



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM, BOSTON COLLEGE

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that we talked to were incredibly welcoming, and their gratitude for what they had in life was nothing short of astonishing. Despite living with several children in a plywood house no larger than my dorm, the mother of the household showed immense appreciation towards Techo for providing her family with the opportunity to own this home. Equally touching was seeing the connection made between the children of the barrio and our group, especially Fr. Andrea Vicini, who accompanied our class to Nicaragua. The kindness of these children, who freely accepted a group of visitors from another culture, was truly touching. As the smiling children chased our bus down the dirt road out of the barrio, I think we all sensed that it was an experience we would never forget.

Later in the week, we had the chance to visit Nica HOPE,

a charity that operates near the Managua city dump. Several thousand people, many of them children, work all day in toxic conditions at the dump for very little money. Nica HOPE provides supplies and support for children in the community to help them attend school instead of working in the dump, and offers computer and vocational training to help them

attain jobs outside of the dump. After learning about the work that the charity does, we had the chance to make bracelets with young women from the community who have learned through the program how to make jewelry and become independent artisans. The chance to work together, even in such a small way, with people our own age let us have a peek into the lives of people just like us who happened to be born in another part of the world. It was upsetting to think that these girls had it better than most in their community, but seeing firsthand the positive impact that projects like this can have was inspiring.

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clothing, was looking on enviously from an area nearby. We gave them some of our pizza and tried to be friendly to them, but we also knew that there wasn't any way to have a lasting positive impact in

By Lucy Methven, LSOE'16

Walking past the glass doors
of the Undergraduate Admission
office on

with the program. The visiting students were given a chance to have all of their questions answered in the more casual setting of the Corcoran Commons dining hall.

The guests also had many opportunities to experience small tastes of life on the BC campus. Attendance at both Friday's Undergraduate Research Symposium and Saturday's Honors Day Program offered introductions to the academic side of the program. Additionally, free time allowed many prospies to tour the campus, attend classes with their hosts, and even visit with professors.

On Friday evening, program staff and a number of current Scholars accompanied the prospective students as they experienced what a privilege it is to be on a campus located so close to downtown Boston. The group enjoyed dinner at the Hard Rock Café and then attended a performance of *Sister Act* at the Boston Opera House. It was a fun night for all!

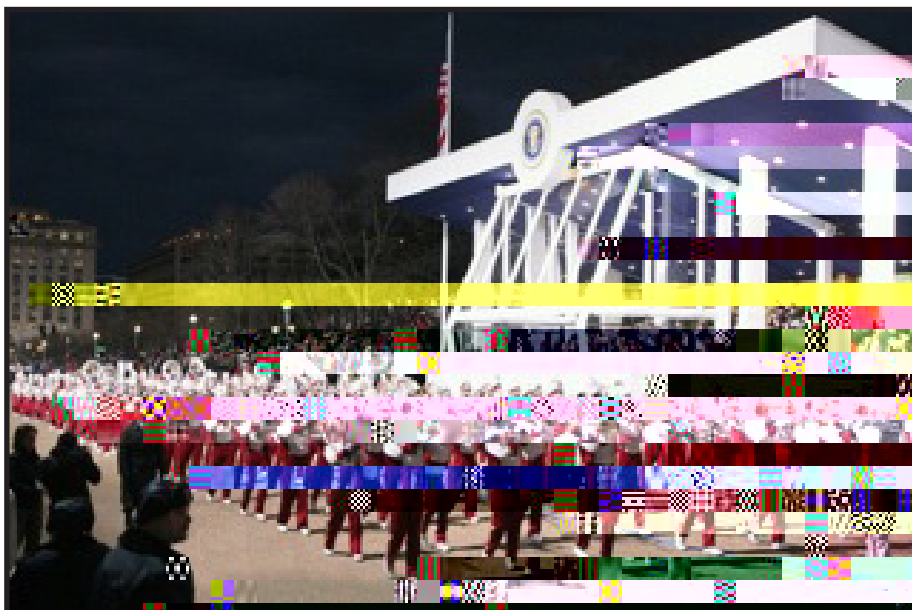
As the weekend wound down, Saturday's Trivia Night provided fun competition among



both current and prospective Scholars. Everyone enjoyed ice cream sundaes as they struggled to remember a myriad of facts, including the name of Beyoncé's daughter and the capital of Vermont. Appropriately enough, Team "Prospie Power" prevailed at this year's game.

A celebration of Mass and a delicious brunch in the Heights Room ended the festivities on Sunday

morning. A number of parents joined their sons and daughters to meet those currently involved in the PSP and learn a bit about it. As Marisa Cochrane Sullivan explained on Thursday evening, the Presidential Scholars Program is "so much more than free tuition." This weekend demonstrated to the fifty-eight visitors just how much the PSP has to offer and where they can potentially fit into this great community.



*Congratulations to
Presidential Scholars*

*David DePalma, A&S'14
Tori Luu, A&S'14
&
Lucas Allen, A&S'16*

*who traveled to Washington DC
with the
Boston College Marching Band
in January to perform in the
Presidential Inauguration Parade!*

By Marie Pellissier, A&S'15

In November, the sophomore Scholars had the opportunity to see “Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson” at the SpeakEasy Stage Company. The show does a good job of educating the audience about the life and times of Andrew Jackson while infusing the proceedings with a heaping dose of angst. Anachronistic costumes, puns, and music helped keep the audience engaged in the story of Andrew Jackson, portrayed as an upset young man with a troubled childhood. After his parents are murdered by Native Americans, young Andrew becomes permanently jaded, convinced

that the only way to preserve the frontier life he loves is to get rid of the European foreigners and the Native Americans whom he believes are encroaching on American settlement. Jackson meets Rachel, the love of his life, and she fantasizes about the life they could have if Jackson weren't a rising political rock star. The Founding Fathers John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, Martin VanBuren, and John Calhoun explain the corrupt bargain that kept Jackson from the presidency in 1824, and in 1828, he is elected President. Jackson consolidates executive power, as the “People's President,” and when Rachel dies, realizes that he may not have set

the best priorities.

The overall consensus in the sophomore class was that this was one of the funniest musicals we had seen with the PSP. Cara Harrington, A&S 15, really enjoyed the avant-garde nature of the show. “It was very colorful... edgy and political and captured my attention from start to finish,” she said. It garnered positive reviews from many of the other Scholars as well. The irony and the humorous take on one of the most interesting parts of American political history made *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* both entertaining and a learning experience.

Brian Soucek, PSP '98, has taken a job as an Assistant Professor at the UC Davis School of Law. He and his partner, Matt, will be moving to San Francisco this summer and he will begin teaching in the fall.

Gary Gabor, PSP '02, started this past fall as an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Hamline University in St. Paul, MN.

Jonathan Pike, PSP '10, has changed jobs and is now the Director at FTI Consulting in Boston.

Andrew Steck, PSP '10, is engaged to Jamie Tiscia, LSOE '10. They will be married in 2014.

Joseph Zabinski, PSP '10, just finished his Masters of Engineering Management (MEM) degree at Dartmouth and is now a Strategic Operations Analyst at Babcock Power in Danvers, MA.

Abby Letak, PSP '12, had a modified version of her Sociology Honors Program/ Scholar of the College thesis “Accidental Intellectuals: LOST

By Nathan Schwan A&S'16

For the second consecutive year, Presidential Scholars met with the President of Boston College, Father William P. Leahy, S.J., to discuss salient student issues ranging from the Core Curriculum and diversity initiatives to the residential dining plans and drinking policy. We met Fr. Leahy—the first time for many of the freshman Scholars—in a formal but relaxed setting where the conversation was open to any Scholar who wished to voice an opinion. First, he addressed us as a group, and then listened attentively to our brief individual introductions, commenting that he would like to know us better because we hold so many positions of leadership around campus. Following the personal statements from over fifty Scholars, Fr. Keenan took the responsibility of moderating the talk due to the wide variety of topics submitted to be addressed. However, as the agenda gained some momentum, the Scholars were quick to participate in the discussion, often passionately voicing concerns and insights into the many points.

One of the most debated topics was the University's commitment to the liberal arts and humanities in a more technologically-oriented world. This was especially relevant because mathematic and scientific skills are often viewed as not only key to the job market but also a priority in an education. Fr. Leahy understood the concern, and recognized this as a problem. He acknowledged that the liberal arts are undervalued in American society. However, he emphasized the University's commitment and

mentioned the new humanities building, Stokes Hall, as a monument to the University's everlasting tradition. Naturally, the talk turned to a conversation about the University's Core Curriculum.

Currently, many people dislike the Core. Often, one may overhear freshman lamenting the courses they must take or seniors regretting the courses they delayed taking. Of course, Scholars are part of the Honors Program and therefore receive a streamlined version of the Core. However, we are neither insensitive to the perception among the student population nor completely shielded from the general problems. A small part of the issue rests in the conflict between an aging tradition and the new society in which it finds itself. The larger scope involves the inflexibility of the Core and the debilitating stringency of options to focus on developing expertise in a specific department, especially for research theses and faculty connection. Although the Core was initially designed to broaden the horizons of every student, the current perception is that it wastes precious time that could be focused elsewhere. The question seems to be whether the Core, currently composed of fifteen mandatory courses, two of which are natural sciences, should simply be the foundation or focus of one's BC career. Fr. Leahy supported the former, arguing that the Jesuit tradition does its job helping students realize their academic potential and interests. He acknowledged, though, that the Core must be transformed to more efficiently address the needs of the students. There is a standing University Core Development

Committee to address these issues. Fr. Leahy was understanding and shared similar concerns, while still displaying unwavering commitment to the Core.

After the difficult segment on the liberal arts, the discussion turned more towards residential issues, such as dining meal plans, drinking, and diversity. Although there was not much time left to dig into solutions for these issues, it was at least reassuring to hear that these problems weigh heavily on Fr. Leahy, as leader of the University. Notably, alcohol culture on campus proved to be a sincere issue for him. Of course, even as students it's hard for us to pin down exact reasons why it is so prevalent. Nevertheless, we tried to offer insight into the issue and brought up the perception that the University's discipline policy is unfair in the way it seems to penalize responsibility and condone irresponsibility. Fr. Leahy once again reaffirmed his understanding and discussed some of the work being done on an administrative level to correct these issues.

Overall, for a one hour session with the President of Boston College—half of which was simply introductions—much was accomplished in terms of getting to know the often busy Fr. Leahy who works ardently to ensure BC is on a progressive track. Although all students did not agree with various aspects of his vision, I do not think anybody who knows him can say that he isn't thoughtful or understanding of the complex concerns surrounding the student body. We certainly thank him for his time with us, and we look forward to seeing him again.

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