

Ex Libris

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Class of 2027 Takes on Indonesia



Photo Courtesy of Aalok Bhattacharya

Scholars pose in front of the Borobudur Temple in Yogyakarta

By Callie Walsh '27

Just as the Scholars were settling into the calm, mundane life-style that is winter break in college, the class of 2027 hopped on a plane and started their journey to Jakarta, Indonesia. Director Kathy Bailey and Professor Tracy Regan, along with the help of several generous Boston College alumni, led this inaugural journey to the world's largest archipelagic state. Over the ten days, Scholars embarked on an unforgettable trip filled with breathtaking landscapes, inspiring connections, and hand-on experiences that deepened their understanding of the country's rich history and culture.

After nearly twenty hours in the air, the Scholars arrived in Java, the largest and most populous island in the Indonesian archipelago. The first day was packed with exploration, including a sightseeing tour of the capital city with visits to the Presidential Palace, the Indonesian National Monument, and the Istiqlal Mosque (the largest mosque in Southeast Asia!). As they explored Jakarta, Scholars gained insight into Indonesia's remarkable religious and ethnic diversity. Despite being the world's largest Muslim-majority nation, they were struck by how mosques, cathedrals, and Buddhist temples stood in close proximity, reflecting a spirit of coexistence and tolerance. That night, the Scholars enjoyed a rooftop dinner with panoramic views of the city, joined by BC alumni and local Indonesian students.

The next morning, BC alum Emmeline Hambali (CSOM '01) took Scholars behind-the-scenes at Dynapack Asia and Amadina, one of the largest recyclers of PET plastic. Scholars were given an intimate look into the manufacturing process of recycled plastic packaging. Perhaps what was even more meaningful, however, was learning about the efforts of Mahija, an NGO that works in the field

of literacy, anti-slavery initiatives, and sustainability. The visit left Scholars with a deeper appreciation for the intersection of industry and social impact, setting the tone for the rest of their trip.

Next, the Scholars set off to Kudus. Upon arrival, the Scholars were welcomed at the Djarum Foundation headquarters, the family business of Martin Hartono (P '27). The afternoon was dedicated to learning about the foundation's various initiatives aimed at improving both the local community and advancing greater sustainability efforts. Scholars first toured Djarum's plant nursery and waste processing center, gaining insight into the company's environmental conservation efforts. The true highlight of the day, however, was the visit to Raden Umar Said Vocational High School, one of Indonesia's top vocational institutions specializing in animation, graphic design, software, and game development. Scholars were blown away by the students' talent, engaging in lively discussions about their projects and making full use of the school's two-story slide! The afternoon wrapped up on a competitive note at the Jati Badminton Training Center, where Scholars tested their skills against local athletes. As suspected, the seasoned athletes dominated, with Scholar Sam Craft putting up one of the most impressive efforts but ultimately failing 2-22.

Before departing Kudus, Scholars visited one of Djarum's hand rolled clove cigarette factories, learning about the craftsmanship and cultural significance of the tradition. It was a quick morning, however, as Scholars set off for Borobudur Temple, the world's largest Buddhist temple and a UNESCO Heritage Site. Spending the afternoon exploring the ancient temple, Scholars ascended its seven levels, reaching the summit to take in the jaw-dropping view at the top.

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The next morning, Scholars woke up in a new city, Yogyakarta. After setting out on a city tour, Scholars got to take a stab at some local Indonesian traditions. First was the Batik factory, where they took part in the intricate textile art form of applying wax to fabric before dyeing it. Despite their best efforts, most Scholars quickly realized mastering the craft was no easy feat with many opting to purchase one of the local creations for a slightly more “aesthetic” keepsake. Unfortunately for Scholars, the Silversmith workshop proved to be even more challenging. Most Scholars found themselves turning to the silversmiths themselves for assistance as they struggled to create the ring or earrings of their choice. Despite the technical challenges, the experience was one of the Scholars’ favorites. Reflecting on the day in the city, Connor Nicholas shared, “exploring Yogyakarta was one of my favorite days, engaging with the local people at the Silversmith and the Batik shops were great experiences exploring Indonesian culture.” The exploration didn’t end there as Scholars wrapped up their Yogyakarta visit with a Ramayana ballet performance. The story originated in India but has since become integrated in Indonesian art and culture.



Photo Courtesy of Callie Walsh

Scholars and Director Kathy Bailey together on the temple stairs

The last, and possibly most anticipated, stop of the trip was the island of Bali. After a short plane ride, the Scholars arrived at the Apurva Kempinski Bali Hotel, where they were immediately struck by its grandeur. The five star luxury resort, owned by Wings Group, boasted breathtaking views of the Indian Ocean, a sixty meter swimming pool, and a curated gallery. BC alumni, and head of Wings Group, Andrew Katuari (CSOM '01), welcomed the Scholars with open arms, sharing his insights on entrepreneurship, leadership, and management. While the resort’s infinity pools, beachfront cabanas, and world-class dining were nothing short of spectacular, Bali continued to amaze with a visit with Wings group to the Jatiluwih Rice Terrace, the second UNESCO World Heritage site of the trip. The experience was unlike any other as Scholars rolled up their pants, donned bamboo hats, and waded knee-deep into the mud to plant rice themselves, gaining a newfound appreciation for the centuries-old farming traditions that sustain the island.

The last day of the trip was bittersweet as Scholars had the day free to soak in their last moments at the resort, pack their



Photo Courtesy of Callie Walsh

Groups of Scholars pose with diver & fish at the aquarium

belongings, and prepare for the journey home. However before that could happen, Scholars enjoyed a farewell lunch at the Koral, Bali’s first aquarium restaurant, where the exquisite food was only heightened by the vibrant marine life surrounding the tables. The afternoon concluded with poolside relaxation, beach swims, and a spirited beach volleyball match. Scholars Sam Craft, Rohit Srinivasan, Connor Nicholas, and Callie Walsh joined alumni Andrew Katuari and resort guests for a competitive game, a fitting way to end such an amazing journey.

As the Scholars boarded their flights back to Boston, they reflected on the whirlwind of experiences over the past few days. Whether it was testing their silversmith skills, competing at the badminton court, or chatting with local Indonesian students, each moment added a new layer of appreciation for Indonesian life and culture. Rohit Srinivasan put it best: “The biggest thing that stood out from the trip was the hospitality of the people we encountered. There was a sense of authenticity and community, a feeling unlike any other I’ve experienced.” More simply, the trip wouldn’t have been possible without the people who made it happen. The Class of 2027 is extremely grateful to Kathy Bailey, Tracy Reagan, Jennie Thomas, Sarah Gregorian, and all of the generous alumni who helped sponsor the trip.



Photo Courtesy of Callie Walsh

Group of Scholars smile at Amandina Bumi Nusantara

Class of 2028 Journeys to Ireland

By Daniel Bajada '28

On Friday, February 28, all eighteen Gabelli Presidential Scholar Program freshmen departed from Logan International Airport to Dublin. After checking in at the Mont Hotel, Scholars had a chance to take a much-needed nap before heading to Boston College Ireland, the home base for the trip. The Scholars were introduced to Róisín, their guide for the trip, who helped direct them to the Merry Ploughboy Pub. Scholars entered into an authentic Irish experience — a proper Irish meal, a traditional Irish musical performance, and an entertaining Irish step dance. One of the Scholars, Anna Helman, was invited onto the stage for an Irish dance lesson and was fortunate enough to receive some Ploughboy merchandise to remember the experience.

The following day, the Scholars embarked on a walking tour of the city. Fiona, the Scholars' tour guide, showed the group the city's monuments, spanning from the conflict over reunification to the personal history of Oscar Wilde. With tired brains from travel and history, the group moved on to another tour: the Guinness Storehouse. Students learned about what differentiates a pint of Guinness from any other pint in the world, primarily the thirty million bubbles in every pint. To make the experience even more unique, Scholars had pictures of their faces imprinted into a pint's foam. Of course, the group picked up some merchandise to wear for St. Patrick's Day back in Boston.

On Monday, the Scholars started their day with a trip to The Irish Emigration Museum. After learning about the reasons for emigration and the long-term impacts of the migration, the group headed to lunch before going to their next destination. At The Little Museum, Scholars had the opportunity



Photo Courtesy of: Thea Gillien

Scholars after landing in Dublin



Photo Courtesy of Maddie Anders

Scholars pose before entering the Guinness Storehouse Museum in Dublin

to examine cultural artifacts from various points in history and received a thirty-minute recap of two thousand years of Irish history. During their free time, groups of Scholars went out to continue exploring the streets of Dublin. Notably, some visited the National Gallery of Ireland.

The next day, Professor Mike Cronin briefed the Scholars on the history of Northern Ireland and the ongoing tensions between different religious groups in the area. Scholars then visited the Museum of Literature, where they learned about the most influential Irish writers and had the chance to write the introduction to their own works. The group made their way to the Westin Hotel for a formal afternoon tea. They ended the day back at BC Ireland by watching short films and learning some Gaelic.

On Wednesday, Scholars met with US Embassy Staff. Connor O'Brien '28 described the experience, saying "It was extremely enlightening hearing from a professional working in a field I've been interested in for a few years now." Everyone then traveled to Powerscourt Estate and Garden, where they strolled through the stunning landscape and appreciated the breathtaking views. To celebrate their last night in Dublin, the group partnered up with BC Law students studying in Ireland and answered trivia questions about what they had learned.

The next day, Scholars awoke early to travel to Belfast, seeing some of the Irish countryside during the trip. The group headed straight to the Mitchell Institute at

Queen's University, Belfast, to learn about how Irish history affects the present. Professor Dominic Bryan gave a fascinating talk titled "The Symbolic Landscape: Understanding Peace and Conflict in Northern Ireland," and Dr. Cheryl Lawther spoke about "Victimhood and Dealing with the Legacy of the Northern Ireland Conflict."

Some of the academics joined the group at lunch, allowing for more time to discuss the topic at hand. Professor Bryan then joined the Scholars to give us a bus tour of the city; he pointed out landmarks and revealed how history is etched into the fabric of Belfast. On Friday, the group attended a briefing by Ciaran Higgins from the Belfast City Council Economic Office. His insights into Belfast's economic landscape gave everyone a better understanding of how the city is evolving post-conflict. Following that, they had an incredible opportunity to meet Ryan Murphy, the Lord Mayor of Belfast. He improved the group's understanding of the political landscape in the city and gave them a tour of the beautiful Belfast City Hall. After lunch, the group went to the Titanic Museum to hear the tragic history of the vessel.

As the Scholars' time in Ireland came to a close, they realized just how grateful they are for the chance to be a part of this program. Catherine Phan '28 reflected on the experience, saying "Trips like this are so unique; there's nowhere else where I can have an experience with some of my best friends. I feel so close to our cohort, and I'm so excited for everything to come!"

Health And Healing: Sophomore Justice Project



Photo: Andrew Ng

Dr Jim O'Connell (left) and Dr Phil Landrigan (right) join a group of sophomores before the event

By Catherine May '27

For their Sophomore Social Justice Project, the class of 2027 decided to address healthcare inequity. Several Scholars previously volunteered at the St. Francis House Foot Clinic, which connects unhoused men and women to foot care and medical professionals, during their summer PULSE Program. Scholars also worked at Women's Lunch Place, Haley House, Pine Street Inn, Bridge over Troubled Waters, Boston Green Academy, and the Suffolk County House of Correction.

Inspired by their work at the St. Francis House foot clinic, the sophomores decided to open up a new foot clinic within Women's Lunch Place, which is a shelter that serves women in Boston. According to the Boston Public Health Commission, 95% of unhoused people in Boston have healthcare insurance. However, the staff members at Women's Lunch Place report that far fewer unhoused women have healthcare insurance, likely closer to 50-60%.

Through their summer experiences, it became clear to the Scholars that trauma greatly contributes to these women's disparity. The leading causes of homelessness among women are domestic and sexual violence. These experiences lead many women and genderqueer individuals to feel uncomfortable in co-ed spaces. Guests at Women's Lunch Place reported that they avoid co-ed clinics such as the one at St. Francis. Unfortunately, most clinics for unhoused people exist in male-dominated environments, including St. Francis House. The Boston College Foot Clinic provides a safe, comforting space for these women. It has already treated over two hundred patients, one hundred foot conditions, and set several women up with healthcare insurance. It is a partnership between BC, the Boston Healthcare for the Homeless Program, and Women's Lunch Place.

For their fall event, the sophomores hosted a panel discussion featuring Dr. Jim O'Connell (Boston Healthcare for the Homeless Program, President), Melissa Hector (Boston Pub-

lic Health Commission, Director of Equitable and Strategic Initiatives), and Kaite Hayward (AmeriCorps). Dr. O'Connell is President and Founder of Boston Healthcare for the Homeless Program. He is the author of "Stories from the Shadows" and the subject of Tracy Kidder's "Rough Sleepers." The event saw great attendance and deeply engaged the BC community. Students stayed after to get their books signed by Dr. O'Connell, who was extremely generous with his time and knowledge.

Visit the website: <https://homeleshealthbc.org/>

Donate to the clinic via gofundme:

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-healthcare-for-homeless-women-in-boston>



Photo: Andrew Ng

Panelists interviewed by Rohit Srinivasan '27 & Callie Walsh '27

GPSP Alumni Speaker: Dr. Sahil Amin '16

By Mackenzie Duffy '28

At the final dinner of the GPSP Selection Process in the Murray Function Room, Dr. Sahil Amin, GPSP '16, addressed the prospective Scholars, current Scholars, GPSP alumni, and university faculty and staff.

GPSP Director Kathy Bailey introduced Sahil to the audience. Upon graduation, he spent three years working at Precision Xtract as an analyst and consultant before attending Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. He graduated in 2023 and now works as a research anesthesiology resident at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston.

Sahil began by expressing his heartfelt gratitude to everyone in the GPSP and at BC. He also addressed the prospective Scholars in the room, highlighting the hard work and determination that earned each of them a spot at the Selection Process and emphasizing their bright and limitless futures, regardless of the weekend's outcome.

Sahil recalled being in the prospective Scholars' position, sitting at the closing dinner of his own GPSPSP, and he could hardly fathom being on the other side of this evening. He recounted the big decision that was looming over him during his senior year of high school. Amidst offers from many top universities, Sahil chose BC and the GPSP because of the incredibly unique and life changing opportunity, and in retrospect, he feels as though it was one of the best decisions he has made in his entire life. In addition to the financial factor that allowed him to pursue higher education with confidence, he credits the community and opportunities from the Program and BC as a whole to forever altering his life for the better.

While at BC, his peers and mentors quickly became like family and challenged him to grow intellectually and personally. He attributes his business and entrepreneurial interests to one of the GPSP trips and is aboundingly grateful to the Program for encouraging him to get out of his comfort zone and follow his passions.



Photo courtesy of University Advancement

Dr. Sahil Amin's senior year photo at Boston College

The skills he developed at BC continuously influence his life and career, through entrepreneurial pursuits and overall eagerness to try new things, such as working with AI in his resident anesthesiology position.

Additionally, he credits the GPSP with his definition of success: how well one can think beyond one's immediate field. That definition is directly tied to the Jesuit value of being a person for others. Sahil attributes BC for encouraging him to serve a greater good, whatever that may be. Whether writing a book with classmates for their social justice project to raise awareness for the Boston Marathon bombing or volunteering with cancer patients in Barcelona, the GPSP and BC provided him with opportunities that shaped his perspective on what it means to lead a meaningful and good life.

Sahil concluded that the Program gave him more than just an education; it gave him a way of life and shaped the leader he is today. Amidst the myriad of feelings the prospective Scholars may have been experiencing, Sahil assured them that they have the unique opportunity to step into something bigger than themselves

GPSP Welcomes Prospective Scholars

By Catherine May '27

On Friday, March 1, the Gabelli Presidential Scholars Program welcomed an extremely talented and kind cohort of high school seniors from across the country and globe to the Boston College community. The weekend started with a walking tour of the BC campus, led by current Scholars. The prospective students experienced the best of Boston weather, as they were welcomed by a clear blue sky and a sunny day.

The students then gathered for pizza and dessert and gradually got to know one another. Devlin Hall quickly filled with laughter and conversation. As current students know, this event is often the start of lifelong friendships. The prospies and their hosts then journeyed back to their host's respective dorms to get settled and prepare for the Selection Process.

Throughout the week, the prospies attended mock seminars, had lunches with faculty and one with current Scholars, had a formal dinner with faculty, Scholars and GPSP alumni, played trivia in Gasson Hall and visited the classic "Lucky Strikes" bowling

alley in downtown Boston. Many prospies also chose to shadow classes, such as Perspectives on Western Culture or Sensation and Perception in their free time.

"Prospie Weekend" often brings back happy memories for current Scholars as they recall the students who hosted them and their first moments at BC. Before they know it, some of these high school seniors will become freshmen and be traveling to Ireland, serving at a PULSE placement, and attending Tuesday night meetings. Our current Scholars expressed that the visiting students would make great additions to GPSP and the BC community at large.

The incredible weekend was made possible by the dedicated work of GPSP team Jennie Thomas, Sarah Gregorian, Kathy Bailey, and the admissions team, including Susan Migliorisi, James Dewey-Rosenfeld, and Grant Gosselin.

The GPSP wish the prospective students luck, no matter where their college journey takes them. For those who join GPSP and the BC community, the Scholars look forward to welcoming them in the fall!

Alumni Announcements

Nicole Wong '09 recently published her first book [Mahjong: House Rules from Across the Asian Diaspora](#), and welcomed son, Oliver in September 2024, with her husband Max.

Kathryn Fox '11 and husband David, welcomed son Ronan last July (2024).

Amanda Loewy '15 received the 'Together We Win' annual departmental award this past January, at her company, which recognizes outstanding contributions to team cohesion over the past year.

Mary Kate Cahill '16 was recently promoted to Director of Business Operations and Legislative Affairs with the Illinois State Board of Investment.

Jacob Ciafone '18 married Caroline Weinberg in Brooklyn NY on April 5, 2025.

John Knowles '18 was accepted to the Society of Jesus; he will be joining the UCS Province, Denver, CO entrance Class of 2025 in mid-August.

John Marvin Sipp '18 is now a PhD candidate at UChicago.

Sergio Farina '20 was recently promoted to Investment Associate at Expanse Venture Partners, in Dallas, Texas.

Leena Rijwani '20 will begin her Internal Medicine residency at New York Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center in June.



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