

Dear colleagues and friends,

Goodmorning! Kalimera!

On behalf of our course directors and co-directors, I would like to welcome you and thank you for your participation in our inaugural University of Athens and Mayo Clinic Hematology and Oncology Course.

It has been an honor and a privilege to be involved in organizing this first of its kind meeting. We understand that Athens is a desirable destination at this time of the year. We appreciate your decision to join us and we are proud that we have been able to bring together both the Hematology and Medical Oncology communities in organizing this event.

Over the next two and a half days, we look forward to coming together to review and interpret new, practice-relevant data primarily presented at ASCO 2023 and EHA 2023, as well as discuss how best to integrate novel evidence-based treatment strategies and how to apply novel biomarker-based approaches into clinical practice in the fields of hematology and medical oncology.

This meeting is a unique opportunity to bring together passionate practitioners and to be able to combine both the European and US experience and perspective during our sessions over the next few days.

But we would like to go beyond this. We hope that there will be a demand to establish this meeting as an annual event and we would like to hear from you. We would ask all attendees and faculty to share with us their thoughts on this topic.

On our end, we hope that this meeting will serve as a catalyst to promote collaboration between investigators in both Institutions and an opportunity for young Greek physicians to seek information on training opportunities at Mayo Clinic. We envision in future meetings to be joined by our Mayo Clinic international colleagues from Mayo Abou Dabhi, in the United Arab Emirates and Mayo Clinic Healthcare located in central London. We look forward to renewing old friendships and developing new ones. But please let us know what your thoughts and needs are.

This meeting could not have happened at a more fortunate time.

This meeting is in alignment with Mayo Clinic's strategic plan for 2030 and beyond, as Mayo Clinic seeks to cure, connect, and transform health care globally. Educational activities like this meeting directly support these goals.

This meeting is also in alignment with University of Athens' vision, under the leadership of Rector Dimopoulos, who has been enthusiastically championing initiatives that enhance the university of Athens' international presence and recognition and promote its faculty.

In order to facilitate a deeper understanding of our Institutions, we have included two special sessions in the agenda. The first one scheduled for tomorrow at 8:00am will include a 30 minute introduction to the Mayo Clinic. I am honored to moderate this session, during which 3 of our senior Mayo Clinic cancer center leaders Drs Ansell, Fonseca and Saab will share their insights on Mayo Clinic's past, present and future.

On Saturday morning at the same time, Rector . Dimopoulos and Professor Psaltopoulou will introduce us to the university of Athens' history, current state and plans.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank rector Dimopoulos for his leadership in making this event come true.

I would also like to thank Dr. Terpos for his constant efforts and his attention to detail that allowed us to address all challenges during preparation of this meeting and without his experience we would not have been successful .

On the Mayo side, I would like to thank Drs. Saab, Ansell and Fonseca for their enthusiasm and embracement of this meeting,

I would also like to thank my colleagues at Mayo Clinic and at the University of Athens who eagerly agreed to participate and share their expertise.

And finally, I would like to thank all participants for their support of our effort and all of the pharmaceutical companies as their support has allowed us to make this meeting happen.

On a personal level this meeting is an important destination in my own Odyssey.

It has been a joy to reconnect with some colleagues, few of them I had first met decades ago as a student and resident at the University of Athens Medical School.

At the same time it is my pleasure to get to introduce my colleagues at the Mayo Clinic, my new professional family, to the leaders of the Greek hematology and Medical Oncology community.

I hope my own personal experience as well as that of my greek colleagues in our delegation Drs Leventakos , Dimou and Grivas can serve as a foundation for what I hope this meeting will be: a gathering of friends, old and new.