

More than 80 students to promote campus activism through new four-year Periclean Scholars program

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Features Editor

Freshmen interested in changing the world attended a Project Pericles meeting Thursday in Yeager Recital hall.

Tom Arcaro, director of the project, and history professor Jim Brown spoke extensively on what they considered the core of the program: the Periclean Scholars. Nearly 30 members of the class of 2006 listened to the program outline and brainstormed possible project ideas.

"The purpose tonight is to infect as many people as possible with the vision of Project Pericles," said Arcaro.

Between 80 and 100 students will be notified of acceptance into the inaugural freshmen class before pre-registration on April 17.

These selected students will then embark on a four-year commitment plan—beginning with a Global Studies course during fall of freshman year and ending with the implementation of the final project as seniors. Meanwhile, students will also pursue their major. Arcaro informed students that Periclean courses are listed like all other classes and will fulfill the core requirements for society and civilization hours needed for graduation.

As sophomores, Periclean scholars will enroll in a 200-level course during the fall semester. This class will focus on building background knowledge, finding a focus and establishing a project idea.

"Imagine something big," said Arcaro, and asked audience members for preliminary ideas.

Marissa Morris-Jones raised her hand to suggest action for the AIDS epidemic in Africa. The freshman human services and psychology major has a history of community service—most recently as a volunteer for the Burlington Housing Authority.

"I have an extra heart for the HIV virus in Africa. I have friends who are missionaries there," she said.

“ We are put on the planet to make a difference. You can be part of the problem or part of the solution.

—Tom Arcaro, professor

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Jim Brown encouraged students to have an open mind when thinking of possible projects.

"You're in on the foundation of this course," said Brown, who will teach one of the 200-level course sections in the fall. "What I find fascinating are the ideas that students come up with."

During their junior year, scholars will engage in specific learning and research, while creating an action plan to implement change in the chosen location. In the final phase of the project, students will attend a seminar class in the fall and spring semesters of their senior year. The group will meet once a week to exchange information and receive updates on each other's progress.

Students will also be expected to keep the campus community informed on the project through informative presentations. Periclean scholars will also be responsible for mentoring Periclean members in the classes behind them.

With large-scale projects, the question of financial backing inevitably arises. Currently, the allotted annual budget for Project Pericles is \$50,000. Arcaro told students they may be responsible for raising additional funds through activities such as applying for grants.

First-year scholars also face the challenge of setting a high-standard model for future classes and for other colleges and universities around the country.

"You will all set the bar high, and, in a sense, design this program," said Arcaro.

Elon was chosen, along with ten other colleges and universities, to participate in this pilot program created and funded by Eugene Lang Foundation.

Periclean hopefuls with a 2.5 GPA who have completed—or are currently enrolled

in—a Global Studies class may apply for the program by submitting a letter of interest and a letter of recommendation from a GST professor to director Arcaro.

Brown and Arcaro concluded the presentation by stating that this program has the possibility to instill lifelong skills to use beyond graduation.

"We are put on the planet to make a difference. You can be part of the problem or part of the solution," said Arcaro.



Photo courtesy of Dan Anderson

In ancient Greece, Pericles was known as a fantastic orator characterized by noble honesty. He is said to have been an advocate of learning and the arts. This statue is said to come from the Roman emperor Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli.

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