

Alumni Spotlight: Genti Kostandini, Perrotis College Class of 2000



Kostandini with his wife, Effie Antonoudi, at the Perrotis College graduation ceremony last year.

Spending his summers on his grandfather's farm in Albania, Genti Kostandini knew he would never lose his love of agriculture. What he didn't expect, however, was a career path that would take him on a worldwide odyssey in pursuit of his professional goals.

As a professor of agriculture and applied economics at the University of Georgia, Kostandini's research has taken him to Kenya, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Mexico to study the impact of drought-tolerant crops and the risks associated with increased rainfall variability. Given his wide range of research interests—everything from the effect of immigration laws on labor supply to biopharming intellectual property rights—Kostandini expects that much more international travel lies ahead.

Kostandini's journey began in 1997 at age 18, when he came to Greece to study agricultural business. He spent his first year at a school in Larissa, but transferred to Perrotis in 1998, just a year after the college opened. Two of his classmates from high school in Albania were Perrotis students at the time and convinced him to make the switch.

While at Perrotis, the trio took introductory classes on agricultural business and the foundational principles of economics. "I wasn't sure I was going to like the field," Kostandini said. "But the faculty [at Perrotis] convinced me. It was only the second year since the school had opened, but

the faculty were clearly passionate about their work.”

Kostandini remembers the influence of Professors Konstantinos Rotsios and Athanasios Gertsis, both of whom are still full-time faculty members at the College. Kostandini noted, “Both were really inspiring and offered hands-on learning experiences that made me interested in the field of agriculture business.”

Kostandini received his associate degree in agricultural business, one of two degree options for Perrotis students at the time, and continued on at the University of Arkansas for the completion of his bachelor’s. He remembers the influence of Perrotis in this transition.

“I received good scholarship money thanks to my connections to Perrotis,” he noted. “This mattered a lot because of the steep cost of college for international students.”

After graduating from the University of Arkansas, Kostandini matriculated to the Virginia Polytechnic Institute (Virginia Tech) to complete his Master’s in Agriculture and Applied Economics, eventually going on to pursue his Ph.D. in economics, with a focus in agriculture. Since then, he has worked as a professor at the University of Georgia in the department of Agriculture and Applied Economics.

Similar to his research interests, Kostandini teaches classes on a wide range of topics—everything from microeconomics to agribusiness. Although he has a few big seminars, he finds himself teaching smaller classes fairly often, similar to the ones he took twenty years ago at Perrotis.

Kostandini now lives in Atlanta with his wife Effie.