

KONSTANTINE OURANITSAS
YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE MONTH
MARCH 2015



The Philo4Thought Hellenic Professional Mentoring Initiative is pleased to present our March 2015 “Young Professional of the Month” Feature Article! The goal of our publications is to provide positive, successful role models who will inspire the next generation of young professionals. A preliminary criterion for #YPM candidates is their active engagement in an entrepreneurial initiative or career path. Candidates are typically of Hellenic origin and part of a philanthropic, humanitarian or environmentally conscious field. The most essential qualification they have in common, however, is the spirit and compassion to persevere, and the heart to share their knowledge and experience with others.

We have had the honor to work with this month’s young professional, Konstantine Ouranitsas, over the course of two years through the initiatives he organized for the National Hellenic Students Association of North America (<http://www.NHSAofamerica.org/>). Respected community leader and young professional, we are happy to share his journey with you today.

THE JOURNEY & “AHA” MOMENT:

Kostas attended LeBow College of Business at Drexel University, graduating with Honors with a BSBA in Finance. At Drexel, Kostas participated in the 5-year Cooperative Education Program and held three internships, two as an accounting intern at Sunoco Logistics Partners, L.P., and one as a forensic accounting intern at Kroll, Inc. Upon completing his third Co-op, Sunoco Logistics invited Kostas to work part time as a Financial Associate within the Financial Planning & Analysis team. At Drexel, Kostas was selected to be a Dragon Fund Analyst to participate in a two-part course on portfolio management, essentially having full control of a real \$1.2 million investment fund (aka the “Dragon Fund”), which was part of the Drexel Endowment.

The inspiration behind this professional pursuit started in high school. “I took a Business Math class where we played a stock market simulation game, which inspired me to pursue a career in finance.” Finance seemed like the right fit for him from the start and Kostas says that there were really no other professional paths to consider. Growing up in New York, the center of the world economy, in the heart of the financial district and near Wall Street also played a role in developing Kosta’s career choice.

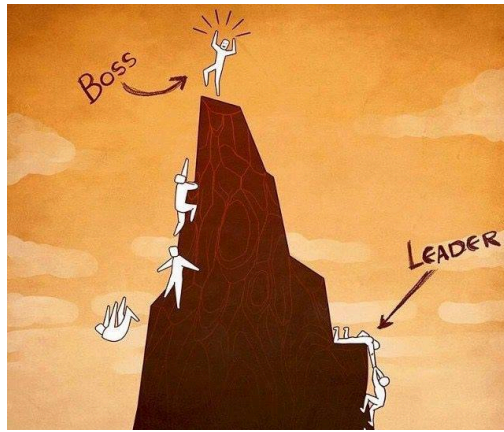
When asked how fulfilling and unique Kostas finds his chosen career path, he explains “I love working with numbers and seeing how the market is affected by different events that take place.” While he is very modest in saying that this doesn’t really offer much to the community in terms of service, many would beg to differ. Even at this young age, Kostas has successfully advised many members of the community and led the movement to establish the NHSA as a 501c3 organization.

In addition to his fast-paced up-and-coming financial career, Kostas is known as the dedicated and energetic leader of the National Hellenic Students Association of North America (NHSA). To this point, we have a few testimonials from NHSA members:

*John Papaspanos, Esq., NYC: "I met Kostas during my years of graduate study in Philadelphia and learned about the pivotal roles he plays in the Greek American community. Although a young man, he always assumes major responsibilities, first as President of Drexel's Hellenic Association and then as President of the NHSA. A meticulous planner, Kostas organizes events and conferences, completing the lion's share of the work to execute everything perfectly. He excels at working behind the scenes, contacting the appropriate individuals and institutions to collaborate and ultimately achieve organizational objectives in an efficient and professional manner. As he is *also* regularly first in line to lead a Greek circle dance, I am confident that we will continue seeing Kostas as a leader of many things in the years to come."*

PHILOSOPHY:

When asked about his overall philosophy of work and life, Kostas says he has a “work hard, play hard” mentality. “I believe in a work-life balance; however it is important to work hard at what you do. Moreover, I believe that being a good leader is very important.” Kostas says that his leadership philosophy is best illustrated in this picture:



When asked how much of his professional and philanthropic work is inspired by his upbringing as a member of the Hellenic community, Kostas explains that it is important to always hold on to your culture and heritage in all aspects of life and to be proud of your ancestry. “In everything I do, I try to spread the Hellenic culture and ideals. This has given me the passion to become very active within the Hellenic community.”

MENTORS:

Kostas says that his favorite mentors are his parents, Maria and Gus Ouranitsas. “They serve as great role models as they are very active and hardworking individuals. They are both proud of being Greek and of their Pontian descent.”

When asked when he has needed professional mentors so far and where he has gone to find them, Kostas says that he usually looks to community leaders or top specialists in a specific field for advisement. “I rely on different people for different things when it comes to getting advise, etc.”

CHALLENGES:

Time management is a huge challenge most people face. Kostas uses a planner, his phone calendar, and a basic To Do List to stay organized. On average, Kostas dedicates approximately 50 hours a week to his career, with an additional 5 hours (weekly) on networking and another 8-10 hours to his business, an online product brokerage. Approximately 7-10 hours is spent on NHSA and other Hellenic organizations.

Since the start of Kostas’ presidency in the NHSA, he has worked diligently to set up the organization as a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Corporation. After much work, NHSA became a not-for-profit Educational Corporation in New York State in 2014. Finally, at the beginning of 2015, NHSA was established as a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit.

DOWN-TIME:

In his spare time, Kostas enjoys playing/watching soccer, keeping up with stock market reports, and engaging in opportunities to learn more about Hellenic culture/history – and to educate others through his various cultural activities. A good portion of Kostas’ spare time is dedicated to his role as President of the *NHSA*, which promotes unity, education, and networking among college students in the U.S. and Canada.

WORDS OF WISDOM:

The skills Kostas values the most are time management, organization, teamwork, and leadership. “These are traits that I found are extremely useful personally and professionally. These are skills that I use in my career, NHSA, and throughout everyday life.”

Kostas’ advice to today's young professional is to continue learning outside of school. “School will not teach you everything you need to have a successful career/life.” It’s important to keep an open mind for new learning opportunities, a trait that people notice about Kostas, whose leadership quality stands out the most because he is a good listener and takes in and assesses all the factors of a situation before taking action.

MENTORING:

We’re so pleased that Kostas is willing to serve as a *Philo4Thought* mentor to a younger member of the Hellenic community! Thanks Kostas!

SPECIAL EVENTS: The *NHSA* will be hosting their Annual Spring Convention March 20th-21st, 2015 in Philadelphia. Details are available on the *NHSA* website: www.NHSAofamerica.org.

CONTACT: Mentoring inquiries should be submitted to philo4thought@yahoo.com. To follow Kostas’ activities, please visit his Facebook page at www.facebook.com/kouranitsas.

READERSHIP: While the primary readership is the young Hellenic professional of New York, we are very pleased that our online exposure has caused our targeted readership to shift beyond this scope! Young professionals of all communities and origins are welcome to contribute comments and questions!



Speakers at the NHSA Fall Convention (November 2014, Washington, DC): From left to right - Konstantina Panagiotopoulos (NHSA), Eleftherios Karmiris (Hellenic Society Prometheas), Art Dimopoulos (National Hellenic Society), Despina Miller (NHSA), Congressman John Sarbanes, Nick Largakis (AHI), Konstantine Ouranitsas (NHSA), Margaret Skourlis (IHS), Ioanna Kriebardi (Embassy of Greece), Neophytos Constantinou (Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus), Steve Crombie (NHSA)