

One to Watch: Q & A with Peter Wilkinson '15

Never underestimate the power of a good cheer

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PETER WILKINSON '15 IS A RABBLE-ROUSER, BUT IN A GOOD WAY. THE EPITOME OF WILDCAT PRIDE, WILKINSON CAME TO UNH TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, INCREASE STUDENT SUPPORT AT ATHLETIC EVENTS AND CHEER ON UNH STUDENTS IN THEIR MANY ENDEAVORS. PETER IS ONE OF FOUR “ONES TO WATCH” FROM THE CLASS OF 2015.

Why did you decide to come to UNH? Originally I wanted to go to school for engineering, so I was looking at MIT. Math and science were the name of the game for me. But when I visited here, the UNH community resembled my home community so much, even though my hometown was about 3,000 people and UNH is so much bigger. It's such a close-knit community, I just instantly felt comfortable here.

You were the leader of the Cat Pack Captains — what's that? I did a lot of stuff to boost school spirit in high school, and when I got here, I thought I could do the same thing. I really like to create change and build community. I definitely did not see it becoming this big. I used to talk about it, like imagine if there was this group of students known on campus that would come together and go support as many of our athletic teams as possible and really get the crowd going. I wanted to be able to bring students together for these big events, to help instill a better sense of pride in students at UNH.

What else did you do here at UNH? I joined the Residence Hall Association my freshman year, ran some ideas by them. I was president of RHA for two years, that's where I really learned the skills to be a leader. That, and, UNH Leadership Camp, where we developed something called a leader action plan — it's a physical document that says, "Here's what I'm going to do to make change happen." I was also a June orientation leader.

Majored in: Environmental conservation and sustainability. I was undeclared engineering my freshman year, but I started to feel like I wasn't getting enough people interaction. I realized I love working with people, and I'm passionate about the environment.

What's next? I'll go to grad school for student leadership. At this point in my life, I really want to work on a college campus — if it could be UNH, that would be amazing — in a position either in a student union or somewhere in student affairs, where I'd be able to help students find and develop their leadership abilities. I also like being a motivational speaker, and speaking about community building.

What advice would you give your freshman self if you could? Spend time early on to make sure you have the academic side of things down in college. Start your freshman year off right. As you progress, you can move a little bit away from that and start exploring. Also, develop your own social support system or network. Find the classmates in your major, your professors, in general other faculty and staff... people you can rely on, who will point you in the right direction for opportunities. The sooner you can do that the sooner you will be successful.

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