

PERICLEAN NEWSLETTER



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Class of 2022: Ghana & Local Partners

BY VIRGINIA BEALL

Catherine Stallsmith and Katie Robinson updated about the activities of the Class of 2022 cohort. The class is currently preparing to finish up their work as Periclean Scholars and have created the syllabus for their Core Capstone, their final Periclean course they will be taking in the spring.

They have been partnered with the Youth Development, Research, and Innovation Centre (YDRIC) in Ghana. Earlier, they helped write a grant proposal to start a leadership program for youth in Ghana to increase the rate of turnover in students returning to the community. However, the class has not been able to do as much work with YDRIC because of an inability to travel to Ghana with COVID-19. Their main hopes for next semester are to do something impactful with YDRIC and make a sustainable partnership between YDRIC and Elon for the future.

During this semester, they focused on community engagement with Alamance County. They were involved in multiple community engagement events throughout the semester, with Catherine and Katie being involved in activities such as volunteering at CityGate Dream Center and a diaper drive.



They have also been working with the group Sustainable Alamance, which is an organization committed to helping reintegrate people who have been released from prison back into the community. They find this important as the rate of people who return to prison is high. In understanding their work with Sustainable Alamance, they read *STAMPED* by Ibram X. Kendi and Jason Reynolds, and as a class, they attended the guest speaker Jason Reynolds' talk.

Another major event for the class this semester was the core forum. Every senior Periclean class does a core forum for first-year students to discuss global engagement and introduce the Periclean Program. Katie was especially involved as she discovered the Periclean Scholars program through a core forum for the class of 2019 during her first year. The class worked to put together a presentation on core topics they have learned about and worked on. The forum involved them looking back on all that they had learned, and Catherine and Katie enjoyed the refresher that it gave them on topics such as voluntourism. While it happened in the evening, they found that many students were engaged with the material and excited to learn about concepts like voluntourism and about different ways of global engagement.

The class is really excited about the work they have done and what they will be doing in the spring. They are close as a cohort, which Catherine and Katie attribute to Dr. Tapler's dedication to making them a community of peers.

Class of 2023: Sri Lanka

BY EMERSON WELLS

Because of the pandemic and limited travel to Sri Lanka, the class has shifted their focus to fundraising efforts for an LGBTQIA+ center in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Kasey Fountain has helped spearhead this project, becoming interested in ways to support LGBTQIA+ individuals in Sri Lanka following the completion of a white paper project last semester. Homosexuality is criminalized in Sri Lanka and organizations that cater toward activism and support tend to be located in metropolitan areas and catered toward certain ethnic groups and class levels. Recognizing that Sri Lanka is diverse both culturally and economically, an organization that works well in one area will not necessarily do well in another, the Class of 2023 connected with a scholar with experience in queer activist movements in Sri Lanka to work toward spaces and support for LGBTQIA+ folk in rural Sri Lanka.

“We are now fundraising for an LGBTQIA+ center in Jaffna to function as a shelter for people who have lost jobs or been kicked out of their homes,” explains Fountain. The center also has plans to serve as a soup kitchen and a space for individuals that have lost their homes as result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The class hopes to work further with Sarvodaya, their partner in Sri Lanka, to work toward creating and utilizing pre-existing centers.

The class’s Instagram fundraiser raised \$220. Because the center aims to fundraise around \$8000, the Class of 2023 is planning to hold larger events in the spring semester to raise awareness about Sri Lanka and get the campus further involved in fundraising efforts.

Because the majority of the Class of 2023 will be abroad for the spring semester, the class focused a majority of their time as a cohort toward planning a Sri Lanka New Years event being held this spring. This will be the first type of this event held at Elon, aiming to celebrate both Sinhalese and Tamil traditions and introduce the concept of Sri Lankan New Year to Elon’s campus. The event plans to hold traditional activities and Sri Lankan food provided by Elon Dining. With a focus on having this event registered as a sustainable event with the Office of Sustainability, all decorations and programming is being planned with sustainability in mind. The class has worked closely with Sri Lankan community members and faculty to make this event authentic and engaging.

Lastly, the class worked toward advertising the Periclean Scholars Program at three College Coffee events to encourage applications for the Periclean Class of 2025. With a table highlighting programming from past and current Periclean classes and students from all current Periclean classes, the table attracted the attention of faculty and students.

The cohort looks forward to continuing similar work in the spring semester.

Class of 2024: Structural Racism and Racial Inequality

BY VIRGINIA BEALL

The Periclean Scholars Class of 2024 began their first year as a cohort this semester. The cohort is beginning with learning about systematic racism in order to better understand how they can help Alamance County. They simultaneously watched documentaries such as *13th* and read the book *STAMPED* by Ibram X. Kendi and Jason Reynolds, which helped them realize how systems of racism operate today. They created a timeline of the historical events outlined in the book in a visual manner, which was shared at College Coffee. Others in the class visited COR 1100 classes to present the timeline and stimulate discussion on systematic racism.

After this project, they focused about learning about racism pertaining to Alamance County, which prompted them to investigate the roots of immigration to the U.S. and Alamance County for a better understanding of its history. The class then split into three major topics that interested them and relate to racial issues: mental health, public health, and incarceration. Each group went through the process of researching their issue and created graphs and intervention strategies. The cohort has also begun discussing community partners, which they intend to continue in the spring.

The cohort has bonded over their passion in countering racism, and Dr. Lundeen has created a class environment that is goal-oriented and ambitious in order to maintain their enthusiasm. The class has done extensive group work that has produced successful outcomes that they are proud of.

One student, Delyla, enjoys working with the Periclean Scholars program because of the sense of community. She likes that her cohort is very open and vulnerable with each other, and she says that she feels understood and comfortable to share her experiences as a black identifying woman. Delyla says her class is very supportive towards her, and that her experiences have helped her to educate her cohort.

The cohort will continue to work on social justice issues in Alamance County and North Carolina next semester and are very passionate about how they can help. They say that COVID-19 has not affected their work much so far as they are only in the beginning stages, but they hope to be able to make an impact even with the restrictions in place.



PHOTO COURTESY OF
TODAY AT ELON

Class of 2025: Costa Rica

BY EMERSON WELLS

The Periclean Scholars Class of 2025 plans to create meaningful partnerships and explore civic engagement opportunities with Costa Rica as the designated country of focus. Described as “the most politically stable nation of Central America, one of the most consolidated democracies in the continent, and one of the most beautiful countries in the world” on Elon’s Periclean Program website, the country presents itself as a unique site of student engagement.

The program is the first Periclean collaboration with Costa Rica at Elon and will be led by mentor Dr. Vanessa Bravo, Associate Professor of Strategic Communications and Chair of the Department of Strategic Communications. Dr. Bravo has journalism experience in Costa Rica and professional expertise in international communications and public diplomacy with prior work published examining Latin American diasporas.

Potential areas of focus in Costa Rica include examining political divisions, disinformation efforts across several areas that may threaten civic engagement, environmental issues and climate-change related challenges, socioeconomic inequities, drug-trafficking, growing concerns related to crime rates, and other areas students may identify as an interest.

Because the COVID-19 pandemic may prevent or limit travel to Costa Rica, the cohort plans to follow suite of the Class of 2024 and focus on sustainable collaboration within Alamance County and local communities.

The class will begin with a focus on supporting both the Latinx and undocumented immigrant communities within Alamance, recognizing these groups as an “underserved and essential group” in the county. The knowledge gained through local partnerships in this area will inform students about Latin American peoples and cultures and support future engagement in Costa Rica. Ideally, issues of focus will remain consistent both locally and abroad. All partnerships and programming will support the Periclean Scholar mission to “empower students through global civic engagement both locally and internationally with emphasis on cohort-based learning and student leadership.”

The Class of 2023 has spearheaded marketing efforts for the Periclean Class of 2025. The application closes on March 4, 2022 for first year students.



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