



UAegean Research Unit  
Press Release  
**Collaboration with WPI (USA)**



---

**Θέμα: The University of the Aegean (UAegean) collaborates with the local community of Syros island to welcome students from WPI as part of the WPI Syros, Greece Project Center - IQP Program**

**Date: 15.11.2024**

---



The [University of the Aegean \(UAegean\)](#), in collaboration with the [Cyclades Chamber of Commerce](#) and the [Social Cooperative Enterprise \(SCE\) "Travel in Art"](#), welcomes to Syros a team of students from [Worcester Polytechnic Institute \(WPI\)](#) in Massachusetts (USA). The students will undertake "project-based" assignments as part of the WPI ["Interactive Qualifying Project - IQP Program"](#). Projects are at the heart of a WPI education which extensively incorporates the "project-based learning" approach to a STEM undergraduate education. WPI is internationally renowned for its innovative approach to formation of young engineers through project-based learning.

WPI's IQP program offers its students the opportunity to work on real-world problems in various locations worldwide, collaborating with local entities and communities. The new [WPI Project Center in Syros](#) is part of this Program and gives WPI students the chance to work on important projects with impact in the Aegean Archipelago's societies and economies. The Center is actively supported by the University of the Aegean and the local community of Syros island (the Chamber of Commerce, the Municipality of Ermoupolis, and other local organizations and civil society groups). **To mark this significant collaboration, the University of the Aegean and WPI have signed a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MoU\)](#), laying the foundation for joint research activities, as well as the exchange of researchers and students.** The University of the Aegean and its partners express their pride in this new collaboration, which is

expected to continue in the coming years, and look forward to seeing the positive results it will bring, both for the two academic institutions and the local community.



During the first cycle of the program, **three teams of WPI students (in total 12 students) reside on the island of Syros for two months, from October 20 to December 14, 2024**



Under the guidance of the WPI faculty and with the support of mentors from the collaborating entities, WPI students carry out **three projects** aimed at providing significant benefits to the local community:

**1. “Improving Waste Management on Syros”: With the support of the research community of the Univ. of the Aegean.**



The project investigates the issue of waste management in a small-medium island which is also a tourist destination. To reach this goal, it evaluates past and present waste management practices, engages with key stakeholders, and identifies the most critical challenges on the island. Through interviews with local government officials, academic researchers and policy makers, local businesses and global technology innovators, the project will present how waste management programs are implemented in the context of a small or medium island, identify avenues for innovation and provide effective and feasible recommendations.

**2. “Telling the Story of Aegean Gastronomy”: With the support of the Chamber of Commerce of Cyclades and the Univ. of the Aegean.**



The Aegean islands produce an exceptional variety of products renowned for their unique combination of taste, quality, and distinctiveness. To leverage this advantage of the islands, the Cyclades Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with the Dodecanese Chamber of Commerce, has established the [Aegean Cuisine initiative](#), a network of businesses in the South Aegean islands aiming to introduce visitors to the exceptional richness of Aegean foods and wines. The project conducts research and gathers information about similar gastronomic brands and promotion initiatives in Europe and globally. It will also identify opportunities to enhance product recognition and document the most important channels for promoting topics related to gastronomy and marketing local products, in Greece and abroad.

**3. “The Doorways of Syros”: With the support of the Social Cooperative Enterprise “Travel in Art” and the Univ. of the Aegean.**



In our daily lives, we pay little attention to doors, locks, and hinges. However, in the mid-19th century, when many neoclassical public buildings, churches, and private homes were being constructed in Ermoupolis, the residents knew how to “read” the city's doors. From the design and decoration of a specific door, they could infer the status and aspirations of a family, or their access (or lack thereof) to the political scene sphere and possession of power. Entering a church through a richly decorated door could remind them that salvation, or eternal damnation, lay beyond it... The project investigates and documents the history of doors and locks in Syros, while exploring imaginative ways to bring this research to life for the island's residents and visitors. The goal is to produce a beautifully designed booklet, an online exhibition, or another medium that will engage people and offer a fascinating narrative of Syros' architectural and social history.

---

Petros Kavassalis  
Vice-Rector for Research and Innovation

