

SENIORS OF DISTINCTION AWARDS BANQUET

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Rowan University

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
& SOCIAL SCIENCES

Empower. Transform. Engage.



The home of CHSS, Bunce Hall.

Program

Dinner Reception

Dean's Welcome

Office of Alumni Engagement

Guest Speaker: Penny McPherson-Myers
'92 B.A. Law & Justice Studies Alumna

Presentation of Awards

What is the Seniors of Distinction Award?

Every year our programs have the tough task of choosing one student who stands out among their peers in the major—a student who not only demonstrates academic achievement but represents the best in the discipline. Receiving the designation of “Senior of Distinction” is indeed an honor but also a responsibility. We expect our Seniors of Distinctions to make an impact as they progress through their careers and serve their communities. We also urge our Seniors of Distinctions to stay connected with Rowan, with the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and with their department or program so that we can celebrate their successes!



Dean Ammar

I want to congratulate you for your Senior of Distinction Award. You must remember this award with pride. This is a difficult award to earn. You have worked hard to receive it, and there were ups and downs along the way. But you did earn it. Your perseverance, consistency and hard work makes your professors in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences proud. Undoubtedly your perseverance will serve you as you begin your journey after graduation. Take pride in this accomplishment, enjoy this event, and good luck in your future.

Our Guest Speaker

Penny McPherson-Myers, EdD. is a three-time alumna of Rowan University where she entered as a Minority Achievement Program (MAP) student, completed a B.S. in Law and Justice and Sociology, an M.A. in Student Personnel Services, and an EdD in Educational Leadership.



Penny McPherson-Myers

In her current position as Associate Vice President for Diversity and Organizational Effectiveness, Penny leads multiple initiatives to coordinate support services and resources for high school and college first generation, low income, under-represented students through pipeline programs, oversees the Disability and Veterans Affairs services, and addresses students in crisis through the management of the campus food pantry and resource center.

In her previous position, Penny was the director of the Educational Opportunity Fund program, a NJ state-funded grant to provide support services and financial aid to first generation, underrepresented, low income students for the past 17 years. She was also the President of the New Jersey Educational Opportunity Fund Professional Association, Inc. (NJEOPFA), where she led professional leadership development conferences, advocacy efforts, and legislative support initiatives for EOF staff members, students, and EOF programs statewide. She is currently a member of several professional associations and serves as an Executive Board member for the Tri-State Consortium of Opportunity programs.

Prior to her work in higher education, Penny was the director of a residential treatment facility for adolescent female offenders. Her research interest is underrepresented populations and learning communities.

CHSS Chairs & Coordinators



Chanelle Rose
Africana Studies



Emily Blanck
American Studies



DeMond Miller
Disaster Preparedness &
Emergency Management



Joseph Coulombe
English



Danielle Gougon
General Studies



William Carrigan
History



Carolyn Gribbin
Human Services



Kelly Duke-Bryant
International Studies



Mike Weiss
Law & Justice Studies



SENIORS OF DISTINCTION



Sharon McCann

Liberal Studies: Humanities/
Social Science;
Human Services



Marilyn Manley

Modern Languages &
Linguistics; Spanish



Matt Lund

Philosophy &
Religion Studies



Natalie Reaves

Political Science
& Economics



Maria Rosado

Sociology &
Anthropology



Hope Holroyd

American Studies

Hope Holroyd, who is a triple major in American Studies, Public Relations, and Advertising, has really explored what Humanities and Social Science has to offer. Hope discovered American Studies when she was an Education dual major. After moving to Communications, Hope chose to keep an American Studies major because they were her favorite courses. Hope has been a very successful student. She was a standout student in our brand new course, Interdisciplinary Research and Writing where she researched utopias and designed a utopia that supported people through all stages of their lives. She has had three internships: two of them at Rowan. One of them was to work for CHSS to implement a Public Relations strategy for the College, where she has helped share our message to students, faculty, and the University community. Hope will continue with graduate work in Strategic Communication next year.



Colletta Ledlum

Africana Studies

Colletta K. Ledlum personifies the Africana Studies program's commitment to intellectual rigor, community engagement, and experiential learning in a global/local setting. With a double major in AS and Biological Sciences, Colletta has used her leadership role as the president of the African Student Association and Africana Studies Council to organize events that reflect the continental/diasporic experience. In addition, Colletta not only participated in the AS program's Study Abroad service-learning trip to the Dominican Republic, but she also successfully completed the program's first Model African Union course which culminated in a three-day conference at Howard University, Washington, DC. Colletta has also offered her services as a public health immunity advisor for the United Nations at an Ivorian refugee camp in Cape Coast, Ghana, and volunteered as acting secretary for the Ebola Survivors Clinic in Redemption Hospital in Duala, Liberia. After graduation, she plans to attend graduate school to obtain a master's degree in public health and ultimately return to Liberia to serve disadvantaged communities.



Nyjeer Wesley

*Disaster Preparedness and
Emergency Management (DPEM)*

Mr. Wesley will receive a BA in DPEM, a BA in Sociology, and a Certificate in Social Justice & Social Change. As the first student to declare the DPEM major, he is in the second cohort of students to graduate in this new field of academic preparation at Rowan. He earned a place on the Dean's List and joined Alpha Kappa Delta, The International Sociology Honor Society, The Equal Opportunity Fund Honor Society; Epsilon Pi Phi, The Emergency Management Honor Society and the Equal Opportunity Fund Council. He is academically strong in both emergency management and sociology; his inquisitive nature provides insightful contributions in all his classes. Evidence is demonstrated through his volunteer work with the Dr. Harley E. Flack Mentoring Program. He strives to help others through his community engagement and volunteering with the Volunteers of America, Homeless Outreach Team and by working with the Rowan University Center for Volunteerism. Nyjeer researches ways to help eliminate social and cultural barriers in homeland security and emergency management. Mr. Wesley is the type of young man society seeks to serve as a future leader.



Robert O'Leary

Economics

Robert has combined a zeal for learning with service and leadership to both Rowan University and the broader community. As a student, Rob has excelled in the classroom while majoring in both Economics and Finance. While Chief Financial Officer of the Student Government Association, he represented the voice of the student body to university administration. In this capacity he supervised the SGA's \$1.5M budget. He is also President of the Financial Management Association and Chair of the Student Financial Control Board and the University Budget and Planning Committee.

Rob organized students to serve with Vanguard where they worked with groups such as Jewish Relief and Career Wardrobe. As manager of the SGA fund, Rob has focused on goals that directly benefit students such as improvement to mental health on campus. In his summers, Rob worked internships and took summer class abroad. A Dean's List student for every semester at Rowan, Rob was the 2017 winner of the Finance Scholarship. His goal is to establish his own business.



Elliott Scates

English

Elliott exemplifies the qualities that we value at Rowan. He's smart, hard-working, humble, and generous with his time. Working with at-risk youth in the Bridgeton and Millville area, he's organized outreach programs, visited teens in their homes, and led monthly field trips. Elliott mentors students in underserved communities for the Rowan Urban Teacher Academy, and he volunteers annually for the Sasquatch 5k Run for Ranch Hope, a local organization that provides resources for at-risk youth. He's also raised thousands of dollars for the American Cancer Society via the Relay for Life in Cumberland County. As he himself put it, "One of the greatest gifts I have been given is the ability to communicate my thoughts and beliefs effectively. As I pursue a career in education, my desire is to empower students to find their voices so that they can have a positive impact on those around them."



Amanda Parker

General Studies

This year's Bachelor of General Studies Senior of Distinction is Amanda Parker. Amanda came to Rowan as a freshman in 2014 from the small town of Midland Park, NJ. While her time at Rowan has offered her countless memorable experiences, a few of the most important include two amazing years of playing softball under head coach Kim Wilson, studying abroad in Italy for a month, and guidance towards finding a career that she would love. Amanda credits the help of her professors, friends, and family, in the decision to pursue a career in law enforcement. Upon graduation, Amanda will attend the Bergen County Police Academy.



Mikaela Litchfield

History

Mikaela Litchfield is a truly exceptional student. An Honors student, she is completing multiple academic programs, including majors in History, International Studies, and Africana Studies and minors in Women's & Gender Studies, and German Studies, and she has excelled in all of them. In addition to her many academic commitments, she has also successfully taken advantage of many other opportunities at Rowan, including the CHSS Match Internship Program (at the Alice Paul Institute). She puts her knowledge into action and volunteers in the community with refugees and women's empowerment programs. A recipient of the prestigious Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals (CBYX) fellowship, she will have an opportunity to study and intern in Germany next year. Mikaela represents the best Rowan has to offer: an accomplished student who engages with the world and demonstrates the value of informed citizenship.



Natasha Mathes

Human Services

Natasha Mathes is the Human Services Seniors of Distinction awardee. She has exhibited numerous academic and professional qualities that have set her apart from her peers. She is introspective, intuitive toward others feelings and motivations, direct while maintaining warmth, quick to build rapport while respecting differences. She has overcome much adversity in her past and continues to have medical battles to fight. However, these challenges have not taken away from her leadership at her internship or as the Human Services Club Vice President. She commands the respect of her peers and her professors. This woman is a leader in the field that she has only just stepped into. We should all expect great things from her!



Tyler Jiang

International Studies

Tyler Jiang is an exemplary student, an extraordinarily accomplished young researcher, and a valued member of the Rowan community. An Honors student with a double major in History, he has maintained an outstanding academic record and was a founding member of Rowan's chapter of the Sigma Iota Rho honor society. He has achieved recognition and success off campus too, winning a major federal scholarship—the Boren—which funded his studies in China, and publishing numerous articles in Sigma Iota Rho's online journal and blog. Perhaps most impressive, as a research assistant for Joseph Braude, a senior fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, Tyler co-authored two publications that appeared in venues with national reach and that have been widely cited. He also appeared as part of a panel of experts on a China Global Television Network show. Due to Tyler's outstanding research record, he was selected by Rowan's Division of University Research for the 2018 Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research. After graduation, Tyler plans to pursue a doctorate in International Affairs and work as a professor and policy analyst.



Ray Erasmo

Law & Justice Studies

In addition to Ray's outstanding academic performance; he truly embodies the commitment to higher education, dedication and service to the Rowan community, and empathy and passion for helping others that are so deeply valued by this department. Serving as a student leader and involved member of a number of campus organizations including the SGA, the Pre-Law Society, the Victim Awareness Club, the Transfer Student Mentor Board, the Academic Success Center, the Asian Cultural Organization, Sigma Alpha Lambda, and Lambda Alpha Epsilon, Ray is committed to volunteerism beyond the borders of Rowan. He has volunteered in the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service in Philadelphia, PA as well as with the Boy Scouts of America. Most notably, this past semester along with the Victim Awareness Club, Ray coordinated a Hurricane Maria Relief Effort on campus through which over 600 donations were sent to Puerto Rico. Ray is currently preparing for his LSATs which he plans to take in June. His career goals are to obtain a job in the prosecutor's office with a commitment to youth mentoring programs and reducing juvenile involvement in the criminal justice system.

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SENIORS OF DISTINCTION



Carlee Murphy

Liberal Studies

Carlee transferred to Rowan in Fall 2016 and has always been a proactive, mature and motivated student. She chose the Liberal Studies program as a way to combine her passions for sociology and business and truly values her interdisciplinary education. Carlee believes her short time at Rowan has helped her discover her passion for learning and is confident that her Liberal Studies degree has taught her the skills necessary to adapt and succeed in society and the ever-changing business world. Her goals after graduation are to begin her professional career in a higher education setting and eventually attend graduate school for either Sociology or Academic Advising.



Mariela Capellan

Modern Languages & Linguistics

Mariela Capellan was born and raised in Jersey City, New Jersey, to parents who immigrated from the Dominican Republic. First in her family to graduate from an accredited university, Mariela has taken a not-so-traditional route towards pursuing an education. A former preschool teacher, she graduated with an Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education and transferred to Rowan University at 24 where she is graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Modern Languages and Linguistics and a concentration in Spanish and French at 29. Mariela is eager to help children with communication disorders using a unique combination of education and experiences, which is why she hopes to pursue a Master's degree in Speech – Language Pathology. Mariela uses her experience in modern languages by volunteering at her local church, and exploring various countries and new customs.



Sam Aloï
Political Science

Sam is graduating from Rowan as a double major in Journalism and Political Science. He interned for New Jersey's fourth legislative district, assisting the legislative aide on bill summaries and daily operations. He also joined the district in Trenton to observe local government in action. Sam has worked as a marketing assistant and photographer in Campus Recreation for the past two years and is writing his senior thesis on how public transportation affects political participation. He plans on pursuing a master's degree in public policy or attending law school after graduation.



Jonathan Fernandez
Religion Studies

Jonathan Fernandez is a double major in English and Religious Studies, and a member of the Bantivoglio Honors Concentration. Jonathan's professional background includes an internship with a local publishing firm through Rowan's CHSS Match program, as well as a three-month internship with the Department of State, working under the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Manila. He is currently the co-leader of the Spiritual Diversity Group, a student-led discussion group intended to promote interfaith and spiritual dialogue, and he has served on Whitney Hall Council's E-board for two years. Jonathan intends to enter the Peace Corps after graduation, and aims eventually to serve under the Department of State as a Public Affairs Officer.



Hannah Buckley

Sociology and Anthropology

The 2018 Senior of Distinction for the Department of Sociology and Anthropology is Hannah Buckley. Hailing from Green Township, New Jersey, Hannah has utilized her course of study as a double major in Sociology and Environmental Studies to examine how social forces interact with the environment. She seeks to continue this examination at the graduate level and to utilize her knowledge productively to advance environmental justice. Boasting the highest grade point average among Sociology majors in Sociology courses, Hannah is one of our most talented and accomplished students. She has displayed an advanced capacity to analyze, to articulate, to argue, to ask stimulating questions, and to connect theory and practice. As we have taught Hannah, Hannah has taught us. In addition to being brilliant, our Senior of Distinction is genuine, humble, and kind. We honor Hannah for her sustained excellence and for bringing credit to our department and our university.



Frank Mihalic

Spanish

On the road to playing professional hockey, Frank Mihalic learned that hard work always produces results. As a Spanish Major, through his determination and hard work, Frank excelled in his study of Spanish at an ambitious pace. He has been recognized for his academic achievement by being selected as a President's Scholar Award Winner and for the Dean's List. Outside of the classroom, he has been a student worker for the Department of Foreign Languages & Literatures, Vice President of the Spanish Studies Association, a member of the Tau Sigma International Honor Society, and served as a volunteer Spanish/English interpreter for the Center for Behavior Analysis. He scored amongst the highest percentiles on the LSAT and will be attending law school on a full tuition scholarship. Eventually, he plans to open his own law firm, specializing in medical malpractice, wrongful death, and product liability cases.

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