



## The Periclean Progress E-Newsletter

**Volume 14, April 2018**

"An educated citizenry is the essential instrument for promoting responsible social action and community well-being." - **Eugene M. Lang**

### **National Office News:**

#### **Five Teams Win Letters to an Elected Official Competition**

Teams from **Carleton College, Pace University, Pitzer College, Reed College, and Skidmore College** were selected as the winners of the **2018 Debating for Democracy (D4D)<sup>TM</sup> Letters to an Elected Official competition**. Each team will receive a \$500 award to use on an advocacy campaign focused on their issue.

Skilled letter writing to an elected official is highly effective and we are excited by the quality of the submitted letters. This year's letters proposed innovative solutions to a wide variety of issues including climate change and environmental protection, education reform, gun violence, immigration and DACA, prison and sentencing reform, sexual assault, and Title IX enforcement. The teams sent their letters to elected officials throughout the United States. A panel of external experts selected the winning letters. We look forward to working with the five winning teams as they develop their advocacy campaigns in the coming year.

This year, we have two winning letters on the same topic, gun violence. Teams from Carleton and Pace both urged their elected officials to repeal the "Dickey Amendment" which prohibits the CDC from conducting research on gun violence and treating it as a public health issue.

**Carleton College-Ilan Friedland '21, Marlana Resnick '21, Sophie Rogers '21, Justine Seligson '19, and Jackie Tyson '20** wrote to Representative **Jason Lewis (R-MN)**. Their campaign focuses on support for Bill H.F. 3022 which "would position Minnesota as a leader in thwarting an epidemic of domestic terrorism."

**Pace University-David Lê '19 and Laurianne Gutierrez '22** wrote to Senator **Charles Schumer (D-NY)** "to implore (you) to introduce legislation to repeal the Dickey Amendment in order to permit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to fund research that could help provide a solution to the problem of gun violence in the United States," The pair are planning a petition drive as well as outreach to elected officials.

**Pitzer College-Marquise Brooks, Malakai Embry, Pedro Florez, and Amber Burkhardt '20 and Blake Clement '20** wrote to Representative **Nanette Barragán** (D-CA) in support of Title I of Bill 3356, which would support research on strategies to reduce recidivism among the formerly incarcerated. The five students are part of a Pitzer "Inside-Out" class. They wrote, "The course takes place at California Rehabilitation Center (CRC) so some of us writing this letter are incarcerated" the others are "typical college students at Pitzer." The group plans to advocate for greater support to assist the formerly incarcerated in integrating into their communities. "We are particularly interested in providing adequate halfway homes for people reentering the free world." As part of their campaign, they will film testimonials from the formerly incarcerated, display them online, and share them with elected officials.

**Reed College-Soha Ahmed '20, Maya Arigala '20, Mayaki Kimba '20, and Kwani Marcellay '20** wrote to Oregon Governor **Kate Brown** (D) about the implementation of House Bill 2845 which directs the Department of Education to develop Ethnic Studies standards for adoption into existing standards for public K-12 education. They requested greater geographic and racial diversity on the advisory group responsible for the implementation of ethnic studies in the Oregon public school system. Gresham is the most diverse city in the state but currently lacks representation on the advisory panel whose members are drawn from Portland and Salem. The group is planning on creating a Community Ethnic Studies Library for students in the Centennial School District and Gresham-Barlow School District.

**Skidmore College-Isaac Bardin '20 and Ted Randell '19** wrote to Senator **Kirsten Gillibrand** (D-NY) "to urge you as a member of the subcommittee on Fisheries, Water, and Wildlife to introduce legislation ... to prohibit oil and gas leasing. We need legislation to protect our coastlines, wildlife, and communities from the Trump administration's ill-advised attempt to drill for fossil fuels off the coast of the United States." The team is planning on mobilizing a grassroots campaign in support of the bill and will visit Albany to meet with their Representatives and Senators about this important issue.

The Debating for Democracy (D4D)<sup>TM</sup> Letters to an Elected Official annual competition engages students around public policy issues, the political process, and with their elected officials. Since this program began in 2008, we have received outstanding submissions from hundreds of student teams at our Periclean colleges and universities.

Writing letters that clearly ask an elected official to take specific action is an effective way to assert civic power. In 2017, The Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) released a report, *Citizen-Centric Advocacy: The Untapped Power of Constituent Engagement*. One of their major findings, based on nearly 1,200 responses from congressional staff, is that mass e-mail campaigns are virtually ineffective. With the rise of social media and mass e-mail campaigns, congressional staffers are inundated with duplicate messages from the same campaign. It is a personalized, specific letter (or e-mail) that is much more powerful for influencing change. For more information and to download the report, [click here](#).

### **Periclean Faculty Leaders-Changing the Discourse on Campus:**

This fall, we launched a second cohort of the **Periclean Faculty Leadership (PFL) Program<sup>TM</sup>** on 13 campuses. The PFL Program is a leadership and course development program dedicated to incorporating civil discourse, civic engagement, and social responsibility across the undergraduate curriculum.

The PFL Program encourages faculty members in a wide range of disciplines to create and teach courses that address issues of social concern, enrich the curriculum, and enhance

student engagement. Periclean Faculty Leaders (PFLs) from the first cohort are serving as mentors to the 2017-2018 PFL cohort. In addition, each PFL is paired with a PFL from another campus. The PFL Program is supported by **The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations** and **the Eugene M. Lang Foundation**.

Sixteen Periclean Faculty Leaders taught courses from a wide range of disciplines: Archaeology and Classical Studies, Business Law, Computer Science, Dance, English, Environmental Studies, History, Mathematics and Statistics, Psychology, Sociology, Theatre, and Urban Studies. Their syllabi have joined the 100 other courses incorporating civic engagement on our website.

Over the coming months, we will feature reflections on their experiences. For this issue, we are pleased to highlight the work of **Nurcan Atalan-Helicke**, Associate Professor Environmental Studies and Sciences, **Skidmore College** and the work of **Michael H. Janis**, Associate Professor of English at **Morehouse College**. Professor Atalan-Helicke taught "Political Ecology" as part of the PFL Program and Professor Janis taught "Honors College Composition."

### **Countering Hopelessness in the Classroom-A Periclean Faculty Leader Reflects By Nurcan Atalan-Helicke, Skidmore College**

We are at an interesting juncture: Students and teachers feel overwhelmed by the complexity and scale of the environmental crisis. Coupled with the political crisis that creates a polarization of perspectives, not just in the United States but all around the world, we feel powerless to bring about and hesitant about change. Indeed, studies have discussed this action-knowledge gap, and how increased awareness of environmental problems often does not connect to pro-environment behavior.

Publicly engaged scholarship, teaching, and learning can be a way to counter hopelessness in the classroom. For environmental studies and sciences students, this can be in the form of civic engagement courses that offer them an opportunity to work in their communities to address a current environmental or development issue, address social justice and power dynamics embedded in the problem through their courses, and reflect on their learning. These courses help prepare educated and engaged citizens and strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility.

They help us rethink classroom dynamics by integrating the world outside of the classroom as a valuable learning experience and reframing the role of the teacher as a co-learner in relation to the students and community organization. I taught Political Ecology as an undergraduate class in Environmental Studies and Sciences Program in the Fall of 2017. The Periclean Faculty Leadership Award helped me refine the evaluation of the course, learn from my peers and mentorship experience, and share my commitment to civic engagement both on and outside campus. I was a workshop facilitator at my college for other faculty who want to designate their courses as civic engagement courses.

I will facilitate a workshop on environmental justice at the regional civic engagement meeting at **Siena College** in May 2018. I will meet with the civic engagement coordinators of the higher education institutions in the Capital District, NY and stakeholders (civil society and government representatives) and discuss on how to improve the integration between curriculum and community needs. In this age of hopelessness, it is important to learn about best practices on our own campus and across other higher education institutions. Sharing practices, through the Periclean Faculty Leadership Program but also through workshops such as these, help empower faculty engaged in civic engagement. They are also

critical to support the next generation of faculty and students committed to civic engagement.

**The King Collection Gives Grady High Students  
Insight On Life of Martin Luther King Jr.  
By Tammy Joyner, Morehouse College**

Students from **Morehouse College** and Atlanta's **Grady High School** recently spent class time together this fall immersed in the works of the college's most famous alum. Their two meetings this fall at Morehouse were part of the program known as "The Civic Engagement Project." The outreach gives students an opportunity to explore the legacy and writings of **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**<sup>48</sup> and discuss how his message applies to America's volatile political and social climate today. The Morehouse-Grady collaboration is part of Morehouse's Project Pericles work.

"The goal is for the students to engage with some of the most critical ideas and most effective arguments in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s work.," said **Michael Janis**, an associate professor of English at Morehouse who worked with Grady English teacher Larry McCurdy to organize the event. "It's a great opportunity to work in the community."

McCurdy, who accompanied 17 students and two other faculty members on the trip, said King's speeches "are timeless and totally relevant to so many things today. "He's so universal in his idea of social change and taking the high road amid dissent and hate," McCurdy added. "It's so relevant to our national zeitgeist."

Eight students from Janis' advanced PFL class in English composition led the Grady students in discussions on King's "The Time For Freedom Has Come," an article that originally appeared in The New York Times Magazine in September 1961.

To underscore King's message, the group visited the King Collection where they got a rare glimpse into how King composed his speeches. The civil rights leader relied heavily on outlines and continual rewrites until he was satisfied with the final draft. The group also got to see, among other things, a Western Union telegram sent to King from Muslim minister and human rights activist **Malcolm X** in June 1964.

**Dr. Vicki Crawford**, Morehouse's director of the King Collection, gave a presentation on the importance of preserving the artifacts for generations to experience. The King Collection is in the Robert W. Woodruff Library at the Atlanta University Center.

Grady senior **Shamaria Dill**, 17, said her favorite part of the visit to Morehouse was seeing King's original hand-written speeches because it "showed his thought process." Dill, who wants to be a detective in law enforcement, plans to attend Howard University.

Morehouse junior **Wendell Shelby-Wallace**, one of the discussion leaders during the classroom exercise, said she hoped this would "enlighten scholars by exposing them not only to historical text, but also past experiences, which are relatable to modern-day society's challenges."

McCurdy said the Civic Engagement Project also was a chance to expose his students to college life. "Some of these kids will never set foot on a college campus if it weren't for opportunities like this," he said.

**Tammy Joyner** is a contributing writer for Morehouse.edu

## Project Pericles and Campuses Ramp Up Engagement for 2018 Mid-term Elections

**Student Choices - Student Voices (SCSV)**-Comprised of student-led Task Forces on our member campuses, SCSV efforts encourage civic participation by hosting an array of events and activities about national issues for students, faculty, staff, and community members. This spring, our SCSV Task Forces have continued their voting advocacy initiatives with a focus on the upcoming primaries. **Occidental College** (with SCSV mini-grant support) hosted a "lunch and learn" education session highlighting Occidental's voting trends using data from The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE), which provides data about the voting habits of students on specific colleges and universities. Task Force members also walked students through TurboVote (an app that provides information and reminders about primaries and general elections) and shared other state-specific resources such as the Campus Vote Project. **Macalester College** students assisted with regular voter registration drives at the Civic Engagement Center and are organizing a gubernatorial candidate forum later this month in conjunction with **St. Catherine University** and have invited **Carleton College** to attend. **Drew University** held a panel featuring local political candidates and university professors discussing the importance of voting and registered voters through the League of Women Voters in preparation for the upcoming New Jersey Primaries.

### Highlights from Drew University's Student Choices - Student Voices (SCSV) Task Force



*SCSV Task Force Leaders Matt Gronert '21 and Emma Marie MacAfee '21 from Drew University moderating a panel discussion inspiring young people to vote and mobilize around issues they care about. Photo by Arielle de Rosario.*

Five Drew University First-Year Civic Scholars, **Matt Gronert, Diana Karamourtopoulos, Emma Marie MacAfee, Kelly Maegerlein, and Tim Proctor**, were nominated to be SCSV Task Force Leaders. They organized a successful voter education event featuring local politicians, professors, and non-partisan organizations in the 11th District of New Jersey, including Madison Call to Action (MACTA) and the League of Women Voters.

The event took place on April 12, 2018 at Short Stories Bookstore in Madison, NJ, an ideal location for Drew students and community members to convene. After the 30+ attendees

arrived, many registered to vote and applied for a mail-in ballot. Then, the panel portion of the event began. First, local Madison politicians opened by expressing why they think voting is important, drawing from their own personal experiences as politicians. Afterward, Mr. Gronert and Ms. MacAfee moderated a discussion, posing questions to the panel about why it is important to vote. **Kathy Abbott** from the League of Women Voters and three Drew University Professors of Political Science/International Relations, **Dr. Timothy Carter**, **Dr. Jason Jordan**, and **Dr. Philip Mundo** presented.

Ms. Maegerlein, one of the Drew SCSV Task Force Leaders, reflected afterward, "I am really happy with how the event went! Each panelist brought up great points about low voter turnout and how to mobilize voters. I liked that they talked about the different ways you can get involved. If you're interested in the environment you can mobilize around that. If you're passionate about gun protection you can talk to people about that. It's not a [political] party thing. You don't have to choose Democratic or Republican to take action and make a difference. Just find an issue that speaks to you."

### **2017-2018 D4D on the Road™ Workshops Energize Students**



*D4D on the Road workshop at Ursinus College*

The 2017-2018 Debating for Democracy-D4D on the Road workshops were extremely successful. We held eight workshops with students, faculty, staff, and alumni from 21 campuses, as well as community members participating.

On February 24, **Ursinus College** hosted the final workshop of the year with **Widener University** participating. **Arielle del Rosario**, Project Pericles Program Associate, attended. Participants, in small teams, worked together throughout the day learning how to make a positive impact regarding issues they cared about most. The trainer, **Carmen Berkley**, facilitated and discussed aspects of how to identify a decision-maker and how to implement tactics.



*Students, staff, faculty, and community members learned the strategies and skills needed for an effective campaign at the D4D on the Road workshop at Ursinus College.*

At the end of the workshop, attendees shared that they would apply these skills immediately, through writing e-mails to their representatives, organizing people for a March for Life rally, and preparing for a lobbying day in Harrisburg, PA.

We have received positive feedback about the workshops this year from attendees and the Project Pericles Program Directors on the host campuses have also been very pleased. We are happy to be able to offer high quality D4D workshops to our member institutions. When asked if they would recommend this workshop to other students or community members, Ursinus student **Min Son** ('20) wrote, "Yes, definitely because these are the skills we need to be engaged citizens." Another Ursinus student, **Reed Meakim** ('20) stated, "I think I've gained a valuable skill that I can use for the rest of my life."

The workshops used case studies and examples drawn from Climate Change, Education Access, Immigration Reform, LGBTQ Rights, Mass Incarceration, and Race and Inequality to teach students tools to enable them to become more active citizens and effective advocates on issues of concern. Topics are drawn from the evaluations and surveys from the 2016-2017 D4D on the Road workshops and selected by the host campus.

We were pleased to partner with Midwest Academy for 2017-2018. D4D workshops provide both novice and seasoned activists with the skills they need to develop advocacy and education campaigns through effective messaging to policymakers, community leaders, and the public. Workshops are open to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members. During the D4D on the Road workshops, seasoned organizers and activists walk participants through the critical steps in running successful campaigns to win on important issues.

Thank you to **Chatham University, Hendrix College, Macalester College, New England College, Occidental College, Reed College, Ursinus College, and Wagner College** for hosting and to Pericleans **Bates College, Carleton College, The Evergreen State College, Pitzer College, and Widener College**, and **Claremont Graduate University, Harvey Mudd College, Pacific University, Portland Community College, and University of Central Arkansas** and others for sending students.

About: Debating for Democracy (D4D)<sup>TM</sup> is a distinctive campus-based program that represents the mission of Project Pericles in action. D4D promotes civic engagement and effective advocacy skills among a wide range of students. Through D4D on the Road<sup>TM</sup> workshops hosted on Periclean campuses, the D4D National Conference in New York City, the D4D Letters to an Elected Official Competition, and co-curricular programs on each campus, students acquire the tools and tactics they need to advance their issues and to get their messages across to elected officials, fellow students, community groups, and the media.

### **Pericleans in the News**

#### **President Kimbrough's Commentary on Race in Higher Education and America Featured in The Chronicle of Higher Education**

The President of Dillard University, **Walter M. Kimbrough**, had his reflections on leadership and race on campus and in America, "50 Years Later: What Would Dr. King Say?" featured in The Chronicle of Higher Education on March 30. We highly recommend President Kimbrough's thought provoking piece.

#### **Reflections on a Theory of Action, Farm to Table: A Community Engaged Anthropology Course at Bates College** **By Elizabeth Eames, Bates College**

Every autumn I include a community-engaged research project in ANTH339 Production and Reproduction: Economic Anthropology, the anthropology department's required junior/senior seminar (and an economics elective). Over the decades, students have embarked upon many distinct ventures, touching upon such themes as workforce development or financial literacy or Islamic banking. Past partners include the chamber of commerce, the middle school, a local bank, as well as several ethnically-based non-profits. Typically, I generate my own projects.

Last summer the Harvard Center's **Sam Boss** proposed that we partner with an existing cooperative of Somali Bantu farmers known as The Sustainable Livelihoods Relief Organization (a.k.a. The Isuken Co-op). He knew they were initiating the creation of a farm-to-table restaurant and market in downtown Lewiston and that they had already enlisted the assistance of **Jonah Fertig-Burd**, Director of Cooperative Food Systems at The Cooperative Development Institute (CDI). Could we help them in this effort? I jumped at the chance!

I knew this project would resonate with a multitude of course themes, such as reciprocity, redistribution, maximization, resource allocation, labor mobilization, social networks, general purpose currency, and social enterprise, just to name a few. Moreover, I was confident that the insights of such thinkers as Marcel Mauss, Bronislaw Malinowski, Karl Polanyi, and Karl Marx would become more understandable to learners through this community work.

In full consultation across constituencies, we devised a plan. Each group of students would delve into one of four topics identified by the members of Isuken: Location; Farm-to-Table Best Practices; Ethnic Restaurant Comparisons; or Promotions. On the evening of November 28th, we would convene at St. Mary's Nutrition Center for a celebratory presentation of our results. By all accounts, it went very well.

Reflecting on the collaboration, Jonah Fertig-Burd of CDI commented: "Through working with Dr. Eames' class at Bates, Isuken Co-op and the students learned about restaurants, cooperatives, and each other's cultures. The work that the students did will be very helpful for Isuken and the Cooperative Development Institute as we continue to grow the co-op and Lewiston's (and the Nation's) first Somali Bantu farm-to-table restaurant."

In their final papers, every student responded positively to their being asked to work for, and under the direction of, members of the local community. They appreciated not studying people, as is so often the case in ethnographic fieldwork projects, but rather working in a non-exploitative way with a group to build something totally new-as one junior put it, "reframing how anthropology can be useful in the real world." Another student noted: "Our final dinner presentation was one of the coolest community events I went to during my entire time at Bates. It...came together better than we could have hoped." Still another student reported, "the close connection between the class material and our community work made this class feel particularly important...and...was one of my favorite parts about it." Finally, a junior expressed gratitude to the project's community partners: "Thank you to the members of SLRO for feeding us, teaching us, and letting us be a part of your team. Getting to know each of you made my semester better and going forward I will continue to be astounded by your dedication, creativity, and generosity."

Well, I, too, am continually astounded by my students' dedication, creativity, and generosity. I look forward to next year's cohort working with SLRO to see the Isuken Co-op Restaurant and Market through to fruition.

[The full written report is available here.](#)

[The students' short promotional video is also available here.](#)

*Elizabeth Eames* is a Professor of Anthropology at Bates College

### **Project Pericles Needs Your Support!**

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