



## 2017-2018 GPPSA Candidates

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President	Kelley Schneider
Vice-President	Bri Fernandez
Secretary	Moha Thakur
Treasurer	Danett Song
MIDP Program Representative	Liz Cordova
MPP-EP Program Representative	Amy Richards
Director of Alumni Outreach	Hall H. Wang
Director of Environmental Initiatives	Olivia Cook
Director of Communications and Outreach	Joseph Schartz
Director of Diversity Programs	Taya Rizk
Director of International Programs	Eva Zhang
Director of Service Programs	Sarah Belford
Director of Service Programs	Edward Weizenegger
Director of Social Programs	Alejandra Reyes
Director of External Affairs	Katie Baskett

# Candidate Statements

## President

Kelley Schneider, MPP '18

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From the moment I set foot on campus, I have been blown away by the dedication and creativity of our class. Indeed, my initial decision to serve as first-year Vice-President was to help tailor our program to students' specific interests and aspirations. As President of GPPSA, I want to continue to move McCourt forward so that we all have the opportunity to put our talents and ideas into action. If elected, I would ensure growth in the following three areas:

- **Bolstering Career Services:** starting this spring, GPPSA is launching a Career Office Hours' between first-years and second-years to help our class gain insight into more specific fields of interest. I want to coordinate with the Office of Career Development and GPPSA's Director of Alumni Outreach and Career Services to expand this type programming, so that McCourt students can take full advantage of our network in finding professional opportunities that are tailored to their specific interests, no matter how niche.
- **Fostering Diversity:** our class hails from all over the world and brings many rich experiences to the table. GPPSA should continue supporting events with groups such as LAPA, EAPA, and PPOUT, in addition to increasing our engagement with the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force. We should also take action to increase diversity in recruitment of the student body.
- **Expanding the visibility of GGPSA:** from service trips to environmental initiatives, I plan to increase GPPSA's engagement with the student body so that every student has a say in the direction of McCourt, and so that people know who their representatives are and how to contact them should they have any suggestions or programming ideas.

While these three areas would be in focus, this is by no means an exhaustive list; most importantly, I want to hear from you! I have spent this past year serving on a variety of student organizations (GPPSA, WPPI, and GU Politics) and learning about all the ways in which different groups interact at McCourt. I am ready to put this knowledge into action and to dedicate myself to helping the voices of our classmates be heard. I want to move McCourt forward so that, as we step off campus at graduation, we can look back at our experience and know that the progress we made in the past two years will not be confined to the Hilltop. Overall, I would love to be a part of the GPPSA 2017-2018 team, and would be honored to serve as President.

## **Vice-President**

Bri Fernandez, MPP '18

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If elected Vice President, I would focus the role of VP as that of liaison between the McCourt administration and the students, and work with GPPSA to create greater transparency within the McCourt community. One of the things I love most about McCourt is its small community. We are able to interact with our peers and professors in ways other policy schools cannot. However, there is still work to be done to assure that students' interests are being met. I believe McCourt should focus on providing a more personalized experience for students. While McCourt offers various electives, some policy areas are awarded more selection than others. If elected, I would work to ensure that students pursuing less popular policy areas are provided with greater opportunities to pursue their interests, whether that be through the formation of new student organizations or providing students with more information on classes offered through other Georgetown graduate programs.

I would also focus on providing students with greater development opportunities. This could be achieved by restructuring first year orientation and implementing development workshops. I believe orientation would have benefited from presentations given on resume and cover letter development. One's resume is a dynamic document; thus, greater explanation regarding the different types of resumes for various careers one may pursue after graduation would have helped to provide primary guidance to students. Additionally, I think McCourt students could benefit from complementary workshops that students could attend to learn tips on how to develop their social media presence, interview skills, networking behavior, etc.

Regarding greater transparency, I would like to implement an electronic calendar for all McCourt events that can be accessed by McCourt students. This calendar would include events for student organizations, networking events, and information sessions. Students receive multiple emails a day and the Weekly Career Updates can get lost in the shuffle. By providing students with an electronic calendar, students can stay in the loop and plan their schedules farther in advance to accommodate for events they may want to attend.

These are only a few of the many ideas I have for McCourt. I want to be GPPSA VP because I believe a program is only as strong at the relationship between the students and its faculty. I was President of my sorority as an undergrad and the majority of my time was spent working with the office of Greek affairs to provide support and advocacy for the members of the Greek community. I collaborated with leaders in other organizations to promote accountability and healthy lifestyles, build strong values, and develop students' leadership skills. I have the knowledge and experience necessary to be an effective advocate for McCourt students. We have all worked very hard to pursue an education at McCourt and our experience here should be one that is meaningful, and if elected, I will work tirelessly to assure that you leave McCourt feeling that way.

## Secretary

Moha Thakur, MPP '18  
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I would like to run for the position of Secretary on the GPPSA Executive Board for 2017-18. As an organised individual, I believe that the tasks of the position, such as meeting minutes, organising elections, and communicating with the various student organisations and their events, is a role I would thrive in. During this past academic year, I've been able to attend numerous events by many organisations and understand the various needs of each group and what they hope to get out of their events!

I'm currently employed as a GA for the Academic and Student Services team and so have been exposed to the various levels of coordination and streams of communication required to ensure that all the various groups at McCourt have an opportunity to showcase their talent and thrive. While sometimes demanding, I'm now aware of what is involved and what resources our student groups have in order to allow the rest of us to have an evening of fun! It has also been a role where, in being around Old North, has meant that people stop by and chat and it's great to learn what people are thinking about their week or experience at McCourt as a whole.

Given that the Secretary is also responsible for a spring fundraising event, I feel really strongly about giving back to the D.C. community that we have all benefitted from. Over the summer, I'll be interning for a local advocacy firm D.C. Appleseed and hope that this introduction to the issues that most affect those in the district, where students from McCourt can make a difference, will be able to direct us in our efforts.

Finally, I believe that as a Secretary, it is an important role to increase the visibility and strength of what GPPSA can do. In ensuring that events are organised at appropriate times, to engaging the full student body from MPM to MIDP students, there is so much more that GPPSA can do in taking advantage of the knowledge and experience that we have in our own student body! In knowing that the GPPSA board can be a fully diverse and representational student body for the next academic year, I hope that I can play a role as the Secretary in ensuring this!

## **Treasurer**

Danett Song, MPP '18  
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Becoming a part of GPPSA is a great way to get involved in serving McCourt's student body. In college, I worked as a Resident Assistant for two years, as a Head Resident for one year, and as Hall Council president for one year. In each of these roles, I worked with other students to plan programs on behalf of my fellow residents, aiming to better the community by providing some sort of stress relief, educational value, and just pure fun. Budgeting and being cognizant of finances was a regular part of these roles, and previously having taught math in a variety of summer schools and tutoring centers, I have always been comfortable working with numbers. As Treasurer, I would enjoy working together with the rest of GPPSA to plan events as well as with other student organizations to address any budgetary needs and requests.

## **MIDP Program Representative**

Liz Cordova, MIDP '18  
slc286@georgetown.edu

To be honest, I have failed to get involved with the activities that McCourt and GPPSA offers to students this year. I would like to change that in the future and involve more actively next year. If there is a chance that I can help you, I would love to do so. Looking forward. Sincerely Liz.

## **MPP-EP Program Representative**

Amy Richards, MPP-EP '18  
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I would like to represent the evening program because during my time in my academic career thus far I have been learning how I can make the best out of my time as a part-time student and full-time employee. I want to be able to meet more evening program students through this role and be sure that their interests are taken into account. I also want to be a representative that will use my personal work to impact public policy and inspire others to do the same.

## **Director of Alumni Outreach**

Hall H. Wang, MPP '18  
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I am running because we have not fully leveraged our potential for alumni involvement, and I want to change that. Right now, we don't have a robust targeted alumni outreach programs whereby alumni come to McCourt and provide job opportunities and career advice. We have some, but some is not enough. We need to take advantage of the entire Georgetown University enterprise and all alumni who are in the public policy sphere to come interact with us and support us. In order to be a truly great Public Policy program, we need massively engage alumni, McCourt and non-McCourt to work with us. This does not mean sacrificing alumni involvement in McCourt traditions (like MPiP auction), but surging efforts to collaborate, learn, and explore employment opportunities in new found directions?

Who am I? Why am I the right person for the job? I have been working alumni affairs as a planner for Wake Forest University alumni chapters since 2013. I worked with undergraduate institutions with the gold standard of strong alumni programs such as the Naval Academy and West Point. I know how grow a strong alumni program and make it benefit McCourt. I do this as a matter of public service that I have been raised to commit to my entire life. This time I want to serve you, my fellow classmates. Job hunting is around the corner. Let me help you.

## **Director of Environmental Initiatives**

Olivia Cook, MPP '18  
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I am running for the Director of Environmental Initiatives position because I am excited about the opportunity to expand McCourt's sustainability efforts while connecting with the many vibrant student organizations here. I believe in not just talking the talk of sustainability but really walking the walk. This is best achieved when people collaborate and that's what I would do a lot of in this position, building upon my involvement with McCourt Energy and Environment. I am impressed by the past Director's efforts in working with the administration, but I hope to expand those efforts beyond closed-doors administrative collaboration to really make visible the goals and work of Environmental Initiatives. To that end, I would like to get more feedback from students regarding McCourt's sustainability efforts and achieve a more deeply embedded environmental consciousness through information sharing and events. I believe that there is a lot of potential for McCourt's environmental initiatives and I would be honored to do this work on behalf of the school!

## **Director of Communications and Outreach**

Joseph Schartz, MPP '18  
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For the past year, it has been a privilege to represent McCourt students as the Communications Chair of the Georgetown Institute of Politics and Public Service Student Advisory Board. With your help, I would like to continue serving McCourt students as Director of Communications and Outreach.

Ours is a great story to tell. As McCourt continues to grow and thrive, we should communicate that story to incoming students, current students, alumni, and the world around us. I hope the skills and experiences I bring to the table can help communicate that vision.

As a trained journalist with newsroom experience, I understand the importance of clean, timely, and effective reporting. My newspaper producer duties included many of the responsibilities that this GPPSA position will require social media strategy, website management, and storytelling. If given your trust to serve in this position, my goal is to bring each of these elements to the next level for McCourt.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me with ideas or suggestions regarding communications and outreach at McCourt. I hope I can count on your support as GPPSA begins a new chapter.

## **Director of Diversity Programs**

Taya Rizk, MPP '18  
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Living in this globalized world it has become increasingly important to know how to relate to and appreciate others from different backgrounds and cultures. McCourt has been a place where people of different backgrounds come together for a common cause, feeling welcomed and valued. I have experienced a wide range of cultural perspectives and understand the value of cultural tolerance and acceptance. As a product of a multicultural upbringing, I feel like I am qualified to speak to the issue of diversity and to be an advocate for change. I hope to be a part of a team that works to continue to foster and support diversity at McCourt.

## **Director of International Programs**

Eva Zhang, MPP '18  
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Dear McCourt Student Body,

My name is Eva Zhang, First Year MPP, currently the Director of International Programs. I want to continue my work as the Director of International Programs, so as to support our student body and promote the communication between international students and domestic students.

Last semester, I worked with Beatrice and Tiffany and started Language Group program, the Election Poster, and the International Film Nights. This semester, we also collaborated with EAPA to co-sponsor the New Year Event and with WPPI the Feminist Movie Nights. I wish to continue my work, and am planning to outreach to other international student organizations in GU, so as to provide more opportunity to McCourt students.

Thank you for reading my statement and wish you all a 4.0.

Best,  
Eva Zhang

## **Director of Service Programs**

Sarah Belford, MPP '18  
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Have you been to a local service project recently? Have you volunteered as a mentor at a public school, a tutor at a local library, a server at a food bank, or a translator at a legal clinic? There is no better way to supplement classroom learning than by going out into the communities you hope to influence. In fact, I would argue it's an imperative.

As Director of Service Programs, I would organize and inform the student body of weekly service activities to get involved and give back during your time here at Georgetown. Be it a one-off event or a regular commitment, there are myriad ways to serve and become acquainted with a community beyond the Hilltop. Here in the District of Columbia, we are fortunate to have access to policy issues and communities at the local, national and international levels. I would work to make volunteer opportunities across different policy issues accessible to you. I would also like to create a few service trips to engage in local communities outside of the capital. As a member of Rotaract (the young professionals version of Rotary International) and as a former Community Service Director for my alma mater's alumni group here in D.C., I have done this kind of work before and am eager to get McCourt students out into the community as well.

We at the McCourt School of Public Policy are diverse in our perspectives, our passions and our pastimes, but we are united in our commitment to public service. I would be honored to lead the charge as your 2017-2018 Director of Service Programs.



## **Director of Service Programs**

Edward Weizenegger, MPP '18  
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And we are all connected to each other / in a circle, in a hoop that never ends." So sang Pocahontas in Colors of the Wind. There's a lot that's problematic about the Disney film, but this sentiment isn't one of those things. Whether you're from Shanghai or Spokane, none of us got where we are without the help of others. To serve is to acknowledge this debt, and the sort of volunteer service projects many students have participated in this year have brought concrete benefits to vital organizations. While serving others we also do the important work of becoming real members of our communities here, rather than remaining individuals just passing through. That's why I want to be our Director of Service Programs -- to build on the strong ethos of service others before us have cultivated, and to expand the engagement of all public policy students in the greater Washington community.

## **Director of Social Programs**

Alejandra Reyes, MPP '18  
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During my first year at McCourt, I have had the chance to attend a number of the events planned by GPPSA and other student organisations. I believe that being involved in them, have made my grad school experience better than I could begin to imagine. These events bring the community together, cultivate a sense of belonging, and allow for us to bond with our peers beyond the classroom.

I would want the experience that I have had, to be part of McCourt for the coming year and would love to work, along with my peers, to make that happen through social engagement.

## **Director of External Affairs**

Katie Baskett, MPP '18  
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I am running for Director of External Affairs because I believe that it is important for McCourt students to build relationships outside of our immediate community. We can gain a lot by connecting with other Georgetown organizations and policy students at different D.C. schools. Despite our differences, we are all young professionals going through similar experiences, challenges, and hoping to enter a competitive job market. Networking is so important in cities like D.C., so why not leverage fun, laid-back opportunities to build relationships? As Director of External Affairs, my goal for events would be to create both professional connections and friendships.

I also believe that the McCourt School should be more engaged in graduate student life at Georgetown. I want to represent McCourt in conversations with GradGov, GPAC and the administration to ensure that we have an active voice in the big decisions affecting this campus.