

Christoforos Hadjikyprrianou - CEO, European University Cyprus



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Christoforos Hadjikyprrianou of the European University Cyprus, home to the island's only state-of-the-art medical school, explains the institution's unique value proposition and his vision for the future.

Could you introduce yourself as well as European University Cyprus?

I am the University's CEO and the President of its Council. European University Cyprus has its beginnings in 1961 when it was established first as a Business school, under the name Cyprus College. In 2007, Cyprus College became European University Cyprus and was granted University status by the Republic of Cyprus' Ministry of Education and Culture.

In the last decade-and-a-half, we have made huge strides. We have expanded our programs, established our state-of-the-art Medical School, recruited top academics and introduced the first Dentistry program in Cyprus. Our work and academic achievements culminated in QS TOP UNIVERSITIES granting us the highest distinction of 5 QS Stars in Teaching, Facilities, Employability, Inclusiveness, Social Responsibility and Internationalisation. It is worth mentioning that a Microsoft Innovation Center operates on campus, the first and only such Center in Cyprus and one of only around 110 globally. It was founded on the principle of investing in Growth, Innovation and Excellence. Its key goal is to foster collaboration on innovative research and technology involving a combination of government, academic and industry participants. Ultimately, of course, the aim is

to connect the students, their ideas and their work with the business sector and allow them to get project-based experience, networking and potential employability. In the last three years the Center has supported the establishment of 150 start-ups.

We have over 6,000 students from 60 nationalities, 71% of them following undergraduate programs, 27% post-graduate and 2% PhDs. 84% are campus based, and 16% of degrees are followed online. The university employs over 700 staff, 70% academic and 30% administrative.

You are well known in the academic sector for always pushing institutions to be the best. What actions have you put in place to ensure Cyprus and the University stays on top of the latest developments of the healthcare industry?

First of all, I should mention that our institution is driven by the commitment and collective work of our first-class faculty, its dedicated administrative staff and the dynamism of our students. Individually and as an institution we stand for excellence and innovation; we stand for dedication to knowledge and to our students and to making our society better.

In terms of staying on top of developments in the healthcare industry I would argue that we are not only responding to the changes in the sector but that by boosting the foundations of education in the health sector and by innovating through our programs and collaborations we are actually helping drive developments.

Our Medical School and more recently our Dentistry program have introduced an unprecedented level of state-of-the art technology to the education sector. Equally, our specially designed curriculum for what we describe as the “new generation of doctors and scientists” has attracted academics from the best institutions in the world.

At the same time, we have entered into cooperation agreements with the best medical institutions in the country, including the German Oncology Center and the American Medical Center for the clinical training and specialization of our students.

We have a considerable comparative advantage in that we offer the most comprehensive studies in Medicine, Dentistry, Health and Life Sciences through 22 programs of study (ten of which exclusively) including Pharmacy, Radiology and Radiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Language and Speech Therapy, Public Health, Nursing, Sport Physiotherapy, Biomedical Sciences and Biology.

The current environment is experiencing a lot of different changes. How is it impacting the University and where do you see the main challenges and opportunities?

As a non-state educational university, we are more aware of – and more responsive to – the changing landscape in the sector and more broadly of the economy. We are a university focused on employability; we are also focused on innovation because we know that this is what drives modern economies. The challenge for us is to remain at the forefront of this change and to help our students gain professional experience something available to them in all of the programs we offer.

Surveys show that 8 out of 10 European University Cyprus graduates are employed; 1 in 2 having secured work within the first six months of graduation and 8 out of 10 working in their field of study. These are strong metrics that we aim to improve further.

Human resources are rather limited in Cyprus but the University is working to ensure it is forming a high-quality talent pool. In what way do you ensure the excellence of both staff and students?

I think our stellar growth and our record have themselves attracted academic excellence and have strengthened our capacity to strive towards the highest possible degree of excellence. We have Nobel Laureates as visiting professors and as members of our academic boards and we have first class academic and research faculty working on significant EU funded projects.

In fact the European Commission awarded European University Cyprus the “HR Excellence in Research Logo”, one of the most prestigious international awards, recognizing its contribution to research excellence following a thorough analysis of our human resources policies which were seen as providing and supporting a stimulating and favourable working environment for researchers.

I should also mention that European University Cyprus has been awarded with the Investors in People Silver accreditation by the Investors in People Standard, demonstrating its commitment to high performance through best in class people management practices. Investors in People is the international standard for people management, defining what it takes to lead, support and manage people effectively to achieve sustainable results.

Finally, our University was rated by EFQM, the non-profit organization, which based on its Model of Excellence granted the University the prestigious EFQM Excellence Accreditation for both its academic and administrative functions including, among others, on leadership, strategy, corporate social responsibility, internal academic and administrative processes and partnerships.

What strategy have you put in place to ensure the University is recognized on a regional and global scale?

Following ten years of growth, in 2017, European University Cyprus became part of Galileo Global Education, Europe's largest higher education group with a network of 32 institutions present in over 80 campuses in 10 countries and over 85,000 enrolled students. We believe that our achievements combined with being part of this forward moving group will propel us into greater recognition on a regional and global scale.

In more specific terms our outward looking international approach, for example through our collaborations and networking, are serving both to make us known globally but to bring that global know-how here. For example, the School of Medicine has become the official host for the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health's Executive and Continuing Professional Education course entitled "Principles and Practice of Clinical Research.

What is your vision for the University in Cyprus and especially the School of Medicine?

The Cypriot state has designated education as one of its growth strategy's pillars. My vision is for European University Cyprus and its Medical School to be key drivers of this. We are best placed to help in that direction. We have a very strong international outlook in networking between universities, in the collaboration of the state and universities, in the crucial partnership between universities and industry and, above all, in our dedication to quality education and excellence.

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