

2009-11-30

Athens, Greece

As a Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs of the University of Indianapolis Athens I would like to extend my warmest thanks, and it is a great pleasure and honour to express my salutation to Phylis Lan Lin, PhD, Associate Vice President for International Partnerships, Professor of Sociology. Dr. Phylis Lan Lin the founder and the initiator of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Symposium on “Service-Learning: Service-Learning in Higher Education: Educators, Communities, and Students”, which was held at the Athens Campus of the University of Indianapolis in Athens, Greece on 22-24 of November, 2009.

Over the time I have known Phylis and her team; they have exemplified belief in creative excellence while showing commitment to everything they do.

It is incredible that the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Symposium on “Service-Learning: Service-Learning in Higher Education: Educators, Communities, and Students” was held in the place where thoughts about society have flourished since ancient times. The motivations for its origin are deeply rooted in the lasting cultural heritage of this historical place which had been searching for a new appropriate form of its contemporary creative expression and identity. As Marcus Aurelius, writes in “Meditations,” “Each thing is of like form from everlasting and comes round again in its cycle.” An important feature of his philosophy was that everything would recur. Essential questions of what is culture and what elements are common to all cultures framed service-learning since ancient Greek civilization. Philosophers of education have repeatedly argued that a central goal of learning is the creation of citizens prepared to serve the community. The classical theories of Plato and Aristotle presented education as intended to create good persons, a goal that included both knowledge and disposition to act on that knowledge in pursuit of good ends.

Once upon a time, the value of “knowledge for its own sake” which people get through serving their society was taken for granted; indeed, culture represented the highest ideal of the progressive notion of education as a process that not only taught “for” and “about” something, but also, most importantly, was deeply engaging as it enlightened and ennobled. In the face of the current economic and environmental crises, what does the wisdom of social work have to offer? The challenge here is to examine these ideas and perspectives in terms of the relevance their message carries to the modern world. Conference panel participants presented major themes

that were realized in their creative effort and discussed some perils and promises of a study that portrayed our contemporary era.

I hope that participants of the Symposium will return to a rich and complex corpus of conference issues and join in spiritual quest to find answers to their own questions.

This conference would not have been possible without Dr. Phylis Lan Lin's efforts and enthusiasm. I would like to congratulate Dr. Phylis and her wonderful team for the organization of this event.

This was a truly great Conference!

Cordially,

Susie Michailidis, Ph.D  
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
Chair, English Department  
Professor