

Ex Libris

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GABELLI PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM, BOSTON COLLEGE

Volume XXIII, Issue 2

Winter 2019

Class of 2022 Takes in the Sites of Rome, Italy



Photo: Jennie Thomas

By Will Riherd '22

On Saturday, March 2nd, the GPSP class of 2022 arrived in Rome. Alongside Professor Bailey and Jennie Thomas, the group was greeted by Father Keenan, S.J., who is teaching a semester at the Gregorian University. After being reunited with Fr. Keenan, the Scholars arrived at their home for the week, the Santa Lucia Filippini. A renovated 17th-century

convent and school, the Santa Lucia Filippini is ideally situated in the heart of Rome and is only a five minute walk from the Pantheon, the Piazza Navonna, as well as the site of Julius Caesar's murder. After conversing with Roman nuns in the convent, Fr. Keenan led a walking tour to the Piazza Navonna where the group witnessed the famous Bernini Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi. For the majority of the Scholars, this was their first ever close-up view of one of Bernini's works. Leaving the plaza, they entered "the mother church of the Jesuits," the Gesu, one of the most memorable sites of the week. Timing it perfectly, Fr. Keenan ensured the group arrived precisely at 5:30

P.M. to witness the daily unveiling of the luminous, silver altar of Saint Ignatius. The unveiling of the altar rivaled the remarkable sunset atop the Piazza del Campidoglio the group enjoyed later that night. Capping off the day, the Scholars enjoyed their first Italian meal—a family-style array of pizzas and pastas at Er Faciolaro.

After an exciting introduction to Rome, Fr. Keenan led the Scholars to a lesser known artifact of the city—the rooms of St. Ignatius. From there, they made their way to the Church of Saint Ignatius, known for its false cupola, which is only noticeable when standing directly below. After a

Con't on page 2

Inside...

GPSP Alumni Spotlight.....p.5

2019 SSJP.....p.6

Class of 2021 Costa Rica...p.7

Italy con't from page 1

walk to the top of the Bellarmino, Fr. Keenan's Roman residence, the Scholars enjoyed an expansive view of the city from the palace's rooftop terrace, which confirmed the flat roof of the Church of St. Ignatius. Afterward, the group had freedom to roam the city for the rest of day.

The next day, the group reconvened and traveled to Vatican City to enter St. Peter's Basilica, a long-anticipated moment. Outside of the Basilica, Fr. Keenan pointed the Scholars' attention to one of the most subtle yet extraordinary aspects of St. Peter's square: stopping at a small, hardly noticeable black and white marker, the class one-by-one observed Bernini's famous illusion in which most of the pillars in the square seem to disappear.

Returning early to Vatican City the next day, the Scholars visited the Vatican Museum, enjoyed the arts of the Sistine Chapel, and scaled St Peter's dome. Afterwards, they met with a leader of the San Egidio community—a worldwide movement of lay people committed to solidarity and the reduction of poverty. For the Scholars, the meeting echoed the Jesuit call to be “men and women for others,” sparking conversation about their upcoming volunteer plans for the summer PULSE Program. Continuing the conversation at dinner, the Scholars enjoyed a meal at Fr. Keenan's favorite Roman restaurant, Casa Bleve; amidst its spectacular setting and creative dishes, the restaurant earned a ten out of ten on Fr. Keenan's rating scale.

The cultural excursion continued with a memorable trip to



Con't on page 3



the Basilica San Clemente—a three-tiered complex of buildings. A villa, church, and basilica, each built on top of the other, beginning with a 1st century Roman Villa, an early 4th century Christian church above, and then a 12th century basilica on ground level. As the Scholars

descended through the structural timeline, they were amazed by the ability to transcend centuries in the matter of minutes. Later in the afternoon, after time on their own to explore the Colosseum and Roman Forum, the Scholars went to the Gregorian University, passed the Quirinale Palace, and visited the San Andrea al Quirinale—an intimate, oval-shaped Bernini church that highlights Baroque architecture.

For their last day, the Scholars spent the afternoon at the Borghese museum. There they listened to Fr. Keenan’s description of Caravaggio’s use of realism and light in his *Madonna dei Palafrenieri*. The Scholars then made a stop at the Ara Pacis Augustae—an altar to Pax, the Roman Goddess of Peace. Echoing the words of the San Egidio community, the altar would ingrain a connection between the Scholars and Rome, one that would forever manifest itself in their efforts toward peace, solidarity, and common humanity in the future.

With excitement, the Scholars enjoyed their final taste of Italy at L’Arcano restaurant, before completing the trip with a slow walk past the brightly lit Pantheon. For five days, Rome served as the backdrop for the Scholars’ first international excursion as a class—a long anticipated and exciting opportunity for many to visit Europe for the first time.

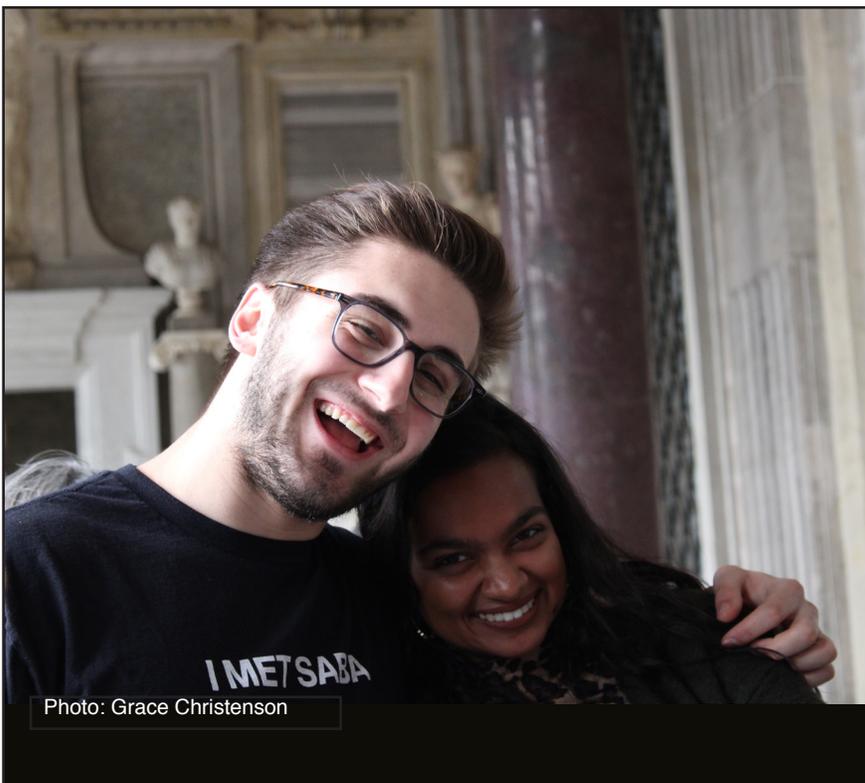


Photo: Grace Christenson



Photo: Grace Christenson

GPSP Selection Process Week

By Jakob Weiss '22

Braving polar vortex temperatures, a talented cohort of 46 high school seniors traveled from around the world to the Heights on Wednesday, January 30, marking the beginning of the 2019 Gabelli Presidential Scholars Program Selection Process (GPSPSP). Over the course of their three-night stay at BC, the finalists followed demanding schedules complete with presentations, interviews, seminars, panels, handshakes, and much more.

As prospies arrived on the morning and afternoon of Wednesday, January 30, they were greeted in the admissions office in Devlin Hall by a handful of current Scholars. A few Scholars took prospies who had arrived early to lunch at McElroy before entrusting them to Luke Murphy '20 and Trevor Jones '20 for an engaging tour of the campus. Wednesday evening's highlights were the famous pizza dinner in the admissions office, at which prospies could meet their hosts and each other, and the even more famous open house dessert social, also held in the admissions office, much to everyone's delight. As always there were ice breaker games and questions, orchestrated by the aforementioned duo of tour guides.

Thursday began with a presentation about the Program by co-director Prof. Bailey. The rest of the day's schedule was individualized for each prospective Scholar, with a mix of faculty and admissions interviews, group conversations, and seminars designed to offer valuable perspectives on her or his personal



Seniors enjoy their last GPSPSP Welcome Dinner.

qualities and suitability for the Program. Some prospies also attended classes with Scholars in their free time. The day ended with the traditional dinner which featured GPSP alumnus Bill Clerico '07 as the speaker. Scholars stated his speech inspired them to reflect on their experiences.

Friday saw the completion of interviews, group conversations, and seminars. The Student Perspectives Panel provided insight into the impact of student involvement at BC. In the early evening, the prospies departed for Boston with some Scholars, relieved at having completed their demanding schedule. The group's first stop this year was to a new venue, Lucky Strikes, a relaxed and spacious restaurant where a buffet dinner was served among pool tables and dart boards. The group then continued on to Boston Opera House, where they saw a showing of *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*. Upon returning to BC, the prospies joined current Scholars in Gasson Hall for ice cream and an engaging

trivia competition.

On Saturday morning, the prospies reconvened one final time in the Yawkey Center for the closing brunch. Prof. Bailey and Jennie Thomas gave thanks to the attendees and to the Scholars, commending them on a successful few days. The prospies departed for home, filled with impressions of BC and GPSP.

Despite some changes from past iterations of the GPSPSP, the 2019 Selection Process was a resounding success, thanks to the hard work and leadership of Prof. Bailey, Jennie Thomas, Sarah Gregorian and their partners in the office of Undergraduate Admissions, Grant Gosselin, and Sue Migliorisi. As in every year, the current Scholars, as well as Program staff and BC faculty, enjoyed meeting potential members of the next cohort of Scholars. The prospies, in turn, enjoyed the Program's hospitality and the chance to become acquainted with the GPSP.

Alumni Spotlight, GPSP Selection Week Dinner: Bill Clerico '07



Photo: Shaan Bijwadia

By Gabriela Probstko '22

On January 31, prospective students, current Scholars, faculty, staff, and alumni came together for the annual GPSP Selection Process welcome dinner featuring GPSP alumnus Bill Clerico '07. Speaking only briefly of the company he founded, WePay, with his fellow P-Scholar Rich Aberman, Clerico promised “not to bore” the crowd with talk of integrated payment processing. Instead, Clerico focused on Boston College and the GPSP, specifically what the two meant to him. He opened up with a nostalgic story of arriving at his own prospic weekend, sixteen years ago, and sitting down in Logan Airport next to someone he did not know at the time, but who would eventually become his college roommate, business partner, and co-founder in WePay. Elaborating on this later on in his speech, he drove home the idea that the people he met here at BC became the most important people to him later on in his life.

He described meeting and making friends with a diverse group of people for the first time here, and how they became his life-long friends, adding that he was going skiing with his college friends soon. Perhaps the most important person BC gave him, he noted, was his wife, whom he met at their five-year class reunion. He urged the prospective students to look around, noting that he would bet that the people they met within the past 24 hours would go on to shape their lives in a “really meaningful way.”

Clerico also focused on the ways in which the experiences he had at BC impacted him as an individual and in terms of the communities he belonged to. He also claimed his experiences set him up for success later on; he mused they were the “perfect set of experiences to take [him] to where [he is] today,” but at the time they were all about experimenting and meeting new people.

He shared a brief story

of experiencing failure for the first time in Professor Bailey’s Fundamental Concepts of Politics class. Reflecting on his easy success in high school, and the stark contrast to what he encountered in this class, he shared that received the lowest grade in his “entire life” from Professor Bailey: a D on the midterm, before managing to bring it up to a C+ in the class. For Clerico, Professor Bailey’s class became a humbling experience, ingraining in him a sense of perseverance and hard work.

Clerico went on to elaborate about his extracurricular activities during his college years, such as his experience with the BC chapter of the American Red Cross, where he learned about leadership, persuasion, and motivating others, as well as his experience as Baldwin the Eagle, which taught him how to entertain people and make them laugh. He cited both of these skill sets as incredibly valuable to a CEO, even though he may not have realized it at the time. He noted that even further, BC taught him how to be a good business leader in teaching him ethics and to how approach ethical problems. Overall, he reflected upon the lessons he learned at BC and how they still influence him.

Clerico closed his speech with a bit of advice. He urged everyone to think of college as an investment of time, money, thought, and energy; he encouraged everyone to look at that time through the lens of finding a place to help you become the person you want to be and a community you want to be a part of.

SSJP 2021: The Geography of Opportunity

By Aroub Yousuf '22

A recurring motif within the GPSP is a focus on social justice, with the Sophomore Social Justice Project serving as a culmination of the mission, as its purpose is to facilitate us on the journey towards becoming men and women for others. The sophomore class has the task and privilege of putting their minds together to identify and raise awareness of a social injustice that they believe is prevalent in society today. After reflecting upon the

inequalities that they witnessed during their summer placements, the Class of '21 decided to focus on how where one lives impacts one's opportunities, specifically access to education, affordable housing, and transportation.

At the Dover Retreat back in August, the sophomores gave a presentation to the rest of the Scholars about their proposed plan and took suggestions from many of the upperclassmen and freshmen alike. Their ultimate goal was to inform the Boston College

community about the obstacle at hand so that individuals would be more inclined to address it. The Class of '21 saw their work come to fruition with the Geography of Opportunity Panel that hosted some of the most knowledgeable individuals within the fields of housing, transportation, and urban planning, specifically with the Greater Boston Area.

On Tuesday, October 30 at 7:00 p.m., many students and faculty gathered in Gasson Hall, to hear a discussion on the issue. The panelists were Angela Johnson, Transportation Justice Organizer at Transportation for MA, Barry Bluestone, the Founding Director of the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy, and Dominique Williams, the Deputy Director of the Office of Housing Stability for the City of Boston. The discussion was moderated by Amy Glasmeier, the Professor of Economic Geography and Regional Planning at the MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning. The panelists started by introducing themselves and continued to provide insight on the root of the issue of the geography of opportunity, later proposing ideas for ways in which we can be more aware of the problem at a grassroots level.

The discussion began with Dr. Glasmeier refuting a claim made by previous generations that hard work will inevitably manifest itself in success. She highlighted the deficits within this statement, beginning with the lack of equal opportunity of many Americans that is rooted in their place of residence. Dominique Williams corroborated

THE GABELLI PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS CLASS OF 2021 PRESENT

THE GEOGRAPHY OF OPPORTUNITY

A SOCIAL JUSTICE PANEL EXPLORING PUBLIC POLICY & ACTIVISM

MODERATED BY AMY GLASMEIER
PROFESSOR OF ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY & REGIONAL PLANNING
@ MIT DEPARTMENT OF URBAN STUDIES & PLANNING

WITH SPEAKERS

BARRY BLUESTONE
FOUNDING DIRECTOR
@ DUKAKIS CENTER URBAN & REGIONAL POLICY

DOMONIQUE WILLIAMS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
@ OFFICE OF HOUSING STABILITY, CITY OF BOSTON

ANGELA JOHNSON
TRANSPORTATION JUSTICE ORGANIZER
@ TRANSPORTATION FOR MA

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30
GASSON 100 | 7:00 - 8:00 PM

Sponsored by UGBC, 4Boston, History Department, Theology Department, and Faith, Peace, & Justice Department
QUESTIONS? CONTACT COSTANAG@BC.EDU

Sophomore Class Explores Development in San Jose, Costa Rica



By Raffi Toghramadjian '21

During the final week of winter break the Class of 2021, along with co-directors Professor Bailey and Fr. Keenan, traveled to Costa Rica to learn about the country's history and development. While sophomore classes have traditionally visited Nicaragua, the current crisis precipitated by President Daniel Ortega's violent response to protests against his Sandinista government forced this year's trip to be relocated to Costa Rica. In contrast to Nicaragua, Costa Rica has long stood out as an example of successful development in a region historically marked by high levels of social and political unrest. While maintaining the Program's relationship to Nicaragua to the extent possible under the circumstances, the sophomore class also had the opportunity to forge connections in a new country.

After touching down in San Jose on Sunday, the Scholars

met Elisa Vanegas, their tour guide from the Center for Global Education, and traveled to the hotel to settle in and prepare for the week ahead. The next morning began with a presentation by José Rojas, who spoke about the history of Costa Rican politics and his role in founding *Coalición Costa Rica*—a citizens' group that mobilizes voters while also lobbying to support policies that better reflected the views of its members. The sophomores then met Professor Carmen Hutchison, who discussed the history of race in Costa Rica as well as her personal experiences as a Black woman living in Costa Rica. After a break for lunch, the Scholars got their first taste of San Jose on a tour of the downtown area—including the splendid National Theater and its historic market—guided by historian Noelia Fernandez.

Tuesday opened with a trip to the National University of Costa Rica, where the Scholars

met Professor Cynthia Mora, who spoke about immigration, emphasizing Costa Rica's welcoming attitude toward immigrants and migrants attempting to travel through the country on their way to the United States. The Scholars then traveled to the *Universidad Bíblica Latinoamericana*, where they met with representatives from a women's network, who discussed the progress they had made in connecting women with resources need to promote entrepreneurship and sustainable development. Tuesday ended on a more somber note, with presentations about the Nicaraguan crisis by Elisa, and Nicaraguan Luis Elena Estrada, who was forced to flee to Costa Rica. Through these two talks the sophomores learned about the extreme challenges facing Nicaragua.

The next day focused on Costa Rica's economic development, as the sophomores

Costa Rica con't from page 7

met with a representative from the Costa Rican Investment Promotion Agency (CINDE), a non-governmental organization that helps encourage international companies to invest in Costa Rica. After learning about the macroeconomic side to Costa Rica's economic success, the class traveled to Cartago, Costa Rica's former capital, to learn about efforts to encourage economic development on a local scale.

Following a brief tour of the city center and lunch, the students met with Grameen, a microfinance organization that offers loans to female entrepreneurs. The sophomores received an overview of Grameen's work and then spoke with three women who have started and grown their own businesses with Grameen's support. The day offered the Scholars the chance to see two very different approaches to development and to reflect on the complementary roles they play.

Thursday started with a presentation delivered by Johnny Rosales on Costa Rica's immense biodiversity and the challenges its wildlife faces as the country continues to develop. Johnny then accompanied the sophomores to Prusia National Park, where the students saw the nature of Costa Rica first hand, although without their guide, who had generously stayed behind to help replace a flat tire on the bus. After returning to San Jose, the Class of 2021 met with Dr. Alejandro Madrigal, who offered insight into Costa Rica's health system and discussed the challenges within—many of which were very similar to the challenges of America's health care system. The sophomores finished the day at the University of Costa Rica, where they met with a group of students who shared stories of campus life



and showed them around.

On Friday, the class traveled to Doka Coffee Estate, where they learned about the history and process of coffee production in Costa Rica, which, until recently, was the country's most important export. Along with the educational aspect of the visit, the sophomores enjoyed both the coffee they sampled, as well as the stunning views of the mountains surrounding the coffee plantation. After returning to the hotel for a relaxing afternoon, the sophomores had dinner with artists—both Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans—who discussed their art and experiences. The class was struck by the story of Gabriel Benavente, a Nicaraguan artist whose art became a powerful symbol of protest against the Ortega government.

On the last full day of the trip, the sophomores visited La Carpio, a poor neighborhood comprised mostly of immigrants located next to the San Jose dump, where they heard from Bethel Meza and her family who invited them into their home and took them on a tour of the area. While they learned about the many challenges the community faces, the sophomores were also inspired by the positive developments the neighborhood has experienced

in recent years. On the tour, the sophomores saw the beautiful architecture and the maker-space, complete with 3D-Printers, of the newly built SIFAIS, a school that offers free classes in a wide variety of subjects to people of all ages. Along with the recently built primary school, SIFAIS embodied the community's hope that they can improve the future for their children even as they struggle to overcome the challenges they face today.

On Sunday, the Class of 2021 returned to Boston. Over the course of their visit, the sophomores learned about Costa Rica's history and culture, and perhaps more importantly, created lasting relationships with the people they met. Throughout the entire trip, the students were amazed by the hospitality extended to them, especially by Alvaro Fernández, the owner of the hotel's restaurant, along with the many others who warmly welcomed them into their businesses, homes, and communities. The trip also gave the sophomores the unique opportunity to examine Costa Rica's development and the many different areas that contribute to the country's success. While the trip may have only been a week, the Class of 2021 is sure to remember it for the rest of their lives.

Alumni Announcements

Lynne Santoro Sullivan '95 was named regional executive editor for The Standard-Times/SouthCoast Media Group of New Bedford, The Enterprise of Brockton, The Herald News of Fall River and the Taunton Daily Gazette

Erin Frey Pearson '99 completed her MPH from the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health in Chapel Hill this past December (2018), and is now working as a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow at the North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine in Raleigh

Ari Daniel Shapiro '01 and his wife welcomed their second child, son Raja, in October (2018)

Hannah Nolan-Spohn '05 was awarded the 2019 Debby Jannotta and Shirley Jaffee CFE Teacher of the Year Award in February, by the Chicago Foundation for Education

Caroline Beimford '10 got married in June (2018) to a fellow BC 2010 alum, Josh Idaszak (with a sizeable PSP alum contingent in attendance), and in September she started as a lecturer of writing at MIT

Joe Zabinski '10 joined OM1, a health analytics startup in Boston, as Director of Data Solutions

Colleen Maher Ernst '11 started a new job as Deputy General Counsel to Governor Ron DeSantis in January and is living in Tallahassee

Elizabeth Fair '12 received her license to practice as a clinical psychologist in December (2018)

SSJP con't from page 6

this statement by asserting that in her own experience, her ability to have received an education in an area that was different than where her home was allowed her to academically flourish, as she proceeded to earn an undergraduate degree and attend law school. She said that the fact that her success was contingent upon the location of her school was inherently unfair to the students who did not receive the opportunity to attend well-funded schools. The moderator went on to show the audience a graph that displayed the tremendous disparity of distribution of monetary resources to various public school districts, and how it directly connects to the wealth of the area in which the school operates. For example, the Newton public schools, where

Williams attended, received a significantly greater amount of funding than the Roxbury public schools, where she lived.

Barry Bluestone was next to speak, and he touched upon the geographic inequities within Detroit. Once a flourishing city, it now consists of homes that have depreciated significantly in value. The Black population lives mainly in the city while the white population primarily migrated to the tranquility of suburbs. Again, this segregation is intrinsically related to education, with suburban schools receiving better funding than city schools due to the higher property taxes of the outskirts.

Lastly, Johnson spoke about how she was drawn to Boston from Texas because of the opportunities and city life,

only to find that Boston is one of the least equal cities in America. There are blatant disparities within the quality and accessibility of the public transportation system, which motivated her to eventually become a professional in this field.

All of the speakers offered some advice to the audience who were now inspired to put an end to this injustice including voting for candidates on the local level who have a genuine interest and drive to ameliorate these inequities. Many of the students left the discussion feeling an intense motivation to take action. Overall, the event was a great success, leaving a large group of individuals with a more holistic perspective on the sources of inequality within our nation.



PSP Alumni:

**Join our PSP Facebook
and LinkedIn Groups!**



122 College Road·Chestnut Hill, MA 02467

GABELLI PRESIDENTIAL
SCHOLARS PROGRAM

