



Kalamata, 16/10/2024

Press Release

On **Tuesday, October 15, 2024**, the **"Motivation Day"** conference was successfully held at the **Central Auditorium of the University of the Peloponnese** in Antikalamos. The event, organized by the **UniStart Hubs**, gathered **more than 120 students, researchers, academics, and entrepreneurs**, with **20 speakers** sharing their knowledge and experiences. The focus was on linking research with entrepreneurship and innovation.

The event began with greetings from **Mr. Stathis Anastasopoulos**, Deputy Governor of the Regional Unit of Messinia, Peloponnese Region, **Mr. Vassilis Papaefstathiou**, Deputy Mayor of Strategic Planning and Climate Neutrality of the Municipality of Kalamata, and **Mr. Athanasios Katsis**, Rector of the University of the Peloponnese. All speakers emphasized the importance of connecting the University with the local community and economy, highlighting its role in creating an innovative ecosystem in the Peloponnese.

Next, Ms. Asimina Altani, Events Coordinator of UniStart Hubs, presented the UniStart Hubs structures and the upcoming actions of the program, emphasizing the opportunities it offers to young entrepreneurs and students to develop skills and promote entrepreneurship and innovation.

The first part of the event featured a panel discussion titled **"Empowering Entrepreneurial Spirit: From Idea to Collaboration and Innovation."** Moderated by Professor **Elias Makris**, Chair of the Department of Accounting and Finance at the University of the Peloponnese, prominent academics and entrepreneurs, such as Rector Athanasios Katsis, **Mr. Sotiris Tsirkas**, Assistant Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the University of the Peloponnese and Scientific Supervisor of the Pelops Racing Team, **Mr. Stavros Stoupas**, President of the Peloponnese and Ionian Islands Development Company (ETAP) and CEO of Start PC, and **Ms. Nelli Kouvellaki**, Founder of Phaos, discussed the challenges and opportunities for young entrepreneurs, with a focus on collaboration between the University and the market.



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After the break, participants had the chance to attend parallel sessions. The first session featured a discussion on **"Economic Professions through the Lens of Digital Transformation and Sustainable Development,"** moderated by Mr. Vassilis Giannopoulos, Assistant Professor in the Department of Accounting and Finance at the University of the Peloponnese, with participation from **Ms. Eugenia Bitsani**, Professor in the Department of Business Administration and Organizations at the University of the Peloponnese, **Mr. Panagiotis Kritikos**, President of the 11th Regional Division of the Economic Chamber of Greece, and **Mr. Nasos Makios**, Environmental Director at KLIMIS and Climate Pact Ambassador, holding an MSc in Bioeconomy, Circular Economy, and Sustainable Development. Simultaneously, visits to specialized laboratories at the School of Agriculture and Food were organized, offering students the opportunity to learn about the latest technological advancements and innovation methods in their field of study.

Following this, a discussion took place on **"Applied Sciences and the Agricultural Sector: Career and Innovation Opportunities,"** where distinguished speakers such as **Mr. Anastasios Darras**, Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Agriculture, **Mr. Ioannis Lykoscoufis**, Assistant Professor in the Department of Agriculture at the University of the Peloponnese, **Ms. Dedousi Efstathia**, Agronomist, and **Mr. Dimitris Anagnostopoulos**, Strategy & Marketing Manager at Olive Ergo ANAGNOSTOPOULOS, highlighted the dynamic role of the agricultural sector in the modern economy and its professional development opportunities. At the same time, students from the Department of Accounting and Finance toured their department's laboratories.

The discussions concluded with the final panel of the day, titled **"Connecting Research with the Market: A Discussion on Humanities and Cultural Studies,"** moderated by **Ms. Eleni Volonaki**, Associate Professor in the Department of Philology at the University of the Peloponnese. Participants included **Ms. Vagia Panagiotidi**, Postdoctoral Researcher at the Department of History, Archaeology, and Cultural Resources Management at the University of the Peloponnese & Co-founder of BeeSTEAM Solutions, and **Ms. Maria Koutsodimitropoulou**, Co-founder of Chronos Conservation Lab, who analyzed the transfer of academic research to the labor market.

The conference concluded with a DJ set at the **networking session**, offering attendees the opportunity to engage in discussions in a more relaxed atmosphere. The event significantly contributed to the connection between the university and the market, highlighting the importance of innovation and entrepreneurial thinking for economic and social development.

The event was coordinated by **Mr. Dimitris Voulgaris**, Coordinator of UniStart Hub Kalamata.

For more information, you can visit the website: <https://unistarhubs.gr/>

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