



THE STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

Boston University College of General Studies



What are some of the benefits of being a College of General Studies student?

"I was able to create a community. I really liked how CGS classes were really small. It let me connect better with my professors and my peers." —Marissa Kachadoorian (CGS'18, CAS'20)

"There's a lot of value in small class sizes, being able to talk one on one with your professors, work on teams, and develop friendships that transcend the CGS experience. In other colleges, you almost miss out on the opportunity to be creative and collaborative and develop the ability to become a good teammate—all of which are so important going into our jobs and careers in the future." —Mari Fletcher (CGS'16, COM'18)

"It's a really unique first-year experience. It allows for self-discovery. Between the gap semester and then the spring semester and then the time abroad, there's a lot of new experiences and a lot of ways to step outside of your comfort zone and discover more about yourself. It's also just really fun, and it fosters really close relationships." —Karsten Grape (CGS'19, Pardee'21)

"I don't know anyone who got to study abroad their second semester freshman year—and I got to do it with all of my friends. It's definitely one of those one-in-a-million experiences that I would never take back." —Marina Pence (CGS'19, CAS'21)



"I went on a trip with a program called National Outdoor Leadership School. It was 85 days in southern Chile in the Patagonia region." —Miles Jones (CGS'19, Questrom'21)

"I took a chemistry class and worked at a chocolate store. I liked it because it gave me a little bit more time with my family, and it also gave me the opportunity to gain work experience." —Marissa Kachadoorian (CGS'18, CAS'20)

"I worked at my old high school in their makerspace, helping students build projects and learn building skills." —Maddie Salman (CGS'20)

"I am so thankful that I had this time off from school to focus on my own personal interests." —Guenevere Dunstan (CGS'20)

How do students take advantage of the fall before their first semester?



Photo by Dave Green



What is it like starting your first semester of college in January?

"You definitely feel a sense of community, especially at CGS. The moment I walked through those doors, everyone was so welcoming." —Phoebe Bobola (CGS'18, CAS'20)

"The first week or so was tough. But after you settle into classes and settle into where you're living and start to get to know your professors and your classmates, it works itself out."

—Reena Wolnek (CGS'18, SAR'20, SAR'22)

"I had a great adjustment to school. Getting to school in the fall it would be easier to fall into, 'I'm homesick' or 'I miss these people.' Whereas getting to school in the spring, it was, 'Time to start the new chapter.'" —Karsten Grape (CGS'19, Pardee'21)

"I think the hardest part was to actually admit that we were a little nervous and just embracing that. I was just happy to be there on campus, living in the dorms, finally being a student."

—Bruce Dennis (CGS'19, COM'21)

How can I get to know other BU students?



Photo by Cydney Scott

Photo by Kirthana Iyer



Is it easy to get involved in BU clubs & student organizations?

"If you seek it out, it's super easy. Once you get started, it's easy for things to fall into place, but you have to be willing to go out and seek it." —Reena Wolnek (CGS'18, SAR'20, SAR'22)

"If you see a club just starting out, I think that's a great way to get involved because it's something new and you could really make it your own. Test the waters on different things you're maybe interested in, maybe even a few things that you're not interested in, just to see. You never know." —Marissa Kachadoorian (CGS'18, CAS'20)

"It's definitely easy to find places to get involved with. There are hundreds of student organizations on this campus, and they're all so welcoming." —Phoebe Bobola (CGS'18, CAS'20)

"I joined the Outing Club and I found a big community among the rock climbers here. Go, get involved in things, talk to people, figure out what extracurriculars you want to be a part of!"

—Karsten Grape (CGS'19, Pardee'21)

"Through extracurriculars, I was able to meet a lot of people outside of CGS. I lived in South Campus so I was able to meet a lot of upperclassman that way who matriculated through CGS or were in different colleges." —Bruce Dennis (CGS'19, COM'21)

"You're changing electives every semester, you're changing classes every semester, and there are welcome events. It's so easy just to get involved on campus, and this campus actively makes an effort to get you involved." —Phoebe Bobola (CGS'18, CAS'20)

Courtesy of Kirthana Iyer



What is it like to study abroad at the beginning of your college career?

"I got a new perspective on the world. It made me so much of a more well-rounded person. I also took out friends and teachers that I love so much. My professors were absolutely fantastic and I felt so comfortable coming to them. You don't see a lot of that in large research universities. You don't get that personal one-on-one time with your professor, and you truly got that in London."

—Marina Pence (CGS'19, CAS'21)

"The different trips — to Oxford, the Roman Baths—I thought those were incredible. There were some I'd never forget."

—Joshua Creelman (CGS'18, Questrom'20)

"It was a way to not only learn about the history of another culture, but also immerse myself in that culture. We're living in an increasingly globalized world, and everyone should take the opportunity to travel to other places to learn about other cultures."

—Jennifer Gonzales (CGS'17, CAS'19)

"It was a really great bonding experience because the people that you're with in the spring—your classmates and professors—are all in London with you."

—Reena Wolnek (CGS'18, SAR'20, SAR'22)

"Lifechanging. There's nothing quite like it."

—Bruce Dennis (CGS'19, COM'21)



It's not just a sticker. It's your ticket to challenging a MacArthur genius, spending a summer in India, performing an original blues song for your thesis, developing vaccines to fight bacterial pathogens, speaking in front of 100 people, scaling 35-foot walls, living in historic brownstones, taking the class, and discovering exactly what you're going to do and what you're going to do.

Did you have any concerns or hesitations before arriving?

"I was really afraid of the six months by myself with a gap semester. Part of me was like, 'If I come late, will I not fit in? Will I not find people?' But BU and CGS do a really good job of integrating new students into everything." —Marina Pence (CGS'19, CAS'21)

"I was thinking about how everyone at BU was going to become friends, become involved in the community, have an understanding of college before I did—and that was really scary to me to feel like an odd one out. But really, you're going to be in a group of people who are having the same experience as you, and that forms a really tight community." —Phoebe Bobola (CGS'18, CAS'20)

"It was my roommate's second year and the entire floor was sophomores. I was a little nervous at first because I felt like they wouldn't feel compelled to bring me into their circle. When I got there it was just the opposite. Doors were always open—people going from room to room. I never felt like I was in the wrong place. It always felt like home." —Babatunde Alford (CGS'16, CAS'18)

"I was concerned about coming in January not knowing anybody while everybody else had started in September. It ended up completely fine. Once we were here, within a month you couldn't tell who came in January and who was here in the fall."

—Reena Wolnek (CGS'18, SAR'20, SAR'22)



Any advice for future College of General Studies students?

“The first two weeks of school just be a yes person. Don’t be afraid to talk to people, don’t be afraid to ask questions. Say yes to meeting up with friends and say yes to joining study groups and say yes to joining clubs. It’s essential to figuring out what you want to do in college and what kind of person you want to be and the time that you’re going to have.”

—Joshua Creelman (CGS’18, Questrom’20)

“Talk to your advisor while you’re in your gap semester. My advisor helped me so much. When I got to campus, he already knew who I was, he knew what I wanted to do. He was so helpful in terms of classes and deadlines.” —Bruce Dennis (CGS’19, COM’21)

“It takes a little bit of time for things to feel comfortable. It’ll all work out. Everything will be ok, even if it doesn’t seem like it at first. Get involved! That’s what’s going to determine what your life is like in college.” —Reena Wolnek (CGS’18, SAR’20, SAR’22)

“Research what you want to do in that gap semester. Really think about what you want to do for yourself, even if it’s taking classes or just working at your job or working for some cool internship that you’ve always wanted to apply to. Reach out to the other people in the program and stay connected.”

—Marina Pence (CGS’19, CAS’21)