

Periclean Back to School Newsletter

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Pericleans' Mission

Responding to Elon's Mission Statement that reads, "We integrate learning across the disciplines and put knowledge into practice, thus preparing students to be global citizens and informed leaders motivated by concern for the common good"



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Letter from Director, Tom Arcaro

Welcome to the latest incarnation of the Periclean Scholars newsletter! Megan Griffin, '16, worked very hard last year reconnecting with our alumni and published over a dozen in-depth alumni profiles on our blog and linked on our Facebook page. Though we do have those means of communication, one outcome of Meg's conversations was the frequent request for more updates about the program in newsletter form: short, personal, with pictures and links about current Classes, past and present partners, future plans and, well, all things Periclean.

So here we are. Our goal is to put out this newsletter 4-5 times per year as an additional vehicle of communication. And there is much about which to communicate. Here are just a couple items.

We are now in the process of recruiting our 15th Class of Pericleans, the Class of 2020 with a focus on Cuba. Only the second two-time Mentor, Dr. Brian Nienhaus, will head this Class, using all of the experience he gained when he first mentored the Class of 2013 focusing on Mexico. His ability to speak Spanish and his vast knowledge as a professor in the Love School of Business combined with his past Periclean experience will be solid assets for his Class as they begin their work after Induction next spring. Dr. Nienhaus and I will travel to Cuba this May –perhaps with a couple members of his new Class- to begin making contacts in this newly 'opened' nation.

The program continues to deepen both academically and in terms of our standards for establishing, maintaining, and sustaining effective and meaningful partnerships in our countries of focus. I am working closely with Associate Director Dr. Mat Gendle to re-articulate our programs' Pledge and mission so that all of our actions are in line with the highest international standards.

Current Classes, as you'll read about in this newsletter, are actively researching their countries of focus and working on short and long term projects. I was fortunate to travel with both the '18's and the '17's to Zambia and Namibia, respectively, this past summer. The highlight of this travel came on our very last day in Namibia when we had a meeting in the US Embassy with Ambassador Thomas Daughton. During the meeting the ambassador offered the support of the American Cultural Center for a Periclean-University of Namibia conference being planned for next January in Windhoek. The 2017 travel party included (l-r) Kelsey Lane, Oly Zayac, Susan Christine Reynolds, Carol A. Smith and Tom Arcaro (see photo).

If you will be here on Homecoming weekend, please make plans to stop by Global Commons 202 –also known as the Periclean room. All are welcome to come by at 10:00AM on October 22nd, game day morning, and attend the meeting of the Periclean Foundation in GC 200. The meeting will be chaired by Meg Griffin, '16.

Finally, I want to take this moment to thank our current Mentors Dr. Carol Smith, '17, Dr. Steve Braye, '18 and Dr. Mat Gendle, '19. I join all of them in thanking our program assistant Morgan Seijo-Vila' for everything that she does for us and the program.



Class of 2008's Work in Mexico ~ An Update

The Periclean Class of 2008 was charged with the task of choosing a country and picking an area of focus. Due to the makeup of the class, they choose to dedicate their time to education in Mexico. After searching for a partner, they choose to work with “Schools for Chiapas”. While attending Elon, the Class of 2008 traveled to Suytic to paint a new school and created a documentary called *Painting Without Permission*. Today “Schools for Chiapas” focuses on four different areas of work: education, women’s empowerment, sustainable agriculture, and public health.

A recent development regarding education in Mexico is the outburst violence against educators. The National Education Association (NEA) is leading the effort to increase peace in Mexico, which Schools for Chiapas has joined. The NEA has written a letter to Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto, which they are calling individuals to sign. The letter speaks out against the violence against teachers and their supporters that has led to the death of eight individuals in Oaxaca, Mexico. In the letter, the National Education Association calls the President of Mexico to encourage dialogue among the community around education reform.

*Information adapted from the Periclean Class of 2008 Blog and the Schools for Chiapas Website

Class of 2016 Update

Led by mentor, April Post, the Class of 2016's country of focus was Honduras. Last semester, the Class of 2016 hosted a "Know Your Rights" panel with their local partner, LUPE. Another accomplishment of the Class of 2016 was a summit hosted with the Love School of Business called People, Planet, Profit, which focused on bridging the gap between business and humanitarian aid. The summit hosted speakers from Braeburn Farm, Beautycounter, TS Designs, and Ten Thousand Villages.

Morgan Abate, a member of the Class of 2016, explained the greatest accomplishments of the Class of 2016. She said finding their groove together was a beautiful process that she was happy to be a part of. Furthermore, she described a new niche that the class created for Periclean which helped shape the definition and potential of the program. While the class had many accomplishments, Abate explains the most difficult part was learning how to work with such a diverse group of thinkers.

Abate commented that Periclean helped her develop writing and fundraising skills, as well as the ability to reach out to the community and advocate on behalf of the community. She explained the goals of the class moving forward are to look into donations. While the class is no longer at Elon, they are keeping up with each other and their post-graduate experiences through email and social media.

The Periclean Foundation

Megan Griffin is a Periclean alumni from the Class of 2016. She is the acting chair of the Periclean Foundation Board. The responsibility of the Periclean Foundation board, according to Megan, is "to work together to make financial and logistical decisions regarding fundraising and fulfilling our Class partnerships." Any funds raised go to the support of partnerships that past and current classes have developed.

The mission statement of the Periclean Foundation reads in part: "The Periclean Foundation exists to support the many partnerships that have been forged by individual Periclean Scholars Classes over the years. The mutual vetting process is...maintained by Periclean alumni and Periclean Foundation board members in perpetuity." Periclean alumni have the opportunity to become involved in select fundraising decisions by submitting a request form to the board asking for funds to be channeled to the maintenance of the partnerships they developed.

Exploring Namibia ~ Class of 2017

The Class of 2017 has officially started their last year on Elon's campus. So far on their journey, the Class of 2017 has raised money through car washes, silent auctions, and a GoFundMe page. They also spoke to a local middle school about the Periclean Scholars program and the issue they will be tackling in Namibia. The highlight of the past summer was sending three individuals, Kelsey Lane, Oly Zayac, and Susan Reynolds, to Namibia with the Class of 2017 mentor, Carol Smith, and the Periclean Scholars founding director, Tom Arcaro.

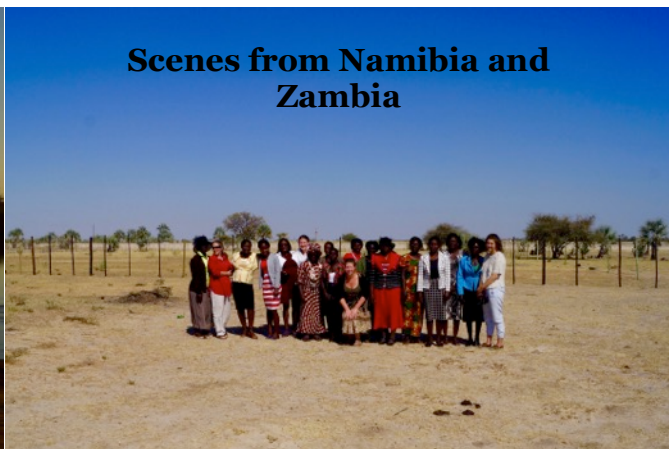
Kelsey Lane, Class of 2017, explained that the trip to Namibia had two purposes: "the first was to begin filming for the documentary, titled 'The Omega Project' that [she] and Oly Zayac will be producing over this next year, and the second was to have conversations with our partners in preparation for the conference, titled 'Voices of Sustainability' that we will be hosting in Namibia in January". Not only was the group able to establish relationships with contacts, but they were also able to develop official working partnerships, which would have been difficult to form otherwise.

While the group was on the ground, they had the opportunity to travel to the Bwabwata National Park. While there, they had the chance to meet Fidi, a man who works for an organization inside the park, which led to the decision to include the stories of community members living in Bwabwata for the narrative part of the documentary the Class of 2017 wishes to make. Looking back, Kelsey says the two most valuable things she learned were how to conduct conversations with people in positions of local authority, as well as the ability to adapt to any situation that was thrown their way.





Scenes from Namibia and Zambia



The Periclean Identity

Project Pericles is an initiative that was originally sponsored by the Eugene Lang Foundation in 2001. Project Pericles has expanded to thirty institutions of higher education across the United States, and Elon University is one such institution. Elon designed a Periclean Scholars program as its fulfillment of the Periclean initiative.

Dr. Tom Arcaro, director of Elon's Periclean Scholars program, described it as a program with an unprecedented capacity for the creation of meaningful change on both local and international levels. He explained that being a Periclean Scholar at Elon University means embracing the responsibility of becoming a member of a Periclean cohort and working collaboratively to maximize both collective and individual growth and learning.

Dr. Mat Gendle and Dr. Brian Nienhaus had similar ideas regarding the identity of Elon's Periclean program. Dr. Gendle described the program as getting a group of passionate, like-minded people together that understand the limitations of possibility regarding their impact on international problems, do not get overwhelmed by the scale of the situation, and enact meaningful change that enhances lives. Dr. Nienhaus stated that the cornerstone of Elon's Periclean Scholars program is "student-centered engagement with themselves, with community partners, and with global partners."

Elon University's Periclean Scholars program is a blend of rigorous academic work and the creation of meaningful change in local and international communities. Our legacy is one that Pericles, with his call to weave change into the lives of others, can be proud of.

Journey to Zambia – Class of 2018

On May 20th, a small team of six Elon students and faculty arrived in Zambia after nearly 31 hours of travel. After a night in Lusaka, the team journeyed to Ndola. A city north of Lusaka, Ndola has a population of roughly 39,000 individuals. The team arrived at a completed Habitat for Humanity house

Bags for Zambia

After receiving purses at the Habitat for Humanity Closing Ceremony in Zambia this summer, the members of the Class of 2018, along with their mentor Steve Braye, decided to purchase purses to sell at Elon.

Each beautifully different, the purses are made by Zambian women, who directly receive the money collected from selling these purses. The material is gathered from a clothing factory in Zambia. The Class of 2018 will be selling these purses on campus in order to raise money for their project.

that would become their home for the next few days. Meg describes Ndola as a “huge community that already hosts several NGOs”. Despite this fact, there were still many ways the travelers from Elon could help the community. After settling into the community, they attended a church service on Sunday, experiencing a full immersion of the culture. Despite the language barrier, the ability to meet one another provided opportunities to make friends and to learn the regional language Bemba. The next activity on their agenda was to work on a house through the Habitat for Humanity’s program “Global Village”. By the end of Friday, they had completed a whole house, which had been a mere foundation on their arrival. On Saturday, they had a dedication of the house to the homeowner, which included presenting the new owner her keys. In addition to building a house, the team visited two

schools, performed community walks to gain access to information for the Class of 2018’s project, visited a market place, and interviewed social workers. The team wrapped up their journey with a trip to Victoria Falls and a safari.

*Adapted from Meg Hinote’s summary of her trip

Interview with Dr. Mat Gendle

Dr. Mat Gendle, a professor of psychology at Elon University, is both the Associate Director of Project Pericles and the Periclean mentor for the Class of 2019. He feels very excited about beginning his time with the new class, but also feels cautiously nervous because he did not enter this position with any expertise on Sri Lanka, the country of focus for the Class of 2019. However, Dr. Gendle spent time abroad this summer with members of the Periclean Class of 2018 in Zambia and now feels much more prepared for his role as a class mentor. He gained a good sense of the possibilities and probabilities that lie in the future of the 2019 scholars and received insight into the achievements and mistakes of past classes.

He views the role of a class mentor as: “more than anything else, to try to guide you [class members] and provide structure for what you do as a class.” One of his major goals is to anticipate any problems or difficulties that the class might experience and figure out ways to work through them in advance. Dr. Gendle is very impressed with the amount of work that the members of his class have already completed. He wants the Class of 2019 to add to the existing Periclean legacy in several ways: to enhance relationships between the program and the Sri Lankan embassy as well as other partners, to raise awareness of Project Pericles on Elon’s campus, and to cement the reputation of the Periclean Scholars program as one of excellence and respect.

Class of 2019 Update ~ Sri Lanka

The Periclean Class of 2019 began their introductory class on Tuesday, August 30th. Led by Dr. Mat Gendle, they are beginning their detailed investigation of Sri Lankan culture, history, and politics. The Class of 2019 has already designed and implemented a decision-action plan and a conflict plan in preparation for future choices about their work in Sri Lanka. To prepare for their years ahead, members have also created several committees such as: recruitment and induction committees for the Class of 2020, visual media and social media committees, a budget committee, a grant-writing and fundraising committee, and a travel organization committee.



Class of 2020 Spotlight: Cuba

The future Periclean Class of 2020 will be focusing on the country of Cuba. The class mentor, Dr. Brian Nienhaus, and Dr. Arcaro, the director of Project Pericles, are currently planning an exploratory trip to Cuba at the end of the 2016-2017 academic year. Their goal is to develop a general understanding of the country's political and social atmospheres and to prepare for the 2020 Pericleans' introductory class. Recruitment for the Periclean Class of 2020, spearheaded by the Class of 2019's recruitment committee, has already begun.

Cuba is currently run by a one-party political system: the Communist Party of Cuba. Relations between Cuba and the United States have been restricted for several decades, but began to thaw in December of 2014 thanks to announcements issued by President Barack Obama of the United States and President Raul Castro of Cuba. In this announcement, Obama explained that he and Castro would begin the normalization of relations between the United States and Cuba.

President Obama recently became the first POTUS to visit Cuba since Calvin Coolidge in 1928. While there, he held a joint conference with President Raul Castro, attended a baseball game between the national Cuban team and the Tampa Bay Rays, and gave a powerful speech on the necessity of normalizing Cuba-United States relations. Cuba is taking steps to open up travel between itself and the rest of the United States.

*Information taken from multiple news sources