

Ex Libris

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GABELLI PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM, BOSTON COLLEGE

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Fall 2017

Dover Retreat Welcomes Returning and Incoming Scholars



Photo: Jennie Thomas

Scholars are all smiles at their first event back together for the new school year

By Jack McErlean CSOM '21

Looking like a shoe warehouse rocked by an earthquake, a vast circle of footwear bobbed and shifted around the sunlit chapel. For some, the restlessness stemmed from the excitement of another year in the Program. For others, the lingering turbulence of Freshman Welcome Week and the anxiety of the unknown wobbled their feet. Regardless of class or concern, a contagious energy filled the room.

Each year in late August, the Gabelli Presidential Scholars Program visits the Connors Family Retreat and Conference Center in Dover, MA to harness the united energy and eclectic experiences of Scholars. On Saturday

morning, the Scholars became acquainted as they shared brief introductions of their name, class year, hometown, and a review of summer activities. The freshman class listened eagerly as the upperclassmen listed numerous internships, academic programs, lab work, independent research projects, and more. Following the introductions, the Scholars welcomed the featured alumnus speaker, Chris Wilson-Byrne '07. Chris spoke about his time at Boston College, which he described as the most formative years of his life. He recalled how certain professors changed his view on life and his ability to address inequality in his wealthy hometown. Chris explained how important his coming out had been for him at Boston College. He reaffirmed both the GPSP and LGBTQ+

communities, which was particularly crucial in light of the current political and social tensions present on college campuses across the nation. Later, a town hall meeting led by Fr. Keenan further strengthened the Program's solidarity.

Scholars also strengthened their personal bonds as they split into smaller groups. First, each class met to discuss specific topics. In particular, the class of 2021 met with Fr. Keenan for a quick check-in and an introduction to several features of the Program; the sophomore class discussed their Social Justice Project with Sarah Gregorian; the junior class worked with Prof. Bailey and Tim Mooney '09, on internships and post-graduate planning, and the senior class also worked on post graduate planning

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with Jennie Thomas and Francesca McCaffrey '14. Afterwards, the Scholars split into several groups, integrated by class, so that older Scholars could give advice to their younger peers, especially the freshmen. After a shared dinner, a

night of laughter followed, as the retreat house filled with Scholars playing games together, watching sports, and bonding.

The next morning, the sophomore class presented their planned social justice project to the rest of the Scholars. After the upperclassmen offered

guidance and potential direction to the presenters, all were ready to gather their things and board the bus back to the Heights. Following a productive retreat, everyone felt prepared and excited for another year at Boston College and in the GPSP.

GPSP New Co-Director: Professor Kathy Bailey

By Charlie Power CSOM '21

With the onset of the 2017-2018 academic year, Professor Kathleen Bailey formally assumed the role of Co-Director for the Gabelli Presidential Scholars Program (GPSP). Bailey brings a wealth of knowledge, connections, and experiences to the Program, and she was introduced enthusiastically to the Scholars by fellow co-director Fr. Jim Keenan during the annual kickoff retreat at Dover.

Bailey has a lifelong association with Boston College, having received both her undergraduate and doctorate degrees from the university. She began teaching in the Political Science Department in 1984, and her current research explores the intersection between culture, politics, and Islam in Central Asia and in the Middle East. As the Associate Director of the Islamic Civilizations and Societies Program, Bailey is a keen proponent of undergraduates traveling and studying in the Middle East, spearheading the Mizna Fellowship Fund through the Office of International

Programs, which grants BC students valuable resources to pursue language immersion, internships, and social justice initiatives in the region. A little under a decade ago she founded the summer-abroad seminar "Politics and Oil in the Gulf" in Kuwait, a rare and eye-opening opportunity to learn in the classroom while simultaneously witnessing first hand the geopolitical implications of hydrocarbons. Bailey is currently writing a book, tentatively titled, *Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan*, and is also an author and contributor to numerous publications. Most recently she was the Editor-in-Chief for the Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam's section entitled, "Central Asia and Afghanistan."

This past summer, Bailey was recognized with the Phi Beta Kappa award, which honors exceptional professors whom students believe have significantly influenced their experiences and personal formation at BC.

In addition to her distinguished academic career, Bailey has been involved with the GPSP since 2005, when she was asked to be a mentor to an incoming Scholar. She has continually served as a mentor over the years to many Scholars and additionally she has been a seminar leader and interviewer during Prospective Scholars Selection Process. From there, her involvement only increased, through traveling with the sophomores to Nicaragua and planning the junior trip to Jordan. It may have seemed a natural fit to officially create a leadership role for her, but Bailey didn't see it that way: "I was shocked when Fr. Keenan asked me to be co-director... I was honored, excited and privileged to be a part of the Program." Bailey looks forward to deepening connections with all the Scholars, in addition to the ones she feels lucky enough to already mentor: "It makes you want to get up in the morning: how passionate and

dynamic the students are once you get to know them."

Outside of working with the Scholars Professor Bailey and Fr. Keenan hope to pursue longer term goals for the improvement of the Program, most notably the strengthening of the alumni associations. This year, two new chapters of GPSP alumni will be founded in D.C. and Chicago, in addition to the ones already established in Boston, New York, and Silicon Valley. As Bailey puts it, "I know the alums are eager to contribute, but we need to build the structure." Holding alumni events around the country will require increased travel schedules for Bailey and Keenan, but as co-directors they will work as a team on the new initiative. The two will also strive to make sure the Scholars always have a point person for the Program on campus, which is part of the reason Bailey was elevated to Co-Director, "We both want to be involved with every facet in the Program, but we need to manage our growing initiatives responsibly." Another aspect that Bailey wants to stress in her efforts to improve the Program is placing the class trips to Nicaragua and Jordan in an informed setting. "It is so important that we don't just travel and take in what we see in these countries, but that we really make an effort to understand the social, political, and economic situations beforehand so we can really process the experiences we encounter in the proper context and connect the dots."

After so much involvement and planning behind the scenes, it is exciting to finally have Professor Bailey as a visible face of the Program. We, as a community, are fortunate she is on board, and her mentorship, charisma, and teaching savvy will benefit an even greater number of Scholars. Her influence on the GPSP has been wildly successful; it will be a privilege to witness her leadership in the months and years ahead.



Photo courtesy of: Kathy Bailey

Ever to Excel: Class of 2018 Summer Internship Experiences



Sammi enjoys an ice cream in the Big Apple

By Harry Shanmugam CSOM '21

This past summer, the Class of 2018 worked as interns in a diverse array of companies and professional fields. From marketing to consulting, pharmaceuticals to law, the senior class gained a wealth of experiences through which they enhanced their understanding of professional environments and engaged in reflection on their own personal goals and aspirations.

Andrew Cammon, a Finance and Physics double major, worked at Deloitte Consulting. Deloitte is a well-known, multinational firm with advisory, consulting, audit, and tax branches. Andrew worked as a part of an eight person consulting team. The project was bigger than what is typical for the firm—his client was a mid-size pharmaceutical company, and he frequently travelled to and from the client site, as he worked on product implementation alongside his team.

According to Andrew, the internship was an invaluable experience because he was treated as a full employee and thrust into a setting that challenged him to put his educational skills to the test. Andrew learned extensively about Deloitte, both in terms of the work and the direction of the firm. When he received a job offer from Deloitte following the internship, he signed in less than 24 hours—a testament

to the positive impact of his internship.

Harrison Tune, a Biology major, worked as a marketing and brand intern at Cambridge-based Alnylam Pharmaceuticals. Alnylam is known for its cutting-edge work with RNAi technology, which has only recently been developed into a usable form for medicine. Harrison primarily worked with the drug Givosiran, which is currently being developed for use

in combatting acute intermittent porphyria, an “unbranded disease.”

As part of the commercial team, Harrison presented a proposal for the social media component of the unbranded disease awareness campaign, and he created a competitive intelligence report on the company’s principal competitor. He also organized the selection process for deciding on a marketing agency for the company, reviewing and judging written proposals, and providing guidelines for their proposed budgets.

Samantha Kim, an Art History major originally from Los Angeles, California, worked as a customer insights and strategy analyst for Bloomingdale’s in New York City. As part of her eight-week internship, she served as an internal consultant, providing advisory services for company decisions. She utilized surveys, focus groups, and social media to provide feedback on potential actions for the company.

Sammi talked extensively about how much she learned from her internship. In her role as an internal consultant, she had to learn how to be objective within her own company. The internship also gave her a mechanism through which she was able to effect meaningful, tangible change on the company through her reports and recommendations. As a voice

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Photo courtesy of: Mariah Larwood

Larwood '18 at Deloitte University

A Summer Abroad

By Rachel Duquette MCAS '21

As a part of the Program, Presidential Scholars spend the summer after their sophomore year abroad, but the choice of where to go, and what to do in addition to language acquisition, is up to them.

For Katie Gold, the experience of living in Paris, France for nine weeks was an exercise in independence. “It forced me to do stuff alone,” she said. With nine years of French under her belt, Gold lived and worked almost completely in French. While in Paris, Gold interned with a late stage start-up called Reputation Squad that helps clients create and manage an online presence. A Marketing and Business Analytics major, Gold was especially interested by how Reputation Squad incorporated new technologies, like virtual reality, into its services.

After work, Gold made it a habit to explore the city. While many of her co-workers lived according to “métro, boulot, dodo”—a phrase which roughly translates as subway, work, sleep—she made a point to go to museums and events. “I wanted to do something every day to break out of that routine,” she said.

As the summer progressed, Gold found that her ability to speak the language became a conduit to understanding French culture. For example, la gastronomie—literally, gastronomy-- describes the French culture of preparing and enjoying good food. Weirdest dish she tried? “Frog legs,” she said. “They tasted like the most tender chicken you’ve ever had.”

Still, she said, the best moment of her summer was after dinner with her host family the night she arrived: “It was like—wow, I can actually speak French, I

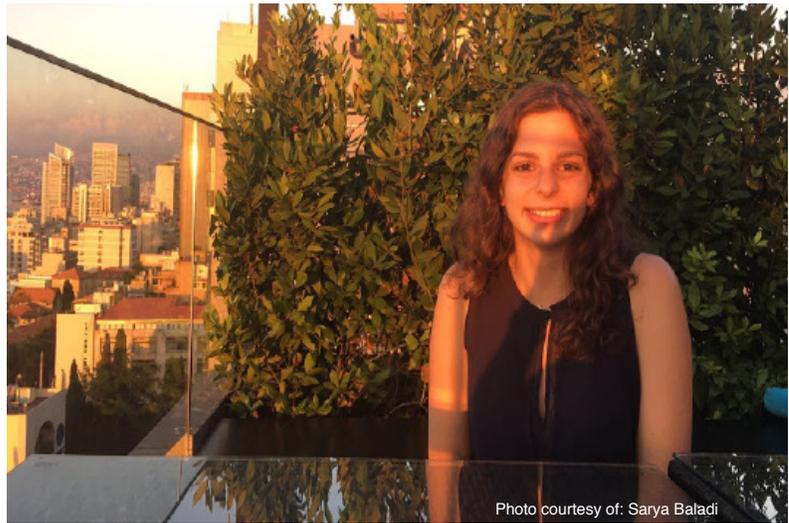


Photo courtesy of: Sarya Baladi

Baladi '19 enjoys views of Beirut, Lebanon

can actually do this.”

For Sarya Baladi, that moment of realization came halfway through her summer in Beirut, Lebanon. To her, a summer abroad was nothing new: the Islamic Civilizations and Societies major, who speaks French and Spanish, as well as English, has lived in Spain and Australia, as well as the United States. In part because of her previous experiences living in different cultures, she knew she wanted to spend this summer focusing on intensive language. Through a program at American University in Beirut, Baladi spent around nine hours a day studying Arabic, with two thirds of her time spent on FusHa, or Modern Standard Arabic, and the remainder learning the Lebanese dialect.

Over the course of the summer, Baladi said, her Arabic abilities improved drastically, but with quite a bit of effort. “At first it seemed impossible,” she said. “It took a lot of work, but it was worth it.” Though she initially struggled to understand conversation and find the right words to convey her thoughts, she

now understands all but the most technical conversation, and can express herself, though sometimes with difficulty. Baladi, who plans to work in refugee integration in the United States, hopes to return to Lebanon next summer to use her Arabic to do research for her senior thesis.

A summer in Lebanon was also a chance to connect more to her mother country and culture. While she has visited the country before, it was important to Baladi to have the experience of living there. “I can relate more to my family history,” she said. The experience solidified her own sense of identity. “When I’m here,” she said, “I feel very Lebanese, but when I’m there, I feel very American.”

For Josh Elbaz, the experience of living in Tbilisi, Georgia gave him more confidence in embracing uncertain situations and opportunities. While there, he divided his time between shadowing at a hospital and interning at an NGO.

The NGO where Elbaz interned focused on helping the blind, who are often pushed to the fringes of Georgian society. Without access to accommodations and education, it’s exceedingly difficult to establish independence and build a role in a community. Elbaz organized funding for and helped plan a conference to provide training in soft skills, technology, and information on opportunities for education and employment.

While at the hospital, Elbaz spent the majority of his time in the Neuroscience Department, where the doctors fight against both maladies and misinformation.



119th Independence Day Celebration in Calocan, Philippines

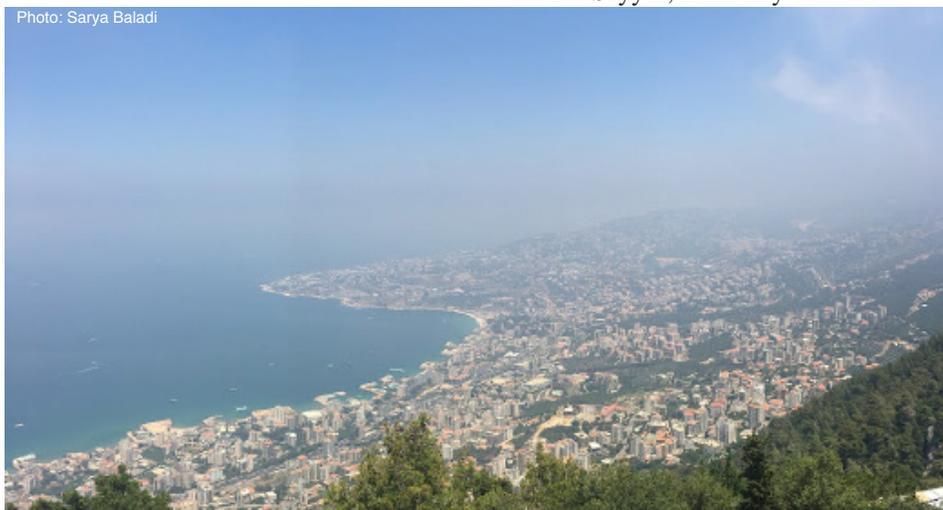
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Many people in Georgia, Elbaz explains, do not go to the hospital until their condition is really extreme, at which point medical treatment becomes more difficult.

Elbaz spoke Georgian at home growing up but he still struggled with reading and writing the language. “I definitely improved a lot,” he said. Particularly in a medical context, there was a lot of new vocabulary. Since Georgia used to be a part of the Soviet Union, many of the doctors there studied medicine both in Georgian and in Russian, using mixed terminology. “They’d explain things to me in Georgian, and then in Russian, and eventually I’d figure it out,” Elbaz said.

Photo: Sarya Baladi



Views of the coast of Beirut, Lebanon

For Shaan Bijwadia, his destination for the summer was Manila, Philippines. The last semester of sophomore year, Shaan Bijwadia joined the photo staff of *The Heights*. Inspired by his experience there, Bijwadia chose to spend 10 weeks interning with the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, the most widely read paper in the country, and also learning Tagalog with a tutor.

Bijwadia’s stay in the Philippines came during a very politically charged time. The one-year anniversary of Rodrigo Duterte’s assumption of the office of the presidency and his State of the Nation address fell amid widespread protests over the declaration of martial law in the southern region of the country following attacks by two IS-affiliated groups, Maute and Abu Sayyaf, in the city of Marawi.



Photo courtesy of: Katie Gold

Anand '19 and Gold '19 in front of the Brandenburg gate

The day before Bijwadia left for Manila, 37 people were killed in the Resorts World Manila attack. While in the Philippines, Bijwadia photographed everything from press conferences to protests to incidences of violence or accidents.

He recalls one day, he went out with the other photographers to cover the scene of a shooting. Two days later, they went back for the wake. Bijwadia remembers playing with one of the man’s kids—the very same one who, just two days before, had carried the bloody mattress his father died on out of his house.

It was a lesson in moral courage in journalism, he said. “You have to do what needs to be done.”

Alumni Spotlight: Chris Wilson-Byrne '07

Photo: Shaan Bijwadia



Chris Wilson-Byrne '07 at the annual Dover Retreat.

By Sarah Samir, CSOM '21

At this year’s Dover retreat, Presidential Scholar Alum, Christopher Wilson-Byrne '07, spoke to the current Scholars and staff. Chris graduated from Boston College with a degree in Chemistry and went on to the Harvard Business School to receive his Masters in Business Administration. He then started his professional career path working in financial services at Goldman Sachs. As a result of Chris’ passion for travel, he moved to London to work at Bain as a consultant where he was able to travel to numerous continents, including South Africa where he lived for a year. He moved back to Wellesley after getting married, but this

fall, perhaps even as this issue goes to press, they will be moving to northern California, where Chris will be joining a startup with a fellow graduate of Harvard Business School.

Chris described how his time at BC shaped him as a person. BC allowed him to form as an intellectual, as he constantly engaged with complex concepts that pushed him to break barriers. Additionally, BC made Chris realize the importance of being a loyal friend, which allowed him to learn how to navigate tough social situations. Lastly, he was able to come out as a gay man because of the supportive and accepting environment BC fostered. He believes that this was arguably the most important part of his formation as a person, as it allowed him to

Class of 2020 Finds Service, Learning, and Camaraderie During their Summer Experience

To fulfill the Jesuit ideal of being men and women in service to others, during the summer following their freshman year the Scholars explore the problems of hunger, homelessness, and educational inequity in the Boston area through participation in a program modeled after PULSE, Boston College's nationally acclaimed course of study and service. Through their work, Presidential Scholars are challenged to see themselves in relation to acute national problems, to think creatively about the roots of these problems, the nature and efficacy of society's response, and the response that these problems elicit in their own personal and professional lives. In parallel with their service, Scholars read and reflect on a variety of texts--from philosophy, social science, public policy, economics and theology--pertinent to issues of poverty and social justice. Weekly discussion sessions challenge Scholars to integrate these readings with their field experiences and to reflect on the implications for their personal values and professional goals.

By Carly Sullivan MCAS '20

During our freshman year of living on upper campus we passed Shaw House daily, we excitedly waited for the day we would move in and begin the Summer PULSE Program. On May 21, we each arrived eager to serve at our placements, expand our perspectives, and explore the city we now call home. In the weeks that followed, we encountered the social injustice that exists within the Greater Boston Area and beyond. Conversations on the T, in the Shaw House lounge, and during Friday morning classes challenged us to consider how we would honor those we met during the month and raise awareness of social injustice within the BC community through our Social Justice Project.

From early morning walks along Dartmouth Street to Haley House, to afternoons spent exploring East Boston after a shift at the Neighborhood Health Center, our Summer Pulse experience allowed



Members of the class of 2020 says goodbye after six weeks together

us to engage with the communities we served. The work we did and the individuals we met will continue to inform our

passions and the lens through which we view the injustices that surround us. We will recall the determination of those we met at Suffolk County House of Corrections working to earn their GEDs. We will remember conversations with individuals calling in to the Project Bread hotline. We will look to the commitment and passion of the volunteers at St. Francis House. In this way, once unfamiliar issues now bear the faces of those with whom we formed friendships during this time.

With this acknowledgment of the humanity at stake in these cases of social injustice also comes the passion to advocate for change. This consideration of the lack of humanity associated with instances of social injustice, called us to focus on human trafficking for our Sophomore Social Justice Project—a crime that stands as a fundamental rejection of human dignity. This crime happens in every state in the US, and even in Chestnut Hill. This sum-



Members of the class of 2020 enjoy time in Cape Cod together

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be comfortable in his own skin.

As for his relationship with the GPSP, Chris was completely captivated by the Program, so much so that he wrote his senior thesis about it. He found that the GPSP genuinely fostered his sense of global leadership through international travel. In addition, the multitude of service projects in which GPSP students partici-

pate reinforced his notion of the common good among domestic and international communities.

Likewise, the Program’s core value of hospitality began to play a significant role in Chris’ life at BC. He and his husband recently adopted a baby girl. Chris stated, “The world is in desperate need of people with good ideas, work ethic, and a strong moral compass.” He

sincerely feels that the experiences the GPSP gives its students allows them to flourish in extraordinary ways.

Most of all, the Gabelli Presidential Scholars Program taught Chris the idea of “fidelity to our partners.” The GPSP is and will continue to be one of his partners for life, as he looks forward to all that is to come within the Program.

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for consumers within the corporation, Sammi left her internship feeling like she had contributed in an important way to the process behind the product at Bloomingdale’s.

Walker Halstad also echoed the theme of meaningful work during his internship experience. An English and Hispanic Studies double major, Walker interned at the Brooklyn District Attorney’s Office in the Department of Criminal Appeals. The DA’s office is responsible for prosecuting all misdemeanors and felonies, so Walker worked in close proximity to attorneys practicing criminal law on behalf of the state. He attended felony trials as a student observer, and wrote motions and briefs responding to appeals on convictions. Walker emphasized the breadth of his internship: the issues he dealt with ranged from trial error to sentencing issues, providing him with a holistic understanding of how the DA’s office and legal system operated.

All of the seniors reiterated the value of their internship experiences for career discernment and understanding of professional fields. At each placement, the Scholars responsibilities extended

beyond the typical internship, as they were completely immersed in the professional experience. All of this made for a won-

derfully instructive and valuable summer experience for the Class of 2018.



Rachel Simon '18 far right, with Congresswoman Katherine Clark (MA), third from right, and fellow interns.

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Students from the class of 2020 hike at Acadia National Park

mer, we realized the proximity of injustices that once seemed distant from 140 Commonwealth Ave.

While we expected and enjoyed a level of unpredictability from our placements, certain aspects of our time in Shaw House remained constant day to day: panicked voices coming from the kitchen

following an unfortunate dinner mishap, visits from gracious facilities workers responding to yet another work order regarding one of Shaw House’s quirks, and debates about which movie we would screen in the lounge. Weekends brought excursions to Cape Cod, brunches in Boston, and a camping trip to Acadia National Park. We found ourselves in the Seaport to witness Sail Boston, at the Boston Opera House to see Wicked, and at Fenway Park to watch the Red Sox beat the Twins. This experience allowed us to see that we belong to a community that extends beyond The Heights.

Welcome GPSP Class of 2021!



Photo: Shaan Bijwadia

Arturo Balaguer
Guaynabo, Puerto Rico

Liam Haffey
Garnet Valley, PA

William Peters
Nashville, TN

Madeline Bald
Birmingham, AL

Jacob Kelleher
Glen Ellyn, IL

Charlie Power
Winnetka, IL

Annamaria Costantini
Houston, TX

Austin Kim
Fullerton, CA

Sara Samir
Merrick, NY

Leah DaCosta
Newark, DE

David Kocen
Rancho Mirage, CA

Harry Shanmugam
Hopkinton, MA

Rachel Duquette
Camas, WA

Jacob McErlean
Towson, MD

Raffi Toghramadjian
St. Paul, MN

Alumni Announcements

Celebrating new Alumni Chapters in Chicago and Washington DC. Be on the lookout for news of Alumni events and gatherings in those cities. As well as the Alumni events that are scheduled in California, Boston, and NYC.

Will Dowd '06 is releasing his first book, a collection of essays titled *Areas of Fog*, which will be published by Etruscan Press in November 2017

Rebecca (Kraus) Izzo '07 and husband Jarret welcomed daughter Cecily Arden Izzo on December 15, 2016

Ana (Mascagni) Archibald '10 and husband John Archibald, (A&S '07) welcomed son Jonah Walter on September 9th.

Colleen Ernst '11 is now a litigation attorney for the US Coast Guard in Washington DC

Elizabeth Fair '12 recently earned her PhD in Clinical Psychology from the University of Southern Mississippi and is starting her post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Alabama at Birmingham Civitan-Sparks Clinics.

Andrew Boyce '16 was awarded a Fitzpatrick Foundation Scholarship by the Fitzpatrick Institute for Photonics at Duke University

Ryan Polischuk '16 completed his Masters in Physics at UC Davis, and is continuing on in the PhD program.

Nathan Schwan '17 was promoted, on his year anniversary, to Staff Technologist at Booz Allen Hamilton



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