

Zannos Grekos  
Georgetown experience

After reading last year's reaction essays, I find it difficult to write about my experience without sounding trite. The essays all center on the fantastic professors, informative lectures, unique dining, and diverse students, or what I call the "Georgetown experience." As a means of avoiding reiterating the classic Georgetown experience, I intend to inform you of the particular people who made each lecture, seminar, dining experience, or random conversation so unbelievably memorable.

To begin, let us focus on the academic juggernauts that make up the professional roster. Sitting in a lecture hall surrounded by one hundred and fifty acquisitive students and focusing on a single speaker embodies a new and sometimes daunting task for me. A compelling topic does not inherently capture the room's attention; it takes more. I enjoyed imagining if I had the responsibility of teaching, and hopefully entertaining, these young minds and picturing which professors I would imitate; this practice helped me uncover the tactics and strategies they used. Professors Arend and Arsenault hold the spot for the most successful in capturing their audiences' attention. The topics Arend covered may not have always held inherent interest, but his upbeat demeanor and pronounced passion for the subjects traps even the most distractible student in a trance. Leaving the mundane basics of the international system to himself highlights how well they planned this program.

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Another impressive professor, Dr. Arsenault, discussed terrorism in the international system. This topic readily lends itself to captivating its audience, but Arsenault did not attempt to simply captivate us: she succeeded in enthralling us. By constantly calling on the students and using her engaging personality, she illustrated the momentous issue of terrorism in all its different forms and the current remedies for this problem in a manner that still resonates with me.

Although I highlighted the most successful of the speakers, some lectures bored me to my bones. On the topic of nuclear arms, the professor had the most naturally attractive material, yet his wallflower-esque personality and total disregard for the particular interests of his audience had me and my comrades struggling to keep our eyes open. The wide range of professors and topics gifted me an invaluable insight into collegiate class structures and courses that I could have never gleaned elsewhere, and obviously the extensive knowledge I acquired helps me shape my ever-expanding worldview in a pivotal way.

I am a bit of a social butterfly and avid people watcher, so the opportunity to engulf myself in a petri dish of one hundred and fifty bright, social-science-minded individuals embodied a new and totally invigorating experience. My roommate and I came from the same city and vaguely knew each other. The value in having a unique roommate from an entirely different walk of life has its obvious benefits, but to have a roommate who hails from a very similar path allowed us to bond

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quickly and then work on making a versatile friend group. Of all the students, I spoke to almost everyone. I became acquainted with around a hundred of them and friends with about fifty kids; of that fifty, my main friend group consisted of 12 people, and of that 12, I constantly find myself thinking of two: Connor and Nina.

Connor has a debilitating illness that has rendered his legs useless. On the first day of classes, I noticed that he would make a friend but then lose them quickly, for they lacked the patience to walk with him at his frustratingly slow pace. This irked me. Accustomed to walking with my disabled grandpa, accompanying Connor on the walks across campus took very little from me but meant the world to him. And our friendship allowed him access to my friends who followed my lead and offered their patience to get to know this outstandingly sweet kid. Connor even told me that he had done the same program last year, but he found this year exponentially more enjoyable due to his new friends. That comment illustrated to me how a small act of kindness could snowball into a drastic beneficial change in someone else's experience.

Next, let us talk about Nina. Nina alternates from living in Australia, where she was born, and California. Although her personality resembles that of no one I have ever meet before, my most memorable moment with her came on a night when a storm rolled through D.C. Due to her unique living pattern, she had avoided experiencing a rainy season and therefore had failed to ever witness a rain

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storm. I deal with Florida showers every day, but what felt mundane to me absolutely amazed her. To watch someone dance in the rain for the first time and stare deeply into the clouds just to catch a glimpse of lightning created an unexplainable feeling that still resides inside of me.

I could write a short book about my Georgetown experience, but I chose to narrow it down and focus on just the people. Next year's students will eagerly look to our essays for what to expect, and my essay offers them very little on the field trip to the monuments or listening to congressmen. However, my essay's goal stems from a necessity to paint the picture of a unique Georgetown experience. Surely they will not meet Connor or Nina, but they will meet people who amaze them, challenge them, and enthrall them. Meeting new people from a pool as strong as those who go to this program embodies the most validating aspect of my trip. I could google the information from the lectures in my living room, but the stunning professors bring the topics to life in a way that very few websites and even institutions can. This experience taught me loads about the international system, college life, people, and myself. I am ridiculously thankful for this opportunity, and I will definitely use what I have learned in my future endeavors.