

Ex Libris

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Class of 2016 Embraces Social Justice in Nicaragua



Photo Courtesy Of: Claudio Quintana

The Scholars had an opportunity to visit the Statue of Sandino.

By Andrew Boyce, A&S '16

Continuing the emphasis on social justice that began during the Summer Service Learning Program, the PSP Class of 2016 traveled to Managua, Nicaragua over the winter break to participate in a travel seminar on development. Led by PSP Director James

Keenan, S.J. and Suyen Barahona of the Center for Global Education, we met with several organizations that are taking unique approaches to improve the lives of the people of the Nicaraguan people.

After contending with a blizzard that delayed our arrival by a day, we finally landed safely in Managua and were given a tour of some of Managua's iconic sites, such as the Tiscapa Lagoon. The following day, we met with Un Techo Para Mi Pais (TECHO), a youth-led organization that builds temporary housing for

Nicaraguans. We then received an overview of Nicaraguan history and current events from Center for Global Education Director Mark Lester. The following day we met with Rina Díaz of Los Pipitos, an organization that works to better the lives of Nicaraguans with disabilities. Next, we met with PRONICARAGUA, a government agency that promotes foreign investment in the country. We then heard from NicaHope, an organization that offers educational

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programs for communities that work in and around the Managuan city dump. The next day we met with Ana Margarita Vijil and Silvia Nadine Gutiérrez of the Sandinista Renovation Movement (MRS) to discuss the current political situation in Nicaragua. Later that day, we departed for

"I really appreciated my time in Nicaragua because it put my experience with both academics and service in a context of international social justice. Our meetings with the inspiring individuals and organizations in Nicaragua helped to put a personal face on the economic, social, and political struggles that face the country and its people today."- Tate Krasner '16

Grenada, a neighboring city, to meet with Tío Antonio of Café Sonrisas, who employs the disabled in fully-integrated capacities. On the last day of the trip, we had the opportunity to listen to two incredibly inspiring figures; Fernando Cardenal, S.J, who led the highly-successful Nicaraguan literacy campaign, and Maria Teresa Blandon, who founded the feminist movement in Nicaragua.

Fernando Cardenal once wrote, "The crusade is not a story of complicated techniques or complex cost-benefit analysis; it is a story of people and the extraordinary potential for liberation and creation that exists within nations." This concept encapsulates our experience in Nicaragua - we were able to see that change is the product of

"Meeting the inspirational people and organizations of Nicaragua who are fighting against social injustice was both eye-opening and transformative for many us. It crystallized a passion for social justice which will guide us throughout our lives."- Nate Schwan '16

individuals who feel inspired and called. Our trip allowed us to meet several role models for the work each of us plans to do in social justice.



Scholars pose for a photograph above the lake in Managua.

Prospective Scholars Descend on Boston College for the PSP Selection Process

By Jesse Mu, A&S '17

Every year, the Presidential Scholars Program Selection Process (PSPSP)—or, as it was formerly called, “PSP Weekend”—invites students from all over the world to participate in a few days of socializing, interviewing, and learning in an attempt to select some fifteen students to compose next year’s class of Presidential Scholars.

This year was no different: one cold Wednesday, as January rolled into February, 54 travel-worn high school seniors filtered in throughout the day, arriving on Boston College’s doorstep with suitcases in hand. There couldn’t have been a more diverse group: countless academic passions, geographic locations, and unique personalities were represented among the students, but what they all shared was their level of achievement. This year’s candidates were more accomplished than ever, and together they formed a group of individuals that any college would be lucky to have.

For those on the other side of the selection process,

this year’s PSPSP wasn’t simply another iteration of the well-known annual event; rather, it had an air of innovation and change, as the program opted to shorten the length of the event by one day and incorporate a new activity known as the “group discussion,” among other changes.

The PSP Selection Process officially started Wednesday evening after hosts were matched with their prospective students and introduced over dinner. After a brief pause to catch their breath and store their bags, prospective Scholars headed to Lawrence house for desserts, socializing, and the famous bingo icebreaker.

Prospective Scholars woke up bright and early the next morning for the start of their activities. Between information sessions, interviews, and seminars, the prospective Scholars took time to enjoy lunch, visit a class, or attend the Panel on Undergraduate Research Opportunities.

Among all of the hustle and bustle, it was difficult to take a break, but prospective Scholars

found an opportunity to during the formal PSP Welcome dinner with delicious food and accomplished guest speaker Pat Grady, PSP’04. This took on a “fireside chat” format where Maggie Scollan, PSP’14 interviewed Mr. Grady in front of the crowd. This conversation was a compelling and satisfying end to the dinner. During this time, prospective Scholars were given the chance to mingle with current Presidential Scholars, alumni, and professors.

After the dinner, prospective Scholars were given time to relax, whether by watching a movie, playing basketball at the Plex, or experiencing BC nirvana at late night, all in preparation for the equally busy Friday.

Luckily, after more events such as the group discussions, more expository activities, and an “off-the-record” lunch where prospective Scholars were given a chance to talk frankly to current Scholars, they were appropriately awarded Friday night with a dinner

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Photo Courtesy of: Marissa Marandola

Prospective Scholars gather for a photo after the formal dinner.

Boston Strong: Examining the Rallying of a Community and its Role in Social Justice

By Mackenzie Arnold, A&S'17

This fall amidst midterms and the Red Sox's World Series run, the Presidential Scholars took a moment to sit down and reflect upon the tragedy that occurred just over six months earlier at the Boston Marathon and what had transpired in the months to follow. Led by the Class of 2016, this discussion kicked off what is to be several months of interviews and conversations highlighting the social justice issues present in Boston through the lens of the Boston Marathon and the Boston Strong movement. Collaborating with community members, runners, service leaders, professors, and other students the class hopes to compile the compelling narratives of this community into a publication set to be released for distribution at this year's marathon.

Providing a glimpse into just what this publication might be, sophomores Dan Lundberg, Catherine Larrabee, and Tate Krasner moderated a panel discussion open to the student body on October 28, 2013. The topic of the discussion: "Boston Strong" what this phrase means to the community and its role in social justice then, now, and in the future.

One member of this diverse panel was John Tlumacki, a photographer for the Boston Globe who had photographed the marathon for nearly twenty years before experiencing the bombing first hand. Standing at the finish line at the time of the attack, Tlumacki took a photographic account of the immediate aftermath of the



Lucas Allen'16 and Catherine Larrabee'16, getting the word out about the event on campus.

bombing. After publishing his photographs in numerous papers, Tlumacki developed personal connections with several victims as he continued to document the lives of families in the months that followed.

Another panelist, Dave Fortier was a first time runner of the marathon in 2013. After hearing that a close colleague of his had been diagnosed with cancer, Fortier joined the Dana Farber marathon team to raise money for cancer treatment and research. Fortier was making his final push for the finish line when the first explosion occurred, taking away part of his hearing and sending a piece of shrapnel into his right foot. As Fortier recovered, he witnessed the unity not only of the Boston community but of Americans outside of the area as he received well wishes from across the country.

Panelist Dr. Aspen Brinton wasn't in Boston when the bombing occurred. In Philadelphia she listened in shock as she heard news of the bombing in the very city where she had just been offered a job as a professor at Boston College. Upon joining the Boston community, Brinton began to draw parallels between her own research on the dynamics of civil society movements and the response of the Boston community to the marathon and the "Boston Strong" movement.

Dave Wedge, a reporter for the Boston Herald, also joined the panel. Wedge, a former student at Boston College, had his first experience with the marathon when he was only in high school, joining his older sister and the rest of the Boston College community on heartbreak hill. Wedge's first experience covering national

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tragedy came as he spent more than two weeks in New York City following the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center. Wedge recalled witnessing the initial unity of New York and the solidarity that blossomed immediately following this tragedy. Wedge also remembered seeing all of this quickly fade away. Replaced by animosity toward other racial groups and even tension between police officers and firefighters, the initial strength of the community was distorted into a harsh and unforgiving strength. In Boston in 2013, Wedge covered the marathon and tense days that followed watching closely how the strength of our city developed.

Finally, Kathe McKenna, a valued community leader, who has been involved with the Presidential Scholar's Summer Service Learning Program, also provided her personal perspective on the Boston Strong movement and its ties with social justice issues. McKenna lives just blocks away from the marathon finish line, and as the Executive Director of Haley House, the Boston based non-profit, she had her own ties to the Marathon. It was through the efforts of Father David Gill, a Jesuit who ran the marathon 34 years ago to raise money for a rooming house, that Haley House's successful history of service began. Now helping formerly imprisoned men and women transition as they rejoin civil society, Haley House and McKenna are addressing some of the social justice issues so persistent in Boston. With this experience, she addressed some of the pushback the "Boston Strong" movement has received for ignoring the larger and more persistent issues that still go unaddressed in the city. With an apprehension about how

some define Boston's strength, McKenna directed the focus back to what could be done to help both the victims of the Boston Marathon bombings and the community as a whole.

Echoing this sentiment, the panel discussed the importance of fostering an environment where the strength of our city is not defined by fighting back or "getting the bad guys." Instead, they hope that our strength will be defined as one that will bring our community together and unite our efforts to serve our entire community, those effected by the events at the marathon and those effected by the social justice issues they confronted when they returned home. While each had their own perception of the idea of "Boston Strong", what all agreed on was that this strength did not just arise six months ago. It has always been here. Among family, among friends, among all of the members of our great city we find strength. It's in times like these when we reflect on something tragic that we realize how truly strong we are in the support we give to each other.

We also realize that we don't always use this strength like we should, and there is a lot more we can do to help confront the social justice issues of our community. We realize that we have a responsibility not only to unite in moments of tragedy, but in everyday life, because that is what will truly make Boston strong.

Thanks to the effort and dedication of the Class of 2016, we will continue to reflect on all of this in the coming year and we look forward to their continued work and publication that will provide even more insight into what makes Boston strong.



The Class of 2016 pose for a photo with the panelists.

First Foray Into Networking

By David Makransky A&S'17

"Networking" is a favorite term of the Presidential Scholars Program. The opportunities afforded to Scholars are numerous, but through networking Scholars can most easily apply their educations to life beyond college. In the Murray Function room on December 3rd, current Scholars were given an opportunity to begin forming connections with some of the Program's most valuable resources: former PSP alumni.

The evening began with introductions of ten PSP Alumni, each of whom then described themselves. Rebecca (Kraus) Izzo '07, Tim Mooney '09, Kyle Marra '12, Ana (Mascagni) Archibald '10, Nicole Estvanik Taylor '01, Kevin Morris '13, Ben Martin '13, Ola Jachtorowicz

'13, Andrew Logan '05, and Sam Sawyer '00, each spoke about their general interests and post-college occupations. Jobs ranged from Taylor's former position as Managing Editor for American Theatre Magazine to Marra's as Clinical Research Assistant in the Retina Service Center at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, with several post-graduate degrees sprinkled into the mix.

As the evening progressed, current and former Scholars began to mingle. Alumni offered gems of advice and forged connections with undergraduates. For many Scholars who were new to networking, the process was surprisingly simple and genuine. "It didn't feel like 'networking' as this technical term, it was just talking to someone," said Jesse Mu, A&S '17, after speaking to Andrew Logan. Logan, like Mu,

was a Computer Science major, and is now the Lead Principal System Software Engineer at Akamai Technologies, Inc. "It was a learning experience for me, to see how someone had exited the fantasy land of college into the real world."

After exchanging business cards and happy conversations, the Scholars and alumni went their separate ways. For some, it was one of many ways to learn about post-graduate opportunities, but for many others it was a chance to see the power and simplicity of networking. Moving forward, every Scholar is more prepared for the exciting ventures that await them after Boston College.



David DePalma'14, Andrew Logan'05, Kyle Marra'12 and Liza Magill'17.



Ola Jachtorowicz'13, Alicia McKean'15, Ana (Mascagni) Archibald'10 and Nate Schwan'16.

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at UNO's

Chicago Grill and "Working", a musical performed by the Lyric Stage Company of Boston, to which responses were overwhelmingly positive. The day ended with an ice cream social in Gasson Hall.

As the program ended with a morning brunch and a dash to catch the airport bus, there was clearly something other than the competition for the Scholarship on everyone's minds. Rather, it was the bittersweet realization that this busy but exciting time was coming to an end. Although the ultimate purpose of the program was the discovery of Boston College and the selection process for the Presidential Scholarship, by seeing the ways the prospective Scholars bonded—whether by their dynamic conversations and "Never Have I Ever" during the ice cream social or the huge group picture



Maggie Scollan '14 chats with PSP alumnus Pat Grady '04 at the formal dinner.

taken at the formal dinner—it was clear that above all, everyone involved with the program enjoyed themselves, met incredible people, made lasting friendships, and were disappointed to go—all hallmarks of a wonderfully successful PSPSP.

Alumni Announcements

Liz Baker, PSP'02, and her husband welcomed their daughter, Tessa Katherine Baker on January 3, 2014.

Megan (Rulison) Scudellari, PSP'06, received the Evert Clark/Seth Payne Award from the National Press Foundation, a prize given to the top young science writer annually for outstanding reporting and writing. She also recently moved back to Boston. Additionally, Megan and her husband welcomed their second child, Patrick, born December 5, 2013.

Angie (Brewster) Benson, PSP'08, is now an Assistant Marketing Director for the Air Force, conducting research about military morale.

Chris Scullin, PSP'10, left his position at Bain Capital in the fall and is now at Harvard Business School, Class of 2016.

The PSP would like to announce the New York City Chapter of the Boston College Presidential Scholar Alumni. The Chapter's organizing committee, co-chaired by Amanda Heron Parsons '97 and Jose Perez '11, includes PSP alumni Turner Buford '99, Mikaela Boyd '02, Kerry Brennan '07, and Sam Dolinger '08. The organizing committee is busy planning a variety of events in the coming months. Be sure to check your e-mail for updates from the committee.

Ambassador Burns Encourages Scholars to Consider Service and Globalization

By Marissa Marandola, A&S'16

On November 19, 2013, former ambassador Nicholas Burns, BC'78, addressed members of the Presidential Scholars Program. Burns, currently a professor of the practice of diplomacy and international politics and the Director of the Future of Diplomacy Project at the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, worked as a career Foreign Service Officer for the United States government for 27 years. He served as the Director for Soviet Affairs for President George HW Bush, acted as a Special Assistant to President Bill Clinton, and worked on the National Security Council as Senior Director for Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia Affairs from 1990-1995. Additionally, Burns represented his country as Ambassador to Greece from 1997-2001 and Ambassador to NATO from 2001-2005.

Drawing on his decades of vast experience, Burns chose to focus his remarks to the Scholars on three areas: public service, President John F. Kennedy's legacy (given the proximity of the anniversary of his assassination to Burns' presentation), and the future of America and young Americans in an increasingly globalized world. Burns remarked that his views on public service were heavily shaped by the Ignatian values he experienced as a Boston College student. He called upon Scholars to "commit to something bigger" than themselves, a call more necessary for this generation than in the past. Burns told his audience, "your fates are linked for the rest of your lives with seven billion other people," so

that it is in young people's interest to do something about global problems, but, more importantly, that showing concern for others through public service is "the right thing to do".

Ambassador Burns' regard for President Kennedy owes much to the president's emphasis on public service. Burns identified Kennedy's assassination as the 9/11 moment for his generation, and said that he believed his generation responded to Kennedy's conviction that public service is the most noble use of one's life. The ambassador referred to Kennedy's speech at American University, "A Strategy for Peace," as a model for American involvement in foreign affairs today. In the speech, Kennedy rejected the premise of demonizing American adversaries, at the time, a reference to the Soviet Union. Burns claimed that "[members of the American government] have demonized the Iranian people," a technique that will likely have far-reaching consequences for the United States in the future.

Burns concluded his presentation with thoughts on globalization and the world young Americans will confront during their lifetimes. He offered a two-pronged evaluation for Scholars to consider. First, Burns encouraged Scholars to consider what aspects of the human condition should concern them. He suggested the global economy, climate change, American opponents such as Iran and North Korea, and the ongoing changes in the Arab World as problematic themes for young Americans. Burns encouraged Scholars to become



Photo Courtesy of: Harvard University

Ambassador Burns

involved in these issues, saying "we need young women, young men to decide they're going to do something" to improve these troubling circumstances. Next, he reminded Scholars that, despite areas of concern, "the human condition is not at stake." Burns pointed to improvements in global public health and poverty and the relative peace of the 21st Century compared to the 20th Century as indications of the hopeful world in which current Scholars will mature.

Ambassador Burns provided numerous subjects of thought for the Presidential Scholars. Most importantly, he reminded Scholars of the responsibilities their talents and their Boston College education place on them, particularly regarding public service. Burns' presentation offered Scholars a model of how to apply the concepts of service and justice they learn during their time at BC to a career and contributions to society.

NICARAGUA



Photo: Vivian Chang



Photo: Vivian Chang

Dan Lundberg'16, Andrew Boyce'16 & Tate Krasner'16 at the Sandino Monument.



Photo Courtesy Of: Vivian Chang

Left: Vivian Chang'16 & Claudio Quintana'16 enjoy a Nicaraguan meal.
Above: The Class of 2016 pose for a photo below the Sandino Monument.



Photo: Tony Gallanis

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