

Jan R. Liss - A Celebration of Eugene M. Lang '38: Social Responsibility in the 21st Century

February 19, 2011

Good afternoon:

I am pleased to be here as Executive Director of Project Pericles to honor Gene for one of his many ideas.

In 1999 Gene Lang wrote an article for Daedalus, the Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and said:

"The philosophy of liberal arts is the philosophy of a democratic society in which citizenship, social responsibility, and community are inseparable. An educated citizenry is the essential instrument for promoting responsible social action and community well-being."

Project Pericles was founded in 2001 as a national organization that encourages and facilitates commitments by colleges and universities to include social responsibility and participatory citizenship as essential elements of their educational programs. Project Pericles works directly with its member institutions, called "Pericleans", as they individually and collaboratively develop model civic engagement programs in their classrooms, campuses, and communities.

Currently, 29 campuses are implementing a unique program of curricular and co-curricular initiatives that prepare and encourage students to become active, responsible citizens. These initiatives include signature Periclean programs – Civic Engagement Course Program, Debating for Democracy, and the Periclean Faculty Leadership Program – and engage students, faculty, administrators, trustees, and alumni and parents in a range of socially-oriented enterprises and collaborations. By hosting annual meetings of presidents, faculty, and students, Project Pericles helps Pericleans share best practices that promote civic engagement as a significant element of higher education.

Each Periclean college and university develops a comprehensive civic engagement program. Building on existing activities, the program reflects its institution's characteristics and traditions— curricula, resources, student body, faculty interests, location, social concerns, and alumni and community relationships. Pericleans seek to harness the strengths and resources of the entire academic community in responding to the needs of society. A campus-appointed Periclean Program Director who reports directly to the President, oversees each program. Programs include curricular and co-curricular activities in the classroom, on the campus, and in the community. Altogether these programs provide students with a foundation for civic and social involvement.

Gene took his brilliant concept and made sure that it would fly by ensuring that all Periclean Programs share these fundamental characteristics:

- **Formal Institutional Commitment:** Each Periclean Board of Trustees commits its institution to prepare students for socially responsible and participatory citizenship as an essential part of its educational agenda. To oversee implementation of this commitment, each Board establishes a standing board committee.
- **Constituency Involvement:** Periclean Programs invite the participation and contribution of all constituencies, recognizing that each—students, faculty, staff, administrators, trustees, alumni, and the community—has equity in the fulfillment of the institution's commitment.
- **Collaboration:** Project Pericles facilitates collaboration and cooperation among Pericleans. It encourages Pericleans to build relationships with other educational organizations and invites the exchange of information.

The national office of Project Pericles works with Periclean colleges and universities to develop civic engagement programs that support, enhance, and extend their existing activities. These programs are designed to deepen the Periclean mission on campus by enabling faculty to incorporate civic engagement into the curriculum and by

empowering students to become more thoughtful and effective advocates.

Signature Periclean Programs include:

Debating for Democracy is a campus-based, co-curricular program that represents the mission of Project Pericles in action. On each campus Periclean students research, develop and advocate their opinions and positions on current public policy issues.

The D4D program includes a National Conference that brings together student representatives from all Periclean campuses to participate in a series of educational activities with leading figures in civic engagement, education, environment, politics, and social entrepreneurship.

A highlight of the conference is the D4D legislative hearings in which students present and defend their original legislative proposals to current and former elected officials.

This year's conference will be held at the end of March and the five winning proposals that will be presented to former U.S. Senators Nancy Kassebaum Baker and Harris Wofford, among others, were written by student teams from Allegheny College, Carleton College, Hendrix College, Macalester College, and Swarthmore College.

D4D on the Road brings advocacy experts to Periclean campuses to deliver workshops designed to empower and prepare students, faculty, and community members to work within our democratic processes to improve the condition of society. These inter-campus workshops provide training in leadership development, media strategy, coalition building, developing an effective message, and electoral politics. Swarthmore once again hosted one of the 12 workshops this year.

Civic Engagement Course Program: Project Pericles has competitively awarded over 100 matching grants to Periclean faculty members to develop and teach innovative courses that incorporate issues of civic engagement in the fine arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. We believe that a more pedagogically powerful experience of education results from greater integration between classroom-based and experiential learning. Since our founding, Project Pericles has worked with faculty to strengthen the links between the curricular, extra-curricular/co-curricular and campus climate to encourage students to become thoughtful citizens actively addressing issues facing the global community.

The White Paper, I co-authored (with Swarthmore alum, Ariane Liazos), "Civic Engagement in the Classroom: Strategies for Incorporating Education for Civic and Social Responsibility in the Undergraduate Curriculum," a guide for incorporating civic engagement into the higher education curricula. It is available on our website along with CEC syllabi.

Periclean Faculty Leadership Program: And finally, to build on the success of the CEC program, Project Pericles has launched the Periclean Faculty Leadership Program. Periclean Faculty Leaders create new civic engagement courses, organize campus-wide civic engagement activities, and generally serve as advocates and leaders for civic engagement at their colleges and universities.

Project Pericles continues to earn recognition for its distinctive qualities and impact as its membership gradually expands. Project Pericles encourages higher education to promote a more just and compassionate society by preparing future generations of thoughtful and involved citizens. Or as some of us say, "more people like Gene Lang."

Thank you.