

PERICLEAN NEWSLETTER

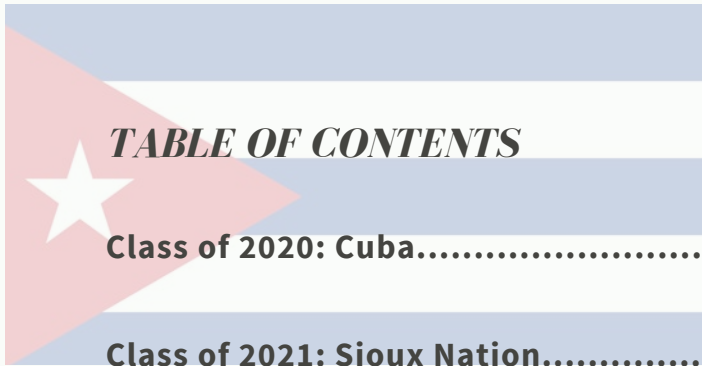


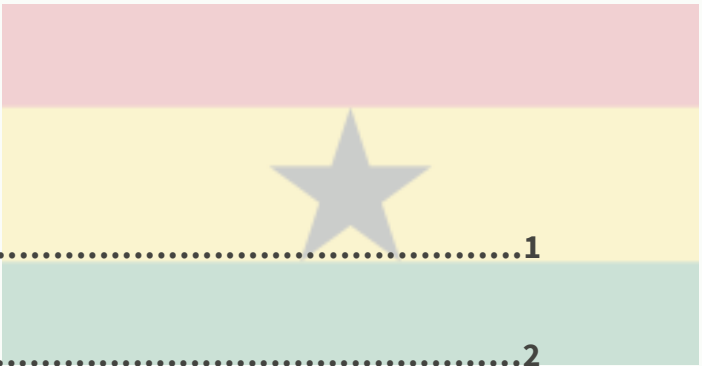
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Class of 2020: Cuba

BY CATHERINE STALLSMITH

Dan Soraco is a member of the 2020 Cohort of Periclean Scholars. The 2020 Cohort's country of focus is Cuba – though the process of making partnerships has been a bit challenging. The Cuban government restricts foreign volunteers from working in their country. Instead, they would rather they contribute to the tourism industry. Students are not allowed to work with NGOs, but they can observe them as research students.

When most of the Cohort goes to Cuba in January 2020, they will be filming a documentary called "The People of Cuba." They are currently in the process of scheduling interviews with people in Cuba. One member of the Cohort studied abroad in Cuba for a semester and made connections, while a few members visited during Spring Break of their sophomore year. The Cohort is preparing for the trip by familiarizing themselves with various film equipment and production strategies. They will mostly film in Havana, the capital, where there is the biggest population and where they have contacts, they will also visit Matanzas. The lives of Cuban people will be included in the film, students just won't be able to partner with people directly. "We want to make it really professional. It's going to look like a mini-series," Soraco says.

The Cohort has done a lot of fundraising – including card swipe donations, letter writing campaigns, and profit shares. Soraco's most meaningful memory was during his junior year – most of the cohort was abroad and only five students were on campus. They visited Marvin B. Smith Elementary School in Burlington for international day to teach students about Cuba. This included playing games, teaching Spanish, and showing videos. "We didn't raise money off of it, but it was our biggest thing last year," he recounts. Soraco and the 2020 Cohort look forward to visiting in January and working on their documentary.



Class of 2021: Sioux Nation

BY ANYA COCOWITCH

The Periclean Class of 2021 has made significant developments in their work with the Sioux Nation in South Dakota. The Cohort has narrowed their focus by choosing a partner organization: the Oglala Lakota Children’s Justice Center (OLCJC). Specifically serving the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, the organization provides advocacy services to children in the community who have been traumatized by sexual and/or physical abuse. The services incorporate modern and traditional Lakota practices in order to protect and heal affected children.

A group of students from the Cohort were able to travel to the reservation this past summer to meet Larry Swallow and Arlana Bettelyoun, the case manager and the executive director for the OLCJC. Among the students were Sarah Kitslaar, Mackenzie Martinez, Caitlyn Stansfield, Lily Apple, and Abby Noyse alongside their faculty mentor Dr. Bud Warner. The group was able to pack a lot into their five-day long trip to Pine Ridge. They took an in-depth tour of the reservation, learned a detailed breakdown of the services offered, and introduced themselves to community members. The students felt like they were welcomed with a lot of excitement to partner with from Larry and Arlana. They were also able to explore their surroundings and historical sites like Mt. Rushmore, the Black Hills, Crazy Horse, and the Badlands. Mackenzie Martinez commented that visiting these sites was important to understand what the Sioux had lost, when the colonizers first came and stripped them of their land.



The OLCJC facility



2021 Cohort member Abby Noyse in Badlands National Park during their summer 2019 trip.

This fall semester, the Cohort focused their energy debriefing the trip and planning for Swallow and Bettelyoun to come to Elon's campus. They were able to bring the two representatives from the OLCJC with the Fund for Excellence grant they were awarded last year. On November 13th, 2019 in Whitley Auditorium, Swallow and Bettelyoun spoke at "Healing the Children at Pine Ridge" which was open for all of campus to learn about the reservation and their experiences working with children to help them heal from the trauma they had endured. The Cohort continues with their fundraising efforts by participating in local profit shares and coordinating bake sales on campus. They hope to travel again to the reservation, January term of 2021. In the meantime they continue to strengthen their partnership with the OLCJC and stay in close contact with Swallow and Bettylyoun.



Flyer from the event the 2021 Cohort hosted with Swallow and Bettylyoun.



Signs advocating for children's rights on Pine Ridge.



2021 Cohort members Mackenzie Martinez and Abby Noyse in the Badlands.

Class of 2022: Ghana

BY ANYA COCOWITCH

The Class of 2022 Cohort has begun their journey as Periclean Scholars this fall semester. With the country of focus being Ghana, the Cohort has put a lot of energy into understanding Ghanaian history, culture, and politics, in hopes of becoming more culturally competent before starting their partnership. Using *The Ghana Reader* as a resource, the cohort divided the book into sections and presented on the most pertinent information to educate their classmates. The Class has also read several scholarly works from varying viewpoints that allow for discussion about ethical approaches to global development, what it means to be a global citizen, the concept of cultural humility. In October 2019, Erin Lawless, Peace Corps employee and former volunteer, came in to discuss the concept of Participatory Analysis for Community Action (PACA), and facilitate role play in order to understand what PACA looks like in the community development context.

The Cohort is in the process of choosing a partner, both locally and in Ghana. At the end of the semester, groups presented their “White-Papers,” to argue why their chosen partners would be the best for the Cohort. By the spring semester, they hope to have chosen their local and Ghana partners and begin to make initial connections. Additionally this semester, they have organized themselves into different fundraising groups in order to fund the project they will be embarking on. Fundraising efforts have included card swipe donations and a fundraiser partnering with Yankee Candle. Lastly, two Scholars, Katie Robinson and Grace Contino, created an initiative called “Periclean Pair-Ups” in which they pair each member of the class with someone new every week in order to strengthen relationships outside of the classroom and to grow closer as a Cohort. The 2022 class sees the value in having a strong relational foundation amongst the Cohort before going about forming connections with their partner communities in Ghana and Alamance County.



Class of 2022 cohort.



Periclean Class of 2019 visited the Buduruwagala monument from a past trip led by Dr. Gendle.

Class of 2023: Sri Lanka

BY CATHERINE STALLSMITH

Dr. Mat Gendle is the Director of the Periclean Scholars Program. He was the Mentor for the 2019 Cohort in Sri Lanka and is now in the process of recruiting and preparing to be the Mentor for the 2023 Scholars, whose focus is also Sri Lanka.

Dr. Gendle decided to keep the same community partner that the 2019 Cohort worked with – Sarvodaya. Sarvodaya is the oldest and largest NGO in Sri Lanka that has a center in all 25 districts. “Sarvodaya has a district center in every district in the country...They can arrange transportation, they can do the logistics, they can introduce us to the community leaders that are on the ground there” Gendle says.

Sarvodaya is an organization that transcends the Sri Lankan government – it has more social capital than elected officials and provides resources to people that the government would otherwise not provide. Gendle mentioned that Sarvodaya recognizes the importance of the strengths-based approach when working with community partners. They use a bottom-up model, which means the local communities are excited to be involved.

“What I’m excited about is this is going to be the first Cohort ever where we are immediately returning to a place where we’ve just been, and so we already have all of the fundamental infrastructure in place,” Gendle said. The Cohort can begin talking about projects and pitching their white papers as soon as possible, since they already know Sarvodaya will be the organization that they partner with. They still have the freedom to decide what issue they want to approach – the beauty of Sarvodaya's work is that it will connect them to a community partner that shares their interest. Gendle is going to visit Sri Lanka in January, and when he returns, he hopes that he will have visited every district in Sri Lanka, equipping him to connect his students to anywhere in the country. Gendle says - “I always try to think about areas that we can be involved in that might otherwise be overlooked.” He is going to explore the districts that are more focused on tourism to see if there is work to be done there. Gendle hopes that he can at least replicate the experience of the 2019 cohort, who did tremendous work. He excited for this Cohort to take multiple trips to Sri Lanka because he believes it is the most sustainable approach for the program. He is also exploring carbon mitigation strategies for the Periclean Program in general.