

BEACON

INSIDE
—

Family and doctrine
Values guide Dean
Gautam Yadama

Back to basics
BC's roots on display
at Messina College

Cornerstone text
Biz Bracher's book
recommendation



EVERGREEN

For
Janet
and
David
Griffith,
a BC
education
bears
lasting
fruit.

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BEACON is a publication exploring the significant advances made possible at Boston College through the generous and forward-thinking philanthropic investments of both individuals and organizations. Their partnership has helped to bring about remarkable progress in the University’s academic and societal mission. We are grateful.

BEACON

SPRING 2023 - ISSUE 9

beacon.bc.edu

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Hello!

Like countless other alumni, friends, students, faculty, administrators, and families who have joined our community over generations, Boston College's ethos of "Eagles for others" is so imbued in me. It's one of the many reasons why I am thrilled to be the inaugural executive director of BC's Pine Manor Institute for Student Success.

This issue of *Beacon* is brimming with examples of Ignatian values at play in the world. Our cover story (pg. 8) features trustee associate David Griffith '68 and his wife, Janet Griffith, P'00, '02, '06, and their deep affection for BC. I had the pleasure of getting to know them when David was a member of the alumni board of directors, and I greatly admire this couple's commitment as volunteer leaders and University champions who have made a dramatic impact across a wide range of areas, from faculty support to financial aid to athletics. On page 18, you can also read about how Carroll School of Management graduates Fifi '94 and Agus Pangestu '94 are finding ways to contribute to campus from the other side of the world.

The Office Hours section (pg. 2) includes a profile of Dean Gautam Yadama of the BC School of Social Work, a compassionate leader whose life work involves improving lives on a global scale. You'll also have a chance to meet another sociologist and my colleague in the Pine Manor Institute, Erick Berrelleza, S.J. As dean of Messina College, Fr. Erick has an inspiring vision for BC's newest school, which will offer first-generation students and students from underrepresented and underserved communities an excellent two-year education toward attaining an associate's degree. A key component of Messina College will include

formative education programs led by campus figures like Biz Bracher '91, MA'95, PhD'03, P'22, this issue's guest contributor to the Beacon Book Club (pg. 26).

Boston College has always been a good neighbor, and I am proud that the Pine Manor Institute is already raising the aspirations of students from middle school to college. From Chestnut Hill to Brighton, Newton to our new Brookline Campus, inspiring stories are around every corner. Here's to sharing BC's light with the world, and here's to your everlasting commitment to being an Eagle for others.

Joy Moore '81, H'10
Vice President and Executive Director,
Pine Manor Institute for Student Success



INSPIRATION AROUND EVERY CORNER

BOSTON COLLEGE



GLOBAL COMMITMENT, GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY

BY JILL CASERIA

Dean Gautam N. Yadama shares what guides his work leading the Boston College School of Social Work at a time when society needs compassionate people to serve and support the world’s most vulnerable communities.

It once had a place on his father’s desk. Today, Dean Gautam N. Yadama has it on his.

Standing barely three inches tall and carved from heavy stone, his father’s Buddha represents family and doctrine, the very foundation that keeps Yadama grounded and balanced in a chaotic world. It serves as a daily reminder of his commitment to the Boston College School of Social Work (BCSSW)—and its purpose within the global community. “There are two teachings that Buddha talks about that are very important to me,” he says. “First is that suffering is

an element of human life. And second is that compassion is the way for us to be free from suffering.”

The roots of Yadama’s understanding of people and their need for resources and rights were seeded by his father, who worked for the Food and Agriculture Organization at the United Nations. In his role, Yadama’s father tackled the complex issues between the changes to Asia-Pacific forests and the populations dependent on those forests to provide the economic, social, and cultural resources needed to thrive.

In many ways, Yadama—who studies social and environmental challenges of the rural poor—has followed in his father’s footsteps. After a childhood in Hyderabad and New Delhi, India, and time in Rome, Italy, Yadama moved to the United States to study—he earned his undergraduate degree from Wilkes University in Pennsylvania and graduate degrees in social policy and administration from Case Western Reserve University. Throughout college, professors recognized Yadama’s interests in studying people and their environments and encouraged him



5 INTERESTING THINGS IN DEAN GAUTAM N. YADAMA'S OFFICE

The dean keeps several items that bring him joy within arm's reach.

SIMPLICITY

As a young student in India's Jesuit schools, Yadama was taught penmanship. Practice paid off—as seen in his beautiful handwriting. The fountain pen and the bottles of blue and black ink on his desk are used on a regular basis to compose correspondence to colleagues and associates. If he's not near his writing set, he uses his second favorite writing implement—a Sharpie.

A MAN FOR OTHERS

For 14 years, in collaboration with the Open Society Foundation, Yadama was instrumental in training young social welfare and social work professionals from Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, and the Republic of Georgia. This glass paperweight from Baku, Azerbaijan, is a gift from a former student.

FROM THE HEART

A treasured birthday message from his children, written in 2020 when the global pandemic separated them physically.

WORDS TO DEAN BY

These postcards remind him to keep explanations short and sweet. "If I cannot tell the story, or identify the problem clearly and succinctly, then solutions are always elusive."

ORIGIN STORY

When he looks at this Buddha statue, he thinks about his parents, who named him after Buddha—a.k.a. Siddhartha Gautama. His father, who passed away in 1993, kept this same piece on his desk. "This reminds me of who I am and who I need to be on a daily basis."





As a student, Yadama benefited from the conversations and interactions he had with his professors. Today he pays it forward by mentoring students in the BCSSW.

“

Our faculty are not here accidentally. They are here because they want to deliver on the promise of a school of social work and to address in fundamental ways the lives of people and improve the human condition.”

—GAUTAM N. YADAMA



to continue to pursue what he loved. That led him to work in India with poor communities and more than 14 years training young social welfare and social work professionals in Asia.

Although it’s been decades since he earned his degrees, he will always

remember the conversations he had with his professors—and the connection they shared for the work. “I understand the power of faculty influence and now I’m giving back what I experienced,” he says. “That’s why I never say no when a student wants to meet with me.”

Today Yadama supports the BCSSW faculty in much the same way, by greenlighting the projects they believe in. However, research, development, and retention of top faculty require regular funding streams, Yadama emphasizes. “We always need resources to support this kind of translational research—research that leads to social impact and change. The school would not have the kind of impact it has had on communities here and around the world without it. In addition, he says, “our faculty are not here accidentally. They are here because they want to deliver on the promise of a school of social work and to address in fundamental ways the lives of people and improve the human condition.”

Students want to study with BCSSW faculty to become instruments of change, Yadama adds. “Increasingly, undergraduates find that our research projects operationalize their major in environment, philosophy, or economics



No matter the occasion, Yadama prefers to send a handwritten note using a fountain pen.

and anchor them in the lives people live. They come to the school to engage in research and intervention projects that give them a front-row seat to the world’s complex social challenges,” he says. “Graduate students come to get trained, to become licensed professionals, to deliver mental health services, and to deliver trauma-informed services in humanitarian settings throughout the country and around the world. This is not easy work. They understand they’re not going to be paid six-figure salaries, yet they have decided to deeply discount their lifetime earnings because they are mission-driven and want to make an impact on the world.”

Financial aid for master’s students, as well as scholarships and fellowships for

undergraduates, are also critical needs facing the school. “If we want top-notch, committed young people in our society, we cannot leave it to chance that some will remain so focused on addressing societal ills and challenges,” Yadama says. “We have to be very proactive in raising resources to subsidize their education so they don’t have the drag of student loans.”

Relieving the suffering of people—and helping them achieve their dreams and aspirations—is at the center of social

work. Social workers seek to improve the lives and respond to the needs of those who are excluded and/or impoverished. BCSSW students are dispersed around the globe, with nearly half addressing the needs of refugees and migrants. Being on site in agencies is the best way to integrate learning from the classroom into practice, argues Yadama. “We don’t want to do anything superficially here. What we have embarked on, and what we need resources for, is to support our students and faculty and accomplish what we set out to do as a school.”

That’s the conviction that leads his daily work. “I’m not here because I want this title,” he adds. “I’m here to accomplish something with colleagues in the school and my colleagues in the University so that we realize the mission of Boston College and do what a school of social work needs to be doing in the next century.

“Buddha taught that ego clouds our judgment and keeps us from seeing with clarity,” Yadama concludes. “There is much to do to secure our communities and fragile lives.” ■

BCSSW Beyond the Classroom



Finding culturally relevant solutions that help relieve suffering from physical, social, and emotional needs has been at the heart of Yadama’s work for nearly 35 years—and it’s reflected in his leadership of BCSSW since arriving in 2016.

PARTNERSHIPS

The stress that comes from navigating scarcity and broken systems is known to damage mental health—especially in children. “In the U.S., for example, we have increasingly unequal access to housing, good paying jobs, healthcare, education—the basics things that

people need to thrive,” Yadama says. “Then you intersect that with our Latinx and Black communities that tend to bear the disproportionate burden of those disparities. And then you overlay the pandemic on top of that and you get a very complicated set of conditions that people are trying to negotiate.” But the mental health crisis cannot be addressed by just clinicians, he adds. “What is needed are professionals who also understand the environment and context of that person—the community, the family dynamics,” he says. “We’re doing that in Boston. We’re doing that in Chelsea and Lynn.”

Many students also train at Mass General Brigham hospitals and within other large systems through an agreement with BC.

INITIATIVES

To help MSW students understand the full context of the particular stressors that Latinx and Black communities in cities face, BCSSW has established the nationally recognized Latinx Leadership Initiative directed by Professor Rocio Calvo, the newly developed and designed Black Leadership Initiative, and the Trauma Integration Initiative.

FACULTY RESEARCH

Around the world, BCSSW is working to improve the lives of crisis migrants. According to Yadama, more than 100 million people have been forced to flee their homes due to natural disasters, war, political turmoil, and social and religious oppression. Many remain displaced for years. Nearly a quarter of BCSSW faculty are researching and designing interventions to help those most affected. Highlights include:

Salem Professor in Global Practice

Theresa Betancourt, who works to improve family functioning in migrant communities in New England.

Christopher Salas-Wright, MA’09, PhD’12, professor and assistant dean of the doctoral program

, who focuses on mental health and substance use among migrants from Puerto Rico who fled after hurricanes ravaged their homes and destroyed their natural resources.

Assistant Professor Maria Piñeros-Leaño and her colleagues

, who are piloting solutions to improve the mental health and well-being of Venezuelan migrants displaced due to political upheaval.

Tom Crea, professor, chair of global practice and assistant dean of global programs, who is designing special education programs for refugee youth.

Associate Professor Praveen Kumar and others, who are looking into clean cooking systems in refugee camps in Rwanda.





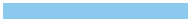


LIFELONG

GET
FIRST

EVERY BC STORY INVOLVES A MOMENT WHEN SOMEONE FIRST FELT AT HOME AT THE HEIGHTS. JANET AND DAVID GRIFFITH '68, P'00, '02, '06, LOVE PROVIDING THAT FEELING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF EAGLES.

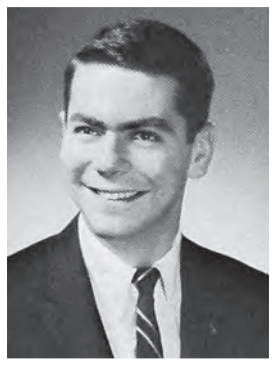
BY KEVIN COYNE



It's an oft-repeated point, the one about your education lasting a lifetime. But clichés have the habit of often being true, and leading Boston College donors Janet and David Griffith '68, P'oo, 'o2, 'o6, are no exception to the rule.

What the Griffiths have seen at BC is a formative education that goes beyond telling the students what to think. Rather, the University's Jesuit, Catholic identity emphasizes teaching students *how* to think, encouraging them to remain curious and question the world and their place in it. At the Heights, it's a journey of discovering oneself, over and again, combined with a profound love and concern for other people.

For David, his first encounter with the value of a real education began in 1964 at Boston College's beloved and bygone Dustbowl. Some 215 miles away from his home in Upstate New York and feeling homesick at the Heights, David sought community in the form of the student involvement fair. He signed up



1968 BC yearbook

“To me, that's what college is about, discovering yourself, the things you like, what you might want to do and be in life.”


—DAVID GRIFFITH

for the Gold Key Society and ROTC, but the group he was really interested in, University Chorale, was conspicuously absent.

Later, he inquired about joining the group, and they responded with prompt instructions—audition at the top floor of Lyons Hall, four o'clock sharp. When he arrived, there sat Dr. C. Alexander Peloquin, University Chorale conductor, at the piano. Here was a man who composed the first Roman Catholic Mass sung in English; collaborated with poet, writer, and Trappist monk Thomas Merton; and would eventually direct the choir for a papal Mass attended by 1.5 million people.

Not that David had the slightest clue about any of that, but he was a keen, inquisitive, and talented enough auditioner to be offered on the spot a place in the illustrious group. From there, he never looked back, taking music courses under Peloquin, performing with the group in New York City (“a seminal moment,” he notes), and falling in love with this art he wouldn't have encountered otherwise.

To hear him speak about it is to understand his passion. “It was unbelievable, overwhelming, and so time-consuming,” David recalls. “To me, that's what college is about, discovering yourself, the things you like, what you might want to do and be in life.”



Legendary University Chorale conductor, Dr. C. Alexander Peloquin, who David relished playing under during his time in UC.



University Chorale, circa 1966.



Following the footsteps of St. Ignatius across Catalonia and Northern Spain, the Griffiths experienced myriad profound moments of prayer and companionship with BC Jesuits and fellow trustees.

Talking to the Griffiths on a bright morning at their winter home in Naples, Florida, they are patient, warm, and jovial. Generally, David speaks in digressions, finding what he wants to say by taking the scenic route, whereas Janet listens, considers, and weighs in a bit more directly.

In the way of couples who've spent a lifetime together, their chemistry is plain to see. Maybe it's the way they finish each other's sentences, preempt each other's punchlines with laughter, or interrupt the other's stories with corrections and counterfactuals.

Fifty years ago this past February, they were getting ready for their first date at a well-loved restaurant in Clinton, New York. They were set up for a blind date event put on by the American Association of University Women, but David wanted to meet Janet beforehand to see how they got on (or, as Janet jokes, "to check out the goods"). Later that week, David remembered to send a Valentine's card. Fast forward seven months and they were married.

June 2023 marks David's 55th BC Reunion. Over the years, David has taken on volunteer leadership roles with the Boston College Alumni Association board of directors and the BC Board of Trustees, and the entire Griffith family has become inextricably tied to the University in ways David never could have imagined when first wandering the dusty grounds where Stokes Hall now stands.

When the time came for their children to start the college search, he had just the place in mind. "We had some of the best times with our kids looking at colleges; we made the process a family affair," says David. "And when push came to shove, they all wanted to go to BC."

David '00 followed his father's path to a career in financial planning by studying in the Carroll School of Management. Then, Kathryn '02 branched out into the Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences to study communication and history, and their youngest, Megan '06, entered the Lynch School of Education and Human Development.

For Janet, perhaps nothing has changed her relationship with BC more than their 2016 pilgrimage with the Board of Trustees to Montserrat, Loyola, and Italy. Tracing the conversion journey of St. Ignatius, they prayed before the Black Madonna, where some 500

years prior, the saint spent the night in contemplation before committing his life to the Lord.

The trip gave her the chance to cultivate friendships with fellow trustees like Tammy '85, MEd'87, and Steve Barry '85, P'14, '17, and get acquainted with BC Jesuits, including University President William P. Leahy, S.J., and Haub Vice President for Mission and Ministry John T. Butler, S.J. "They are always so engaging and welcoming," says Janet. "They've always remembered my name and had a wonderful sense of humor."

The family's BC journey has been a whirlwind, happening the way things often do: slowly, off and on, and then all at once. But the Griffiths wouldn't have it any other way. "BC changed my life, absolutely, completely," says David, squinting out the window into the water of Naples Bay. "I didn't realize how much [my formation at BC] would guide me in my adult life. I've just been totally in love with, enthusiastic for, and loyal to the University since."

"Before meeting David, I had never been to Boston College," says Janet. "It's such a special place. I can see why the students and alumni rave about it."

Recognizing BC's place as a central pillar of their family, David and Janet have grown into impactful and generous supporters of everything from financial aid to teaching and scholarship to athletics at BC.

In 2005, they made their first major gift, endowing a millennium chair. Leveraging his decades of experience as a financial planner, David became co-chair of Boston College's Light the World campaign in 2008. With his help, the campaign raised more than \$1.6 billion, receiving nearly 5,000 planned gifts in the process.



Pictured with the late William B. Neenan, S.J., and University President William P. Leahy, S.J., the Griffiths have always made fast friends with BC Jesuits. In fact, Fr. Neenan presided over the wedding of their daughter Kathryn.

The Griffiths then threw their support behind scholarships through Pops on the Heights and by establishing the Griffith Family Scholarship for students with high financial need. "For us, supporting financial aid at Boston College is a priority because we want people to have the same opportunities we had—for exploration, self-discovery,

and so on—even if they don't have the resources to attend BC," says David. "We find it incredibly rewarding. And the proof is in the pudding—look at the University success rate, what these kids go on to do in their communities and careers."

The latest area to pique the Griffiths' interest has been athletics. Formerly

GRIFFITH GIVING HISTORY



The Griffith Family Millennium Chair
This endowed professorship in the Carroll School of Management was founded in 2005, and supports deserving BC faculty and their research.



The Griffith Family Scholarship
Established in 2021, this endowed scholarship supports students who demonstrate high financial need.



Newton Campus Athletic Facilities
This project will provide revamped facilities for BC men's and women's soccer, lacrosse, and field hockey. (begins summer 2023)



Support Your Sport



Hoag Basketball Pavilion
This expansion of Conte Forum will be the training and practice home for BC men's and women's basketball. (opens fall 2023)

Beyond BC:



Great Camp Sagamore
National Historic Landmark in the Adirondack Mountains that provides educational environmental programming



Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties
A community organization committed to impacting the social and economic well-being of the two-county region



Pops on the Heights



Wall Street Business Leadership Council

tennis players and skiers, Janet and David remain avid golfers, speculative pickleballers, and collegiate sports lovers.

“In the past five years or so, we did a complete 180 on giving to BC Athletics,” David says. “Our philosophy used to be, ‘Why? They’ve got all that revenue from broadcast deals and tickets and apparel.’ Once we learned otherwise, we were all in.”

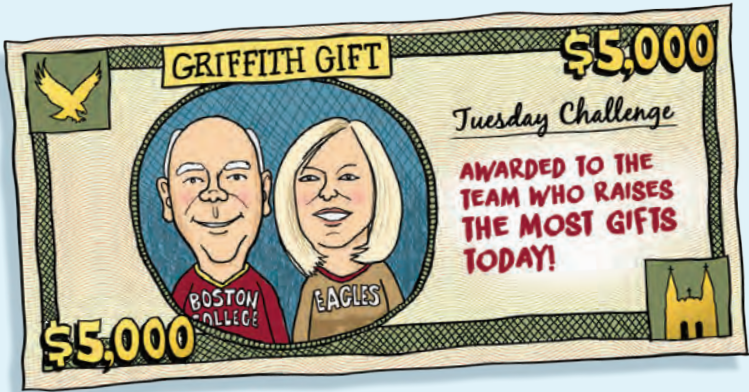
The truth, of course, is that across BC’s 31 varsity teams—especially among those that are not revenue-generating—donor support remains a crucial way of covering basic operating costs. This is where the Griffiths’ leading role in the Support Your Sport Giving Challenge comes in. For the past four years, the



Griffiths have contributed seed funds to the competition, making a monumental difference for teams like sailing, swim and dive, women’s ice hockey, and more. “Janet and I have never had so much fun giving to BC,” says David. “It brings the alums and families of the teams together.”

Alongside these game-changing gifts, the Griffiths have made significant contributions to the Hoag Basketball Pavilion project and athletics facilities on the Newton Campus, in addition to naming the newly renovated women’s ice hockey locker room.

GOOD SPORTS



The Support Your Sport Giving Challenge aims to increase giving among alumni and friends by pitting BC’s 31 teams against each other in a week-long fundraising competition. All gifts go directly to the designated team, providing resources for equipment, recruiting, travel costs, and more.

“It makes miles of difference for teams that don’t have a bunch of booster support,” David says. “There’s no better example of that than lacrosse. Coach Acacia

Walker-Weinstein is a rockstar, and in the past few years they’ve brought our beloved alma mater a national championship on the heels of a hugely successful Support Your Sport week.”

This past February, the Griffiths gave \$200,000 as seed money, and the Challenge raised \$1.4 million. “That’s almost a sevenfold return,” he adds. “Any day we can do that for our alma mater, that’s what we’re going to do.”



Bolstered by several pivotal Support Your Sport campaigns, BC Lacrosse has risen to new heights, claiming the program’s first National Championship and ACC Championship in 2021 and 2023 (pictured above), respectively.



(Left to right) David, Kathryn, Janet, Megan, and David Jr. celebrate Megan's graduation. Even with their children long graduated, David and Janet still make a point to frequently visit the Heights.



“The University was an important part of our children’s lives. They were formed there, each in different ways. It helped them define their character as they moved into adulthood.”

—DAVID GRIFFITH

Beyond BC, the Griffiths' philanthropy extends to a number of important local organizations. Janet has taken the lead on giving back to nonprofits that "have their fingers on the pulse of the local community," chief among them being the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties. Founded in 2008, the Griffith Family Fund has awarded over \$1 million in grants to nearly 30 community organizations, including the Rescue Mission of Utica, Hope House, the Presbyterian Home, the Women's Fund of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, YWCA of the Mohawk Valley, and the Community Foundation's Racial Equity and Social Justice Fund.

Across all their philanthropic efforts, the common thread is Janet's and David's almost instinctive tendency to say "yes" to those in need. They're eager to invest in the next generation, providing a world- and self-expanding education for current and future Eagles.



The Griffiths wouldn't trade a summer spent at their cherished family house in the Adirondack Mountains for the world. They love hiking, fishing, and taking in the abundant natural beauty.

Which brings us back to where we began. In Boston College, the Griffiths have found both a home and a charitable partner, identifying with its mission to

care for the whole person throughout their journey. Such education is the work of a lifetime, and the Griffiths are just getting started. ■

“

We feel the need to give back to the local community in which we've lived, brought up our family, and earned our living.”

—DAVID GRIFFITH

PLANNING MAKES PERFECT

Over the course of a 53-year career in financial planning, David has seen firsthand the fruits of planned giving and speaks with a casual fluency regarding prudent financial management.

“The big thing with planned giving,” he says, “is educating the potential donor on how and why to do it. It

can be very wise from a tax point of view, and the benefits are obvious for universities. It's no coincidence that one of BC's largest gifts was a planned one, from the Robsham estate.”

During his tenure as chair of the Shaw Society, 1,285 new members joined the group by making a planned gift or bequest intention to the University. “Your ideal donor,” he adds, “will give regularly from year to year, make principal gifts to campaigns, but also inform the University that they've included the institution in their estate plan.”

“What more genuine thing can you do than offer a piece of your legacy?”





Hello, my name is:

Andrew Davidson began his tenure as senior vice president for university advancement in March 2023, bringing with him more than two decades of experience in fundraising at Harvard and Dartmouth.

A Massachusetts native, Davidson remembers “jumping around” in his living room following the Flutie-to-Phelan Hail Mary. He is a Rutgers University alum and has multiple extended family members who have graduated from BC, including an uncle, nieces and nephews, and his late father-in-law, Hon. Francis P. O’Connor, JD’53, who served as a justice on the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court.

Why were you interested in this role and Boston College in particular?

AD: It’s three reasons: timing, opportunity, and mission. Dartmouth is winding down its campaign and so it was a natural time to start to think about what to do next. It’s a great place and I had great colleagues, but this opportunity came along and I started to talk to some people about it—trustees, senior administrators—and it became abundantly clear that it’s an exciting time

to be at Boston College, that it is a school on the move. The alumni are excited, the faculty are excited, everyone’s ready to just keep that trajectory going. So you want to go into a place that is firing on all cylinders, and that’s where BC is right now. It also has a unique and compelling mission, one that I personally believe in. I have been pinching myself because sometimes you get the timing, sometimes you get the opportunity. But it really helps if you also believe in the mission.

You say BC is unique in its mission. What sets it apart?

AD: There are great schools out there that are teaching some really talented, fabulous kids. Anything that has to do with faith or living your life that way is a third rail, they won’t touch it. And here not only is it touched, it’s embraced. All that students do here is inculcated in the Jesuit mission and the belief that you’re going to go out in the world and use your talents, your gifts, and your education to help serve others.

What sorts of commonalities exist among the BC alumni in your network?

AD: I’ve yet to meet a BC alum that’s not passionate about this place. They can be

passionately happy, they can be passionately upset—but at least they’re passionate. And that’s key. It’s hard to work with a group that’s apathetic.

So, how do we foster that passion?

AD: They’re starting families, or they’re working, or they’re contributing to their community in some way. Understandably, we recess into the background of their lives. And so we have to figure out how to intersect with their lives where they are, provide some meaningful context, and keep those embers burning so that when they do have time to reengage with us at the level that they can, we’re there to meet them where they are.

What impact do you want to have in this role?

AD: I’m joining a high-performing organization, so my first goal is to do no harm. But I imagine spending some time listening, learning, hearing how things are done and then trying to figure out where I can have an impact. I want our advancement office to be a magnet for talent. If you want to grow in your career, and you want to learn, and you want to do it in a great place with great people, you come to BC. ■

Andrew Davidson

BC’s new senior vice president for university advancement is excited to join a Boston College that he says is “firing on all cylinders.”



EARLIEST BC MEMORY
Jumping around the living room after the Flutie Hail Mary

21 Years in advancement

HOMETOWN
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts

HOBBIES
Rowing, hiking, running, volunteerism

FAVORITE BC TRADITION
“Whatever brings the community together, I want to experience it.”

PREVIOUS ROLE
Vice President for Development
Dartmouth College

OUR VISION HAS WIDENED”

How Fifi '94 and Agus Pangestu '94 are making a difference in the world—and at BC

BY DIANA GRIFFITH



Agus and Fifi at their graduation from the Carroll School of Management in 1994.

EVEN FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD, Setiawaty “Fifi” and Agus Pangestu don’t let distance—or 12 time zones—keep them away from Boston College. Both 1994 graduates, the Pangestus are active members of the BC Alumni Association chapter in Jakarta, Indonesia; have been ardent ambassadors for BC in their community, and, most recently, made a gift to support 245 Beacon Street, BC’s new home of integrated science, innovation, and entrepreneurship. It’s not strictly nostalgia that keeps them connected, it’s their belief in where Boston College is headed and the global impact it can have.

“We were so impressed with BC’s new engineering department and the new building. We think it will take BC to another level,” says Agus, the president director of Barito Pacific, the largest integrated petrochemical producer and the largest geothermal energy producer in Indonesia. “We see firsthand the need for innovative solutions to address environmental, economic, and social challenges, and we believe BC can play an important role.”

The couple toured the building in 2022 as part of a campus visit with their daughters. Inspired by their own undergraduate experiences, the Pangestus have encouraged their children to study in the U.S.; Philippe, their oldest, graduated from Stanford and now works in New York City; Isabel, the middle child, attends Cornell University; and Sophia, their youngest, is eyeing schools on the East Coast. “It was probably the golden years of our

lives, and we want them to experience that,” says Fifi.

FORMATIVE EXPERIENCES

As a teen, Agus left Jakarta to attend Boston College High School, boarding with a couple who were on the faculty at BC and who encouraged him to apply. Growing up in Singapore, Fifi knew she wanted a great education—in a place with all four seasons—and BC quickly became her top choice.

They met early in their first semester and soon began dating, spending most of their time with a large network of Asian students at BC and other schools around the city. Expecting to return home to join their familys’ businesses, they both enrolled in the Carroll School of Management where they often found themselves in class together.

“Our favorite professor, hands down, was Professor Richard Tresch, who taught our principles of economics course; he was the reason we both chose economics as one of our majors,” says Fifi. “His lectures were always so early in the morning, and yet they were the most packed, because he always came in so energetic, so full of humor. That really gave us a lasting impression.”

They stayed in touch with Tresch after graduation, visiting when they came to campus and, at their 25th reunion, they contributed to a research fund named in his honor. “We always remember that, because BC prepared us so well for our career, for the ‘real world,’ we should give back to BC as much as we can.”

JOURNEY TO JAKARTA

After graduation, they moved to New York City where Agus worked as an investment banking analyst and Fifi worked as a junior auditor. When the Asian financial crisis hit in 1997, Agus’s father asked him to come home to help with the family business, Barito Pacific. The couple moved to Indonesia, got married, and went to work, calling on their lessons in finance and economics to help the firm pivot from the declining timber industry to a diversified portfolio that includes petrochemicals, mining, geothermal energy, infrastructure, and other sectors.

Fifi worked alongside her husband and his parents until 2017 when she was asked to take over as executive director of Bakti Barito, the firm’s philanthropic foundation.



Economics professor Richard W. Tresch

“Our favorite professor, hands down, was Professor Richard Tresch, who taught our principles of economics course; he was the reason we both chose economics as one of our majors. His lectures were always so early in the morning, and yet they were the most packed, because he always came in so energetic, so full of humor. That really gave us a lasting impression.”

—FIFI PANGESTU



The Pangestu family gathered to celebrate the Lunar New Year in “auspicious red outfits”. (Left to right) Philippe, Sophia, Fifi, Agus, and Isabel.



Agus Pangestu with proud parents Bapak Prajogo Pangestu (right) and Ibu Harlina Tjandinegara (left).

“Originally, the foundation operated like a charity, providing disaster relief and making donations to people in need,” says Fifi. “When I came on, I wanted it to have a special focus so that it could be more significant and more sustainable.”

Now the foundation focuses on four key areas: education, the environment, economic empowerment, and social progress. One of their flagship initiatives is an effort to completely rethink plastic waste management, from school-based training on responsible consumption to innovative community recycling programs, coupled with extensive

research into cutting-edge solutions such as plastic asphalt roads.

PURPOSEFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Inspired in part by the excellent teachers they found at BC, the Pangestus are passionate about education, both through their foundation’s initiatives and in their own family.

“When we brought the girls to visit BC last summer, we were blown away by how beautiful the campus still is, how impressive the faculty are,” says Fifi. As part of their visit, the family met with students and faculty from BC’s new human-centered engineering program and the Schiller Institute for Integrated Science and Society.

“It’s very futuristic, because a lot of colleges still put engineering as a separate school and it becomes too scientific, too technical,” says Fifi. “But if you’re working across disciplines, that’s when you can help solve real problems.”

Excited by BC’s multidisciplinary approach, the Pangestus see the potential for collaboration between their

foundation and BC’s engineering program, the Schiller Institute, and other new initiatives. They have already invited faculty to visit their plastic recycling plant and other sites in Indonesia, and they hope to sponsor student internships and collaborative research projects in the future.

“BC is a highly ranked research institution, and they are working to address many of the same global challenges as we are,” says Agus. “We hope our gift can help maximize 245 Beacon’s potential as an interdisciplinary, entrepreneurial hub for the BC community.”

Fifi agrees, noting that their work with Bakti Barito has expanded their view of what philanthropy can achieve. “With our first gift to the Tresch Research Fund, at that point all we were hoping for was to help meet the financial needs of some graduate students. But now, our vision has widened, and we want to do all we can to help the underprivileged and to advocate for BC. That’s our goal now.” ■



a CLOSER LOOK

at 245 Beacon Street

The Pangestus' gift will go toward BC's new landmark building, 245 Beacon Street, a state-of-the-art research facility designed to foster faculty and student collaboration across the natural sciences, engineering, the humanities, and social sciences. Housed within the five-story, 157,000-square-foot facility are the Schiller Institute for Integrated Science and Society,

the Department of Engineering, the Edmund H. Shea Jr. Center for Entrepreneurship, the Computer Science Department, and research laboratories. The building also serves as a hub for making and prototyping, includes cutting-edge studios for learning, and provides flexible spaces for impromptu brainstorming.

181

seats in the main auditorium, which is used for teaching and signature events such as the Lowell Humanities Series



3

makerspaces: The Hatchery, Academic Prototyping Studio, and Rapid Prototyping Shop



165

pounds of espresso beans ordered each month for the Tully Café and Commons



Return on Investment

Wall Street Business Leadership Council
inspires a sense of community away
from the Heights

BY ALLISON DONLAN

National rankings perennially show that BC is a powerhouse in business, and this stellar reputation launches our graduates into their career journeys. For those who find their way to the New York metro area, the Wall Street Business Leadership Council is a welcoming network that exists to connect its members with one another and maintain their engagement with the Heights. Over nearly 40 years, this influential group of dedicated Eagles has built a community worthy of BC's business accolades and has made incomparable contributions to scholarship support at the University through its signature event.

ABOUT THE COUNCIL

The Boston College Wall Street Business Leadership Council was formed in 1986 to create a formal network of BC alumni,

parents, and friends in the business sector. The "Wall Street" part of the group's name, however, is not indicative of its true reach, which extends far beyond financial services. Guided by BC ambassadors on the executive and young alumni committees, the council strives to be as inclusive as possible and to represent the BC of today, engaging in partnerships with New York area alumni chapters, as well as affinity groups such as the Council for Women of Boston College and the AHANA Alumni Advisory Council. An annual slate of forums and networking events center on leadership and formation, two pillars of BC's mission, and the group's signature event is the annual Tribute Dinner, a black-tie fundraiser that has raised more than \$50 million for BC's Gabelli Presidential Scholars Program (GPSP) in its 33-year history.





Class of 2023 Presidential Scholars: back row (left to right) Liam Dietrich, Benjamin Siegel, Gregori Estime, Aidan O'Neill, Kathleen Bailey (director), Jennie Thomas (associate director), Rishi Srinivasan, Connor Roukey, Charles Viehl; front row (left to right): Molly Binder, Lauren Gillet, Mercedes Hoyos, Julia Kim, Caroline Bald, Isabelle Jones, Neha Suneja, Hannah Yoon

THE GABELLI PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM

How does one become a Presidential Scholar? It starts with ranking among the top one percent of the national first-year applicant pool. To be considered BC worthy, these students must also demonstrate outstanding leadership ability and character.

Originally established in 1991, the Presidential Scholars Program was renamed in 2014 in appreciation of Mario Gabelli, P'90, '94, '95, '00, '11, and his longstanding generosity to the program. Presidential Scholars are the only recipients of merit-based financial aid at BC. Their reward is a four-year, full-tuition scholarship, combined with

the best possible BC experience that includes international travel, dedicated service opportunities, mentorship, and more.

Each April, senior Presidential Scholars also have the opportunity to dress to the nines and make the trip to New York City for the Wall Street Business Leadership Council Tribute Dinner. There, they meet face-to-face with some of the benefactors who have supported the program, a mutually thrilling get-together that serves as a capstone to four years of hard work at the Heights.

“

These are truly amazing students and individuals, who I know will ‘go forth and set the world aflame’ in the spirit of St. Ignatius. At the Council, we are so proud to assist in providing support for the Gabelli Presidential Scholars Program.”



— JON RATHER '82, P'10, '12, '14, '17,
CHAIR OF THE WALL STREET BUSINESS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

GPSP ALUMNI

To date, 411 Presidential Scholars have graduated from BC, fueled by their scholarships and armed with the tools, skills, and connections they need to follow their passions. Today, they exhibit their leadership skills as medical or law students, teachers, entrepreneurs, analysts, researchers, and in many other fields.

Meet a few GPSP alumni:



CARLY SULLIVAN '20

At BC: Trani Presidential Scholar
Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences
Majors: International Studies, Political Science
Minor: Ethics and Social Justice
Now: Student at Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, D.C.



JACOB KELLEHER '21

At BC: Real Estate Council Presidential Scholar
Lynch School of Education and Human Development
Majors: Secondary Education, Math
Minors: Educational Theatre, Teaching English Language Learners
Now: Studio manager, resident stage manager, and theatre educator at Sunshine Dance & Bright Lights Theatre in Glendale, Illinois



SARA SAMIR '21

At BC: Powers Family Presidential Scholar
Carroll School of Management
Concentration: Economics
Minor: Theology
Now: Business analyst at McKinsey & Company in Boston



GPSP introduced me to people and places that continue to inform my academic and professional endeavors. The opportunities made possible by this program—to engage with peers and mentors at BC, as well as to connect with local and international communities—were fundamental to the education I received and the perspective I developed.”

CARLY SULLIVAN '20

Being a part of the GPSP was a defining part of my undergraduate experience, but I realize only now how important the program was for shaping my post-graduate life. The GPSP provided me with the tools and experiences to see the world from a holistic viewpoint. As a current theatre educator, I find myself drawing on these experiences daily to best support my students and provide them with the same kind of ‘education of the whole person’ provided to me by the GPSP.”

JACOB KELLEHER '21

Whether it was traveling to Venice and Costa Rica with our class or getting the opportunity to work in Switzerland for the summer, the experiences GPSP gave me were instrumental to my development and overall experience at Boston College. I met some of my best friends through the program, and the memories we have together are ones I will never forget. I cannot speak highly enough of GPSP, and I look forward to giving back to the program and helping other students just as several generous alumni did for me.”

SARA SAMIR '21

THE 33RD WALL STREET BUSINESS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL TRIBUTE DINNER was held on April 20, 2023, at Cipriani Wall Street. The occasion opened with a rousing rendition of the national anthem performed by Broadway actor and Presidential Scholar alumna Patricia Noonan '07 and featured a moving speech by Rishi Srinivasan '23.

The President's Medal for Excellence was awarded to Tom Coughlin, P'04, the stalwart football coach who served at the helm of the BC Eagles from 1991 to 1993 and led the New York Giants to two Super Bowl titles as head coach. Inspired by the life and tragic loss of Eagle Jay McGillis, the coach also founded the Tom Coughlin Jay Fund Foundation, which seeks to provide resources and support—financial and otherwise—to children with cancer and their families. ■



Rishi Srinivasan '23



(Left to right)
Jon Rather '82, Tom Coughlin, University President William P. Leahy, S.J.



THE PRESIDENT'S MEDAL FOR EXCELLENCE

In addition to feting Presidential Scholars, the Wall Street Business Leadership Council Tribute Dinner is also the venue for the annual awarding of the President's Medal for Excellence—the highest honor bestowed by the University—presented by University President William P. Leahy, S.J. The selected award recipient is a shining example of those rare men and women who truly personify BC's motto, "Ever to Excel."

Past Recipients of the President's Medal

- Guido M. Barilla, P'21, '22, '23
- Geoffrey T. Boisi '69, P'11
- Lawrence A. Bossidy, P'83, '92
- Barbara Bush*
- John S. Chalsty
- Raymond G. Chambers
- Tom Coughlin, P'04
- Charles F. Dolan
- George E. Doty*, P'84
- Mario J. Gabelli, P'90, '94, '95, '00, '11
- Richard A. Grasso
- Jeffrey Immelt, H'10
- Alfred F. Kelly Jr., P'09, '11, '13, '16, '26
- Jack Kemp*
- Carolyn A.* and Peter S. Lynch '65, H'95, P'01
- Wellington T. Mara*, P'76, '79, '86, '95
- Eugene M. McQuade, P'06, '10
- U.S. Senator George J. Mitchell
- Denise M. Morrison '75
- Anne M. Mulcahy, P'05
- Greg J. Norman, P'05
- Robert L. Reynolds
- Francis C. Rooney Jr.*, H'86, P'76, '78, '87
- Philip Schiller '82
- John F. Smith Jr.
- Daniel P. Tully*, P'79, '86, '88
- William J. Vouté*, P'88, '89, '94
- Sanford I. Weill
- William C. Weldon, P'00
- Michael D. White '74, P'95
- Suzanne* and Bob Wright, H'00
- Frank G. Zarb

*Deceased



The legacy of William B. Neenan, S.J., at Boston College is beyond measure. For nearly 35 years, he personally curated the “Dean’s List” and shared it with the BC community. We honor and continue that treasured tradition through Beacon Book Club.

Michigan native Elizabeth “Biz” Bracher ’91, MA’95, PhD’03, P’22, first came to BC in 1987 as a first-year student and has since spent all but two years at the Heights. She first met Fr. Neenan while waiting in the cold for a bus back to Newton Campus. Fr. Neenan had brought cookies for the waiting students. The two became great friends.

Now director of the Cornerstone Seminar Program in the Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences—which offers course-based advising opportunities for first-year students—Bracher, a voracious reader, keeps a copy of Fr. Neenan’s complete Dean’s List pinned to the wall by her computer.

“Fr. Neenan and I would have this conversation about not just the books on his list, but also what books you should read again every couple of years,” she says. “*Charlotte’s Web*. *Tuesdays with Morrie*. *A Lesson Before Dying*.



BIZ BRACHER ’91, MA’95, PHD’03, P’22, DIRECTOR, CORNERSTONE PROGRAM, MORRISSEY COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Crossing to Safety. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. *Let Your Life Speak*.”

The latter is Bracher’s choice for Beacon Book Club. She chose it because of the ways in which Parker Palmer’s book so closely aligns with her work and says this passage best summarizes its message: “*Vocation does not come from willfulness. It comes from listening. I must listen to my life and try to understand what it is truly about—quite apart from what I would like it to be about—or my life will never represent anything real in the world, no matter how earnest my intentions.*”

Bracher is one of several teachers of the popular elective *Courage to Know*, which is designed to confront students

with the most fundamental formational questions that guide their years at BC and beyond: *Who am I? What am I good at? Who am I called to become?* For as long as she can remember, Bracher has given away copies of *Let Your Life Speak* to graduating seniors because of its ability to take on new meanings.

“Every five years or so, you’re in a very different space developmentally—you might be in a different job, your relationships are in a different place,” she says. “I knew that when I started teaching in the Cornerstone program, that it had to be in a fundamental spot. And it’s amazing how much seniors appreciate the book.” ■

Leading *from* Experience



“

People are eager to know what we're building here. I often say that this new school will help BC reflect on its mission because starting fresh causes us to consider why we do what we do and ask if there's a different way to do it.”

—ERICK BERRELLEZA, S.J.

The mission of the new Messina College has deep personal connections for Dean Erick Berrelleza, S.J.

BY DIANA GRIFFITH

[What does the Sicilian port city of Messina have to do with the history of Boston College?](#)

It was there in April 1548, that the recently founded Society of Jesus opened the first Jesuit school accessible to students from every social class. That moment would become instrumental in developing education for centuries to come.

Fast forward 475 years to modern-day Massachusetts. Boston College has risen from its own humble beginnings to a position of prominence as a leading research institution. Among the University's latest academic undertakings is a college with a name—and a mission—that pays homage to the origins of Jesuit education.

Leading the charge is Erick Berrelleza, S.J., MDiv'15, the founding dean of Messina College, and a first-generation college graduate himself. The son of immigrants, Fr. Berrelleza is a sociologist whose scholarship focuses on urban sociology and immigration and who feels a deep connection to the Messina mission.

Here, he speaks about the work that goes into launching an entirely new college and his personal attachment to the effort.



Part of the University’s Pine Manor Institute for Student Success initiative, Messina College seeks to provide a transformative Jesuit, Catholic education for students who are first-generation, lower-income, or from underrepresented groups. The two-year school will offer its 200 students a traditional college experience in facilities on BC’s Brookline Campus (formerly Pine Manor College). Students will earn associate’s degrees and leave prepared to continue their studies at a four-year school or pursue other goals and career interests.

What will distinguish Messina from other two-year schools?

EB: The real distinguishing factor is ours will be a residential college. But as it is a part of BC, we don't need to create new systems to support it and can draw on the expertise of existing departments and programs. That includes Student Affairs, Mission and Ministry, BC Dining, campus recreation, and many more. The academic programs have benefited from conversations and collaboration with the other undergraduate schools within BC, and I look forward to continuing to work with deans and faculty across campus.

Can you describe the type of student you expect to see at Messina?

EB: Students we hope will be applying are right in our backyard, in Boston and the surrounding areas, many need the type of education that Messina will provide. They're young people having to work to help support their family; education may not be at the forefront of their minds. I think we have to let them know that this is, in the long run, going to help their families a lot more. They're also young people who will need significant amounts of financial aid. They will likely qualify for the federal Pell Grant and other aid, and BC will meet the rest of their demonstrated financial need, just as we do for other undergraduate students.

Why is a two-year degree program a good fit for these students? For BC?

EB: This program gives students an entry into higher education. Some will see it as a pathway to an additional two years of study at BC or elsewhere, and some will say, "I'm ready to go to work." We've been working with lots of partners in industry to make sure that the design of these programs ensures students will graduate with the skills employers are looking for. They want a diverse, skilled workforce. That's why we have engaged with our industry partners from the very beginning, to share our thoughts on the curriculum and evaluate how it provides what students need to be employable.

What kind of potential does the Brookline Campus hold?

EB: There are some great bones to these buildings, and Messina will be on part of the Brookline Campus in buildings that will be renovated. In the future, we hope to construct a new residence hall. From a housing perspective, we want to give students an experience they might have on the Chestnut Hill Campus or the Newton Campus. Beyond Messina, there is great opportunity for other BC uses.

What has it been like building this whole program from the ground up?

EB: I've been a trustee for several high schools and universities, so it's not totally new. I've learned from sociology about an organization. It's a big puzzle, and you're just putting together the pieces. I would stress that I'm not building this on my own—there are hands at work in making this possible. I draw on lots of experts, here at BC and throughout the larger Jesuit educational network, to help make sure we're designing something that will meet the needs of our program and students.

What has the response been so far to Messina College?

EB: People are eager to know what we're building here. I often say that this new school will help BC reflect on its mission because starting fresh causes us to consider why we do what we do and ask if there's a different way to do it.

Why is the mission of Messina College so personal to you?

EB: My parents are immigrants and that certainly plays a big part in what I research and teach. I have been a Jesuit for 18 years, and my life as a Jesuit has attuned my eyes to see and my heart to respond to populations of people at the margins. Now, my work will include providing access to a transformative Jesuit education and making sure that we create spaces where our students feel they belong. When I think about what BC is undertaking with Messina, I am proud that this University is responding to the need for increased educational access.

What drew you to the Jesuits?

EB: A number of things, timing being one of them. 9/11 happened during my first year of college. I think a lot of the big questions that usually come later in life, like "What kind of contribution will I make to society?" came a lot earlier for me. I look back on that, not as the defining moment, but one of the moments that started getting me to question what I was doing, what I was studying, what I wanted to contribute to. I still remember a quote from Fr. Greg Boyle [founder of Homeboy Industries] saying, "We care for a population no one cares about." And it just sat with me. In my mind I was thinking, who are these men? Is this something I could do? It was always a kernel in my mind, and I decided to give it a shot, not knowing where it would lead me, but here I am. ■



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