

# Ex Libris

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GABELLI PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM, BOSTON COLLEGE

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## Scholars Welcomed at Dover Retreat



All of the Scholars smile together in front of the retreat house

By Tuna Uskudar '28

Each year, The Gabelli Presidential Scholars Program at Boston College kicks off the academic year on the weekend before classes begin with the annual retreat. The event, held at the Connors Family Retreat and Conference Center in Dover, MA, serves as a welcome to the freshman class and a reconnecting for the upperclassmen. During the retreat, Scholars spend their time learning more about the Gabelli Presidential Scholars Program, building a better sense of community, and playing games.

In this year's retreat, Scholars ate breakfast and then gathered in the large, sunny meeting room where they went around the circle and introduced themselves by name, class year and major, and also shared what they did over the summer. After the introductions were completed, Scholars were organized into eight "Dover" groups of approximately ten Scholars and had the opportunity to get to know each other more closely while enjoying the pleasant weather and beautiful nature. This informal setting encouraged open dialogue and facilitated stronger bonds among Scholars.

After an hour spent with the groups,

Scholars were served lunch and refreshments and had time to play games on the lawn. In the afternoon Scholars were split into another set of groups and got to connect with a new group of Scholars from each class. Conversations during these sessions ranged from academic interests to career aspirations, with upperclassmen offering valuable advice to the newer Scholars.

Later, the classes were separated into rooms to talk about more specific topics. The Class of 2025 spoke about their senior-year involvement in the Gabelli Presidential Scholars Program, Senior Class Gift, and post-graduate planning. The Class of 2026 discussed junior-year internships and post-graduate planning. The Class of 2027 focused on the sophomore-year Social Justice Project and discussed innovative project ideas. Lastly, former Director, Jim Keenan, S.J., joined the class of 2028's discussion with Director Kathy Bailey, where Scholars learned about BC's culture and the importance of Jesuit education.

Following the class breakouts, a group photo session captured the collective spirit of the retreat, with Scholars posing for class photos as well as a group shot that highlighted the unity among the entire GPSP

community. At 6:00 PM, scholars attended Mass celebrated by Father Keenan, after which they attended dinner with alumni of the GPSP. It was a special occasion for Scholars to engage with those who have walked the path before them, and to enjoy a delicious meal in the scenic garden of the Connors Center. After dinner, the scholars had free time to participate in activities such as basketball, soccer, and board games.

The final day of the Retreat began with an early breakfast followed by another gathering in the meeting room to hear an overview of this year's plans and events from GPSP Director Kathleen Bailey. After this, sophomore Scholars presented their Social Justice Project to the rest of the group. Next, scholars got to learn more about involvement in clubs, service-learning opportunities, and Ex Libris, the GPSP newsletter. After meeting briefly for closing remarks, Scholars grabbed a boxed lunch and boarded the bus back to campus.

Overall, this year's Dover retreat successfully reinforced the sense of community among the members of the GPSP. The Dover retreat provided Scholars with the tools, connections, and inspiration needed to navigate the academic year comfortably.



# Class of 2027 Completes a Memorable Summer PULSE

By Patrick Sheesley '27

The Gabelli Presidential Scholars Program Summer PULSE Program, an abbreviated version of the course of the same name taught during the academic year, is an invaluable experience of the GPSP. For six weeks, the Class of 2027 Scholars lived in Greycliff Hall while working with various service organizations across Boston. This experience provided the Scholars with a welcome opportunity to connect with each other for an extended period of time outside of an academic setting.

The Scholars quickly developed a routine with their communal life in Greycliff. After waking up in the wee hours of the morning and hopping on the T, the Scholars commuted to one of their two service placements that they had chosen earlier in the year. After four hours of service, they would either return to Greycliff, linger downtown, or grab lunch together. Afternoons and evenings were spent completing readings for the seminars, playing heated games of pickleball, and watching *New Girl* together in the basement.

Scholars often cooked for themselves and each other; kitchen antics ensued with nineteen students competing for four burners, yet, miraculously, the fire alarm was only set off four times. They collaborated to prepare a delicious, Italian meal, complete with menus and decorations, when



Photo courtesy of Patrick Sheesley

**Scholars with their Italian-themed dinner.**

GPSP Director Kathy Bailey came to visit. While most weekends were spent at Greycliff, Ro Srinivasan and Kendall Liesching each hosted the Scholars for cookouts at their homes on two different weekends in Andover, MA and East Greenwich, RI, respectively. After turning in early most nights, the Scholars woke up early again and continued their service work.

While they made many memories at Greycliff over those six weeks, the Scholars' most significant experiences were found at their service placements and with those whom they served. Scholars would often regale each other with unique stories, experiences, and insights they had at their placements. For example, Connor Nicholas worked in the Education Department at Bridge Over Troubled Waters, an organization that focuses on assisting unhoused individuals between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four. He gained a "much broader sense of the struggles that students my own age go through that I could never imagine."

This sense of an expanded worldview was reinforced at the St. Francis House Foot Clinic. Stories of medical inequities from the guests they served moved the Scholars, eventually prompting Catherine May and Grace Snell to develop an idea for the Sophomore Social Justice Project. The sophomores' project aims to raise consciousness about the inequalities of the healthcare system for unhoused individuals, hopefully promoting positive change in the industry.

The various service experiences culminated in a weekly seminar discussion on Friday mornings with Prof. Meghan Sweeney, Director of the PULSE Program, and

Shanteri Baliga, the Assistant Director. Each class began with a reflection on service experiences of the week, and then a guest speaker would lead a presentation and discussion on a particular social justice issue, whether that be educational inequality, prison reform, or access to public health services. One particular class took the Scholars on a walking tour of downtown Boston with Prof. David Manzo while discussing how redlining, green space, and other factors shaped its current layout.

The Scholars could hardly believe how quickly time flew during their six weeks of GPSP Summer PULSE. While the program itself is over, they will continue to remember its impact and lessons through the implementation of their Sophomore Social Justice Project in the coming months. Whether it was serving food in a soup kitchen, going to a Red Sox game together, or challenging each other in an impromptu freestyle rap competition, the GPSP Summer PULSE Program will stand as a highlight of their four years at Boston College to many of the Class of 2027 Scholars.



Photo courtesy of Patrick Sheesley

**Scholars attending a Red Sox game during the first week of PULSE.**



Photo courtesy of Patrick Sheesley

**Scholars enjoying a cookout at Kendall Liesching's house in Providence, RI.**



# Family Weekend and Alumni Event Highlights



Photo courtesy of Jennie Thomas

Football tailgate featuring GPSP alumni, current Scholars, and staff.



Photo: Michael Manning

The class of 2028 poses at annual Family Weekend GPSP event.



Photo: Michael Manning

Audience for Mario Gabelli's speech to the current the Scholars and parents.



Photo courtesy of Kelsey Swift

GPSP Alumni meet up together in New York City.



Photo: Michael Manning

Mario Gabelli smiles with Mareks Zeile '27.



# Class of 2025 Finishes Internship Placements

By Jack Kehoe '28

Juniors in the Gabelli Presidential Scholars Program participate in internships during the summer before their senior year. This gives them the opportunity to learn about potential career opportunities, expand their knowledge in their field of interest, and open doors to jobs at a wide variety of companies and institutions.

Senior Johany Jeune worked as a nursing assistant on the labor and delivery floor at Boston Medical Center. Jeune, a nursing major in the Connell School of Nursing, described how it is “not as easy to get into a specialty in nursing” and that being able to work in a specific part of the hospital for an extended period of time enabled her to explore a specific type of nursing career.

She was also interested in pairing effective medical expertise with compassion. She recalled that many of the patients in the maternity ward “spoke Haitian Creole, and I speak Haitian, so I was able to create that culture of care.” Pairing her interest in medicine with her passion for patient care made her internship experience particularly rewarding.

Biology major Sancia Sehdev also did work in the medical field. Through Boston Children’s Hospital’s Environmental Justice-Climate Change Scholars Program, Sehdev’s summer internship was spent working with the “Pediatric Environmental Health Clinic [...] involved in the prevention, diagnosis, management, and treatment of health issues that arise from environmental exposures in babies, children, and adolescents.” Through a program called LeadRx, she helped

make educational resources for at-risk communities about exposure to lead. In addition, Sancia also worked in the clinic where she observed day-to-day operations. She described seeing “many young patients whose blood had tested high for lead.” She went on to explain how the clinic offered resources to families to reduce lead exposure and how “it was very fulfilling to see that my work on the LeadRx actually [made] an impact.”

Senior Steven Roche, a double major in mathematics and computer science, interned with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration through the Hollings Scholarship. Based out of Colorado, he worked on a project called magnetic navigation (MagNav), which he described as “using measurements of Earth’s magnetic field to figure out the latitude and longitude of an aircraft.” His skills in computer science were important for this assignment, however the Hollings Scholarship offers undergraduate students’ opportunities in many types of hands-on scientific research which Roche recommends “particularly [for] environmental science majors.” Roche’s Hollings Scholarship gave him the opportunity to work with a government organization on the development of new technologies in a supportive and collaborative environment and serves as an excellent option for current underclassmen to consider for their internships.

Chemistry major Ai-Kee Cheung was involved in research at the University of Pittsburgh this summer. Through the National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates Program, she worked in Professor Peng Lui’s Lab “investigat[ing] the impacts of ring strain on  $\beta$ -Hydride



Sam Peterson '25, Josph Manning '14, Caroline Macneill '25, and Tori Luu '14 meet at the Department of Justice.

Elimination feasibility.” Unlike Roche, Ai-Kee described having little experience with computer science going into her internship, but how the “internship/research experience was a great opportunity for growth.”

While doing important work, Ai-Kee was able to expand her scientific research skills. Additionally, she described how “the most valuable aspect of this program was the connections I made” with colleagues and mentors who were “more than eager to discuss their work and offer advice for the graduate school admission process.” Her experience is a perfect example of how the junior summer internship program can be an additional opportunity for exploration and growth in the fields that scholars are considering for potential careers.

The final senior spotlight is Charlie Neill, a human centered engineering major. He interned with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute. Over the summer his job was to “research, write, and post articles on the Innovations page” of the nonprofit’s website. Neill worked “on the aquaculture team to document innovations

in the aquaculture industry.” which is an often-sustainable form of fish farming. This opportunity to research innovations in the field of sustainable agriculture enabled him to use his skills as an engineer, while considering the environmental and human impacts of the technology he was researching. Neill said the internship “offered me a fantastic learning experience and helped me get a better idea of what I want to do after graduation.”

These five senior spotlights represent only a fraction of the twenty-two amazing summer internships experiences that Scholars had this year, but just among these five there was a broad range of topics and industries that were explored. The experiences the seniors have are then shared with members of the Gabelli Presidential Scholars Program to help inform their decision making for their own internships. This passing of knowledge helps inspire younger Scholars and gives them insight into the breadth of the opportunities that await them the summer after their junior year.





# Welcome GPSP Class of 2028!



**Maddie Anders**  
Rockville, MD

**Daniel Bajada**  
New York, NY

**Maia Choe**  
Tustin, CA

**Adriana Curtis**  
Boise, ID

**Mackenzie Duffy**  
Newtown Square, PA

**Nanati Getachew**  
Everett, MA

**Anna Helman**  
Tiburon, CA

**Jack Kehoe**  
Woodinville, WA

**Max Kelly**  
Milton, MA

**Elaine Kim**  
Little Rock, AR

**Lukas Kucera**  
Elyria, OH

**Connor O'Brien**  
Ft. Washington, PA

**Catherine Phan**  
Southaven, MS

**Isabel Rodriguez**  
San Juan, PR

**Arham Shah**  
Wyckoff, NJ

**Tuna Uskudar**  
Izmir, Turkey

**Dominique Valls Lanusse**  
Key Biscayne, FL

## Alumni Announcements

**Kelly McCartney '11** and her husband Brian Zimcosky welcomed their son Adam John Zimcosky on September 19. Adam joins big brother Colin (age 3).

**Jessica Sky Seminelli '12** and her husband welcomed their second daughter, Diana, on September 10th!

**Marye Moran '14** and her husband welcomed their first child, a daughter, this past September.

**Andrew Boyce '15** began a new job as Advanced Semiconductor Engineer at Honeywell Aerospace Technologies in August.

**Marie Pellissier '15** married Ben Tansi this past August (2024)



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122 College Road • Chestnut Hill, MA 02467

