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## Book Review by Van Coufoudakis

Serge Hadji-Mihaloglou, *Institutional Governance and the Trustees of Anatolia College*, Thessaloniki: Board of Trustees-Anatolia College, 2012, 174 pp.

The author, drawing on his experience as a corporate lawyer and as an Anatolia College Trustee, has written an informative bilingual volume on the structure, composition, and the challenges confronting the Board of Trustees of Anatolia College, an American “not for profit” institution operating in Thessaloniki since the early 1920s.

Three reasons make this book timely and useful: (a) the financial crisis affecting Greece and the Troika’s demands for the reform of Greek public finances. These demands are having a serious impact on Greek higher education; (b) the restructuring of Greek public higher education under the “Plan Athena.” This plan offers new opportunities for reviewing existing administrative practices in Greek public universities and Greek Technical Colleges; and (c) the creation of elected governing councils in public higher education institutions. Their functions, on paper at least, approximate those of an American Board of Trustees. This politically controversial development created new problems because of apparent jurisdictional conflicts with traditional university administrative structures.

Serge Hadji-Mihaloglou’s book helps dispel many of the myths existing in Greece about private higher education institutions. It also describes how Anatolia’s governance system contributed to its success and to its ability to live up to its mission since the early 1920s when the institution relocated to Thessaloniki from Turkey.

The book explains how a 501(c)(3) type institution operates both in the US and abroad. Anatolia College was incorporated in Massachusetts in 1894. Anatolia College combines private and public sector elements to advance important social and cultural goals. The “not for profit” status does not imply lack of regulation or accountability. The ultimate penalty for non-compliance with existing rules and regulations is the loss of favorable tax status. The College faces many regulatory mechanisms originating from both the United States and Greece, including the oversight exercised by the Board of Trustees and its committees; the State of Massachusetts; the standards of the New England Association of Colleges and Universities; the IRS; and Greek government institutions like the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance, the Greek Courts, and even various EU institutions.

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The author identifies and discusses the legal, financial and socio-economic challenges facing a “not for profit” American institution operating in Greece. The limited tax exemption system in Greece and the impact of the economic crisis on philanthropy has created special challenges for this “not for profit” institution. Nothing in the current Greek tax law compares to the deductibility provisions available to “not for profit” institutions operating in the US. An appropriate tax framework will be vital to the success and survival of institution like Anatolia in Greece.

The most significant contribution of the book is the analysis of Anatolia’s institutional governance structure, a subject not well known or understood in Greece. The book outlines the attributes and qualifications of the Trustees; the competence and functions of the various Trustee committees and the well-structured system of checks and balances that keeps the institution operating properly. The book provides unique insights as well as contrasts with Anatolia’s Greek counterparts. Anatolia’s governance model contributes new ideas on how to improve the management of Greek higher education institutions, especially since the introduction of the Governing Councils. The book analyzes the functions of Anatolia’s 35-member Board of Trustees and provides details on the functions of its 11 standing committees. Anatolia’s Board of Trustees maintains a balance between its American and Greek members as well as a balance in the background of its members. The culture of cooperation among the Board members has made possible Anatolia’s adaptation and survival first in Turkey and later on in Thessaloniki.

The book provides an excellent description of the duties and responsibilities of the Trustees and the need for transparency, collegiality and accountability. The issue of accountability is preeminent. It is a function delegated to the Governance Committee. The Board’s operations rely on the effectiveness of its committee structure. The book concludes with comments on the critical balance existing in the powers of the President of Anatolia College and the Board of Trustees. Even though the Board has the last word in this shared governance model, the President is the institution’s real chief executive officer.

This bilingual volume should be read by anyone interested in university administration. To American academic administrators many of the issues under discussion may not be new or surprising. To university administrators in Greece the book brings fresh ideas and approaches to critical issues of university governance. There is much that can be learned from the Anatolia experience, especially at a time of financial crisis in Greece. The author should be congratulated for presenting a timely book on matters vital to Greek higher education.

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