

# Ex Libris

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GABELLI PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM, BOSTON COLLEGE

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## Italy Spring Break: Bigoli, Tortellini, e Padre Gesuiti



Photo: courtesy of Meg Loughman

**By Andrew Constantine '19**

For some freshman Scholars, Italy was the first trip they had taken overseas. For others, Italy was the first trip to a foreign language culture. But for all, it was a life-changing experience filled with incredible memories and takeaways. The Class of 2019 was thrilled to meet recent graduate Daniel Cattolica, who traveled up from his Fulbright

teaching position in Fasano to join the trip for a few days. Not only was it great to hear about Dan's experiences both during and after Boston College, but also, he helped to bridge the language barrier and ensuring that no one praised someone as their "bone marrow" rather than their "hero." It is impossible to capture every facet of the Italy trip; however, here is a brief summary of each day.

### Saturday

At 5 P.M., after futilely attempting to sleep, watching movie after movie, and forming new friendships (the Swiss Air flight attendants proved to be incredibly

charming), the Class of 2019, Father Keenan, and Jennie arrived in Padua, Italy. Spring break began with a delicious dinner at the Trattoria da Paccagnella where the funghi risotto stole the show. After a filling meal, everyone retreated to the Casa del Pellegrino for a much needed night's sleep.

### Sunday

To begin the day, the group attended morning mass in the beautiful Basilica of Saint Anthony, located right across the street from the hotel. Nothing could compare to the stunning architecture of the Basilica; there was something truly special about attending

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L-R: Ellie Warner-Rousseau, Sarya Baladi, Sydney Apple, Josh Elbaz, Sageene Francis, Becky Reilly and Katie Gold waiting to go into the Scrovegni Chapel in Padova, Italy

Photo: Shaan Bijwadia



Photo: Meg Loughman

Katie Gold and a scenic vista of Padua, Italy



Photo: Shaan Bijwadia

Daniel Cattolica '15 and Josh Elbaz in Padova, Italy



Ellie Warner-Rousseau and Sydney Apple in the Coffele Vineyard, Soave, Italy

Photo: Shaan Bijwadia



### *Italy con't from page 1*

mass in a sacred structure that was constructed so long ago. From there we had the opportunity to see the Scrovegni Chapel, a masterpiece in the history of painting in Italy and Europe in the 14th century. Following this, the crew split up to explore the city -- including the Pratto della Valle to the Saint Giustina (the 11th largest basilica in the world). Finally, the group enjoyed another wonderful meal in the Trattoria del Prato where a caramel gelato dessert capped off the meal.

Monday was full of excitement as the Scholars traveled to both Verona and Soave. In Verona, the Basilica of San Zeno and the Pink Arena captivated the full attention of every person. Moreover, Josh Elbaz and Reed Piercey showed all of Italy the true loving nature of the GPSP by placing a lock on the gate outside of Juliet's balcony. After a supremely delicious pizza lunch, the group traveled to Soave. The Castle of Soave provided breathtaking views of not only the city, but also the surrounding miles of vineyards. To end the day, the extremely generous Coffele family led the Scholars on a tour of their winery.

On Tuesday, we traveled to Trent for a day of sightseeing and great food. After seeing the Jesuit church where the Council of Trent was held, the group took a tour of the Trent Castle where the walls displayed gorgeous frescos that depict the months of the year. On the return trip, the crew made a pit stop at Bassano del Grappa in



order to tour the Grappa Museum and walk across a bridge designed by Palladio. On Tuesday night, the group split up -- some remained

in Padua for a large dinner while others took a train over to Venice for a late night adventure.





Photo: Jennie Thomas

The main focus of Wednesday was Palladio. The Scholars explored Vicenza where the architecture of Palladio was visible in every direction. The group went on a tour of the Villa Valmarana and then spent a great deal of time appreciating the Basilica Palladiana in the middle of the city. Before leaving, we drove to the top of a hill that provided beautiful views of the city. Finally, the group returned to Padua and enjoyed another fabulous dinner at Zairo.

On Thursday, the last day in Italy, the Scholars ventured to Sirmione, a city on the coast of Lago del Garda. On this warm and sunny day, the group toured Roman ruins that boasted amazing views of this immense lake with the Swiss Alps in the background. Later, everyone enjoyed a scrumptious meal at a restaurant adjacent to the canal. After returning from Sirmione, the class of 2019 strolled through Padua one last time before returning to the Trattoria da Paccagnella for a final dinner.

As the biggest takeaway, the Class of 2019 agrees



Photo: Jennie Thomas

that this time together has brought the class closer than ever -- it provided an opportunity unlike any other to connect with Father Keenan, Jennie, and all the scholars. This Italy trip laid the foundation for the relationships that will allow us to work towards the four goals of the program in upcoming years.



# GPSP Selection Process Week

*By Reed Piercey '19*

On Wednesday, February 3rd, the Gabelli Presidential Scholars Program welcomed the group of 54 high school seniors, some of whom could soon comprise the Class of 2020. Representing nearly every American state and countries like China, New Zealand, and Switzerland, these students had been hand-picked as the best and brightest among BC's early applicant pool. Their interests and passions embodied the sort of range one might expect to find among such a group, from particle physics to startups to charity work in the Dominican Republic. Over the course of the four-day selection process, input from Fr. Keenan and other administrators, as well as current Scholars, would determine who would be joining the GPSP family at next year's Dover retreat. To begin their stay, after arriving by car, plane, or train to Devlin Hall, the prospective Scholars were greeted by a tour of campus, led by the current Scholars themselves. They then had the chance to meet the Scholars who would be hosting them for the next 3 nights and providing them with an in-depth introduction to the Program. After enjoying dinner together, prospective Scholars and hosts alike moved to Lawrence House to socialize over cupcakes and bond over icebreakers.

Thursday morning provided the prospective Scholars with Fr. Keenan's formal introduction to the details of the GPSP, as well as the beginning of their interviews and group selection activities.



Photo: Isra Hussain



Photo: Jennie Thomas

Each visiting student would, throughout Thursday and Friday, have two interviews, one with a faculty member and one with an admissions officer, and participate in a mock group seminar led by a BC professor as well as a less formal "group conversation." These four processes gave each student the opportunity to discuss their individual accomplishments and talents, and to interact honestly and dynamically in a group setting, giving GPSP the most complete picture possible of themselves.



Photo: Isra Hussain

Group conversations were designed to get to know each student as authentically as possible, covering questions and topics that each group would not typically experience in college admissions interviews. Gaps

# Alumni Spotlight, GPSP Selection Week Dinner: Patricia Noonan

By Becky Reilly '19



Patricia Noonan, GPSP '07, spoke at the Presidential Scholar Selection Process formal dinner about combining her interests in her academic and career life.

Noonan remarked that one of the governing themes of her life at BC and beyond has been the choice between her performances, intellectual developments, and her inclination toward social justice. The first moment of decision manifested itself in three college acceptances letters on the day of the final acceptance deadline. She chose BC while trying to reconcile all of her interests.

"What if I could honor my head and my voice and my heart? What if my greatest strengths lie in the intersection of the three?" Noonan questioned.

During her time as an undergraduate, Noonan explored each area of her life deeply. The

Morrissey Arts and Sciences Honors Program sparked her intellectual curiosity. Programs like the Appalachia Service Program and "Writing for Social Change" allowed her to use her talents to benefit others, and she honed her artistic ability through programs at both BC and the New England Conservatory.

But Noonan eventually found chances to combine her interests. In one example, she spent her time in the Summer Service Learning Program teaching at-risk teens in the Spectrum Boys' Unit, using creative activities like music analysis, storytelling exercises, and Shakespeare performances to explain principles of writing and literature.

"What if the limits between us and the limits we place on who we are and who we can be are not hard and fast walls, but thresholds we can step over?" Noonan mused.

Noonan split her time the following summer between training at the Manhattan School of Music intensively and interning at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Connecticut, a center for new play development where agents and producers discovered her talent for performance.

Noonan found success in writing there, as well. Her new musical, *Learning How to Drown*, written with composer Amanda Jacobs, was performed in the Robsham Theater in February and was an O'Neill Finalist. The play, which Noonan envisioned as one of the first inspired by Irish history and mythology, tells the story of John and Emma, a couple in

modern-day New York, alongside the story of Emma's Irish ancestors. Emma's grandmother was a selkie, part seal and part human, and Emma inherits the feeling of being split between two worlds, finally being forced to create her own space. One wonders if Noonan's personal biography inspires any of the drama.

Alongside her main creative projects, as well as teaching in the arts, Noonan started the #MakeItFair campaign, using humor to draw attention to gender inequality in the arts. Citing its moment of inception as the announcement of the Oscar Best Picture nominees in January 2015, none of which had a female protagonist, Noonan joined 70 women to present gender representation facts in a thought-provoking, satirical video that she showed at the dinner.

Noonan declared that Scholars must embrace both their strengths and insecurities alike to find success, crediting the Gabelli Presidential Scholars Program for allowing her to do so. Her classmates, like herself, define themselves and the work they do on their own terms. They remain close – she even stated that she had been to six GPSP weddings and participated in three.

"If we redefine our limits as thresholds, maybe we write the next great story in our lives. And I can say from experience that choosing the GPSP at BC is a great first sentence," Noonan Concluded. concluded.



in their schedules also allowed prospective scholars to visit classes with their hosts or other students if they wished, letting them immerse themselves in life at BC. They were also able to have lunch with each other and current Scholars.

On Thursday night, Scholars, prospective students, and faculty members alike were privileged to hear from Program alumna Patricia Noonan '07 at the Welcome Dinner in Gasson Hall, who has since gone on to experience immense success as a stage and film actress and writer since her time in the Program. She detailed the many important takeaways she had found in the entertainment industry, as well as her life-changing experience

with GPSP, and provided guests with a look at some of her work—including the original web-short #MakeItFair. Prospective scholars were then able to ask Ms. Noonan questions directly before all returned for a much-needed night's sleep.

To close out a packed few days of socializing, interviewing, and academic exploration, the prospective Scholars, and a few lucky current ones, were treated to dinner at Uno's Chicago Grill in Boston on Friday night, followed by a showing of the musical "Pippin" downtown. It was a night to remember, and a perfect way to cap off their experience. After some fast-paced group trivia back on campus that night, accompanied

by ice cream, everyone prepared to return to their respective homes. The following morning, a closing brunch gave all of the hosts and prospective students a chance to say their good-byes, a testament to the strong bonds that had been formed over a short four days. Our 54 guests then went their separate ways, already having left their mark on BC's campus. GPSP cannot wait to welcome our next class of Scholars come August.

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## Sophomore Social Justice Project Event: Poetry Slam

*By Meg Loughman '19*

When it's brought to public attention that our homeland, the quintessential "Land of the Free," leads the world with the highest prison inmate population, our natural response as Americans is to be alarmed—and that's just the reaction that the sophomore class of the Gabelli Presidential Scholars Program is hoping to evoke with their up-and-coming movement on campus. These 19 impassioned students from across Boston College's schools and departments have come together for a common passion: shining a light of awareness on the political and social travesty that is mass incarceration.

During their six-week experience in the Summer Service Learning Program, they volunteered at various sites around the city of Boston, such as local prisons and homeless shelters. Through weekly reflections, the group came to an overwhelming consensus: No matter where they spent their hours volunteering, the immensity of mass incarceration and its effects across socioeconomic lines, struck them profoundly.



Photo: Meg Loughman

"I, personally, had never been confronted with the injustice that is mass incarceration before," said Alexandra Mills '18, "so imagine how many other students at BC have no idea what this is either."

Mass incarceration is the product of a discriminatory and corrupt system of social justice. Impoverished Americans, especially those of color, are targeted by this system and find themselves caught in a cycle of institutional oppression. They are arrested at alarmingly high frequencies for minor crimes—those that are often ignored when committed by members of the middle and upper classes.

Thus, a movement was born: through the GPSP and in conjunction with 18 co-sponsors, the sophomores created “Mass Incarceration: Missing in America.” Their main goal is to evoke empathy from students on campus by pushing them to recognize their own vulnerabilities as well as the fact that victims of mass incarceration are not all that different from us—they just come from underprivileged socioeconomic backgrounds. So, in an effort to help raise student awareness, the sophomores turned to the power of poetry.

After the group attended a spoken word event put on by formerly convicted persons in

the local homeless shelter Haley House during their summer service learning experience, they were struck by the need to provoke change on campus. “We could definitely feel it,” notes Ameet Kallarackal ’18. “It was pretty obvious that we needed to do something including slam poetry as our kickoff event.”

BC students flocked to the Eagle’s Nest on the night of October 20th in order to attend the sophomore Presidential Scholars’ much-anticipated spoken word event. Not an empty chair nor free standing space against the wall could be seen as “Mass Incarceration: Missing in America” presented itself for the first time to over 500 of its Boston College peers. The emcee for the night was Jamele Adams, or Harlym125; he rallied up the emotional hype and bated-breath excitement that was swiftly delivered by an array of talented speakers.

The first group to perform was the Spoken Word Poetry Flash Mob of Boston, with members joining in from various locations around the room in synchronized slam; the stage was aptly set, each

consecutive act blowing away its unsuspecting audience. Harlym125 himself performed spoken word sets. The nationally acclaimed poetry group Flatline stunned the crowd into silence with their powerful words and melodies, and BC’s on-campus poetry group, SLAM!, highlighted three student poets whose passionate messages ignited the crowd and elicited roaring applause from their peers.

With a turnout beyond the scholars’ highest expectations, the “Mass Incarceration: Missing in America” spoken word event was an overwhelming success. Students from all walks of life left feeling inspired, that same flame for social justice lit within them that the sophomore scholars hoped to ignite by bringing the power of poetry to campus.

“Tonight the discussion was loud, passionate and made it very clear that change is necessary and that all of us are capable of being agents of that change,” said Mariah Larwood ’18. “Tonight we said that we are up for the challenge.”





# Learning About Women's Rights and Other Social Justice Issues in Nicaragua



Photo: Kathleen Bailey

## *By John Knowles '18*

Fr. Jim Keenan took the GPSP Class of 2018 to Nicaragua so that they would “encounter” the country’s people. This Nicaragua trip is aimed particularly at introducing sophomores to issues of social justice, and works in tandem with the Sophomore Social Justice Project. This year, the sophomores have been tackling the issue of mass incarceration. The sophomores tried to find out more about Nicaraguan prisons, but the people there who know about the present situation of the country’s prisons will divulge nothing. Specific information on Nicaraguan prisons is scarce according Dr. Mauro Ampie, a civil rights lawyer with whom the Scholars spoke. The Scholars realized they would have to look elsewhere to learn about prisons in Nicaragua.

Many Scholars saw their understanding of women’s issues grow during their stay in the

country. Silvia Cisneros, a nurse in the poor neighborhood of Acahualinca, described a persistent culture of machismo and of abuse, felt by all 19 female employees of her clinic. She and her fellow clinic employees have worked without pay for a year to provide women healthcare for material and immaterial wounds. For nominal fees, the clinic provides psychiatric services, contraceptive methods and sterilization procedures, and even a beauty school so that the daughters of impoverished women have more career options than their mothers. Even in the face of violence, Cisneros has hope for change, and compassion for those she works with.

“Seeing all these men here gives me hope,” she said to the Class of 2018, which is predominantly male. “Because I have seen that if men are given another option [than violence], they will change.”

Gains are being made for some women. For example, many mothers of disabled children in Granada, a city an hour outside the capital, have been forced to stay in abusive relationships in order to financially survive. These women cannot leave home to work, and they cannot make much money by doing laundry, or other such services, from their homes.

“I needed a way to make these women economically independent,” said Antonio Prieto, owner of a hammock factory and a café, which employs many disabled people. Prieto designed a portable loom that enables homebound caregivers to make handbags and other small accessories, which Prieto then sells online. Two of the three women involved in the pilot program for his portable-loom concept, Prieto said, have gotten rid of their abusive male partner.

## *Nicaragua con't from page 7*

Women's rights at large, however, are a highly contested issue in Nicaragua, claims Teresa Blandón, a leader in the feminist movement in Nicaragua. Previously, they had been able to report domestic abuse to a now-disbanded commission of female police officers, now women have to report the crime to predominantly-male police officers, many of whom may not be as sympathetic to their plight.

The Scholars were also introduced to social responsibility during their trip. They visited a garment factory similar to that in which many of the male Scholars' pants could have been made. Even the highest-paid workers on the floor, those who pressed pants in the steaming heat of gigantic irons, made only a little over \$50 a week. None of them could afford to buy the pants they made.

Four days later, the Scholars were enlightened by Prieto, the hammock factory owner, about the human cost of the cheap foreign products they buy. He concluded, "If you buy a hammer for a dollar, a worker somewhere made five cents. That's just common sense."

On this trip, the sophomore Scholars developed a stronger sense of social responsibility and the need to advance women's rights and liberties, among other lessons. It now remains for them to put these lessons into practice.



Photo: Kathleen Bailey



Photo: Mariah Larwood



Photo: Kathleen Bailey



## Alumni Announcements

**Sean Uiterwyk '96** writes: "I have a new job as Senior Medical Director for Performance Excellence at Atrius Health in Boston. Responsible for oversight of Quality, Safety, Medical Management, and Patient Experience for Atrius. I'll still be seeing patients in a primary care practice in Wellesley as well. Excited to be moving back to Boston!"

**Dustin Rawlin '97**, and his wife Meggan welcomed Loudon Archer Rawlin on June 18, 2015. Older siblings Lillian (7), Lincoln (5) and Lachlan (2) are doing well.

**Andrew Frey '01** was reappointed by Governor Rick Scott to the board of the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority

**Laura Pyeatt Brown '04** and her husband Scott, welcomed daughter Hazel Quinn in November 2015.

**Timothy Carwinski (formerly Carraher) '04** was married on September 19, 2015, and Elizabeth Bernardi '04 stood up in the wedding. He and his husband Patryk Piwinski have changed their last name to Carwinski: a combination of their last names.

**Matthew Gaul '04** was promoted to partner in the Business Services Practice Group, where he represents businesses in corporate, commercial, and financial matters at his firm, Carmody Torrance Sandak & Hennessey LLP, in New Haven, CT.

**Kat Wakeham Barnes '07** will be graduating from her residency this June, and won the American Academy of Family Physicians (AFP) National Residency Leadership Award.

**Emily Neumeier '08** began a new position as Research Collaborator at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence.

**Nick Ackerman '09** was married on October 10, 2015 to Laura Leskoven in **Brooklyn, NY**.

**Nicole Wong '09** is now working as a Producer at Gimlet Creative.

**Elizabeth Fair '12** matched for a yearlong pre-doctoral clinical internship position at the University of Alabama at Birmingham as part of the child specialty track.

**Matthew Alonsozana '14** has been appointed recently as the Senior Research Analyst for Special Projects at the Republican National Committee

**Frank DiRenno '15** is running the London Marathon on April 24th, to benefit the UK Stroke Association.

**Amanda Loewy '15** has joined the marketing firm of Catalyst Group M, a division of the worldwide marketing company WPP. She was selected for the position of Specialist, working with a team handling social media and marketing for major consumer corporations.

**PSP Alumni:**



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