



Rowan University

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES  
& SOCIAL SCIENCES



**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2019-20**

**EMPOWER. TRANSFORM. ENGAGE.**

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History professor Emily Blanck was stranded in Bolivia with her daughter, Julia Carrigan (standing on van), because of the COVID-19 travel ban (see page 6).

# DEAN'S MESSAGE

To say the least, it has been an unparalleled year.

I am in awe of the hard work, diligence and care our Rowan University community demonstrated as we transitioned to working and teaching remotely. The COVID-19 pandemic tested our commitment, flexibility and adaptability to deliver the first-rate education our students deserve. It also challenged us to find ways to make technology available to every student.

Before this shift to a virtual teaching environment, we marked significant dates in history, including Constitution Day, 100 years of women's suffrage and 400 years since the first Africans were forced into slavery in the American colonies. We also marked the 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz and 25 years since the genocide in Rwanda.

Despite the challenges we faced this year, our momentum to provide students with more degree choices in the College of Humanities & Social Sciences (CHSS) continued. We developed undergraduate degrees in world religions and philosophy. We also created graduate degrees in diversity and inclusion, Holocaust education, and emergency and threat response management.

We continued to engage students beyond the classroom in the Case Study Competition, which focused on cybercrime; CHSS Career Day; and other programs. We also connected with the public by presenting "COVID Conversations," a series of podcasts related to COVID-19. In addition to teaching, CHSS faculty members published articles in refereed journals, secured grants to conduct research and launched programs that advance the University's educational mission.

This 2019-20 Annual Report highlights our many accomplishments, how we responded to the changing environment and ways we learned from emerging new situations and challenges. As always, our commitment is steadfast that CHSS and Rowan University will prosper — and emerge stronger — in the post-COVID-19 era.

Dr. Nawal Ammar  
Dean



Dean Nawal Ammar

## Working Together to Bridge the Digital Divide

As the COVID-19 pandemic loomed in the distance, CHSS rapidly transitioned instruction for more than 500 classroom-based courses to remote learning.

To assist in this massive undertaking, Rowan's Faculty Center and Information Resources & Technology provided assorted resources for online instruction. Departments offered guidance and appointed technology mentors to help faculty develop plans to teach their courses synchronously, for real-time online instruction, or asynchronously, allowing students to view lectures on their own schedules.

The College also administered a technology survey, asking students about their digital needs for this plan, and the University provided technology and internet access when necessary. The Office of the Dean of Students played a major role in this effort.

"In the absence of having on-campus resources, such as the library and computer labs, and community resources, such as a community library, students who were disadvantaged were much more so. With those resources, we were able to address most of that digital divide," said Dr. Stephen Fleming, assistant dean.

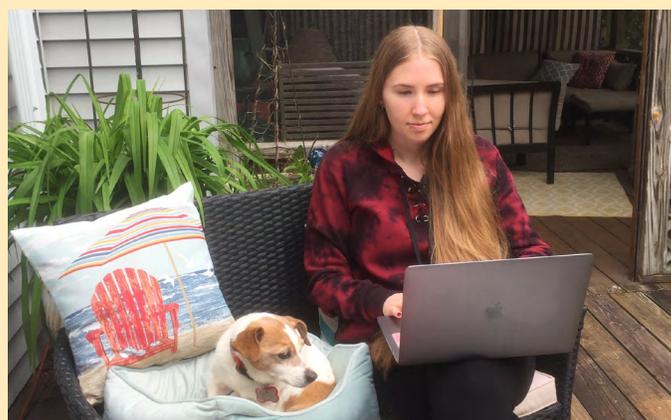
"We engaged the faculty in recognizing if students were off the grid so we could reach out to them," he explained. "The University also did a great job using the Rowan Success Network to perform a second progress survey, where faculty could check whether a student was regularly participating or if they needed assistance to remain engaged."

"For the most part it went fairly well," said Dr. Cory Blake, associate dean. "Part of that has to do with the fact that faculty built rapport with students during the first two months and worked very hard to develop their courses remotely."

Across the board, faculty stretched their technological skills and implemented new tools, which may come in handy in the future. "I suspect that snow days will be different from now on. Faculty may just send out a Blackboard Collaborate invitation," Blake said.

Although there were challenges, virtual learning provided surprising opportunities. For example, an Honors Asian American Literature class virtually welcomed G.B. Tran, author of *Vietnamerica: A Family's Journey*, a graphic novel students were reading.

"It was really exciting for the students, and he stayed during the entire class session," Blake said. "They got to ask him questions about his book. That certainly wouldn't have happened without remote learning."



Students Gianna Hill (top) and Mandee Hamill (bottom) engage with classes remotely. Meanwhile, author G.B. Tran (center) joins students in an English class.

## Students Return Home From Abroad

Ashley Hermansen, '21, was studying in Granada, Spain, when she learned that the spreading pandemic would send her home.

As cases skyrocketed, the country was locked down. Battling uncertainty and flight cancellations, she was immensely relieved to arrive in New York. "I had never been happier to see customs in my entire life," she wrote in her blog.

"Rowan kept in contact with me the entire way," said Hermansen, an international studies and modern languages and linguistics major from Mullica Hill, who arrived home March 17, a few days before the deadline. "I love Rowan and I am so grateful for the support they gave me throughout the semester." She explained that her advisors emailed her multiple times and were very responsive to her messages.

After returning home, she transitioned to online classes from Centro de Lenguas Modernas at Universidad de Granada.

The pandemic also altered travel plans for others:

Katie Patterson, '19, a modern languages and linguistics major from Tabernacle, had to leave China, where she planned to study Chinese for a full academic year under a Boren Award.

Cheyenne Marion, '19, an international studies major from Philadelphia who won a Boren Award, had to leave Jordan, where she planned to study Arabic for a year and work with refugees through the Collateral Repair Project.

Amy Ribinsky, '19, an Honors program graduate from Medford who majored in communication studies and international studies, returned from teaching English in Toulouse, France, through the Teaching Assistant Program in France.



Ashley Hermansen

## Professor, Daughter Find Their Way Back From Bolivia

A little more than a week after Dr. Emily Blanck, executive director of the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, landed in Bolivia with her daughter, Julia Carrigan, all outbound flights were canceled because of the spreading pandemic.

Blanck accompanied Carrigan, a high school senior, who was filming the climate activism of Friends International Bilingual Center in La Paz. Obtaining information from other stranded Americans and internet sources, they struggled to reach Brazil to catch a flight home. Shortly before they arrived, however, the country closed its borders. Finally, the U.S. State Department booked them and other American travelers on a flight home.

"I went to Bolivia to support my daughter's service project, but I depended on her amazing communication skills to help us get out," Blanck said.



Dr. Emily Blanck (left) and her daughter, Julia, rely on each other while stranded in Bolivia.



Dr. Anne Pluta

# COVID CONVERSATIONS

with Anne Pluta

## Podcasts Explore Pandemic Impact

The COVID-19 pandemic has ignited countless challenges and questions throughout the world.

To help the University community come to grips with evolving issues, the College of Humanities & Social Sciences produced “COVID Conversations with Dr. Anne Pluta.”

“We were brainstorming about ways that we could provide useful information, share the utility of the humanities and social sciences in a situation like this,” said the assistant professor of political science.

In this set of interdisciplinary podcasts, Pluta discussed varying facets of the pandemic with colleagues who could speak from different points of view.

“They are accessible for people who are generally curious about these things. They are not meant to be academic conversations,” said Pluta, who writes frequently about political issues for media outlets.

### Available on these podcast services:



SPOTIFY



APPLE



GOOGLE



OVERCAST



RADIO PUBLIC

### The podcasts include:

1. **Live Free OR Die or Live Free AND Die.** Dr. Eva Boodman, assistant professor, Philosophy & World Religions, and Dr. Lawrence Markowitz, chair and professor, Political Science & Economics, explored how countries react to crises and whether authoritarian nations have been better able to contain COVID-19.
2. **Whose Job Is It Anyway? Federalism and Crisis Response.** Dr. Katharine Javian, lecturer, Political Science, and Dr. John Shjarback, assistant professor, Law & Justice Studies, discussed the responsibilities of different government levels during crises.
3. **Enduringly Unequal: How Structural Inequality Shapes Health Outcomes.** Dr. Chanelle Rose, associate professor, History, and coordinator of Africana Studies, and Dr. Whitney Cox, lecturer in World Religions, outlined how crises reveal structural inequalities.
4. **An Economic Apocalypse? How Social Policy Can Help.** Dr. Misty Knight-Finley, assistant professor, and Dr. Stuti Jha, assistant professor, Political Science & Economics, conversed about how the government provides for citizens during crises and the consequences of different approaches.
5. **Gender and COVID-19. Understanding How the Coronavirus Affects Women.** Dr. Danielle Gougon, instructor, Political Science & Economics, discussed how women have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

“COVID Conversations with Dr. Anne Pluta” can be found at [go.rowan.edu/covidconversations](http://go.rowan.edu/covidconversations).

## Volunteer Works to Elevate Lives of Refugees

As the world struggles with the COVID-19 pandemic, Farah Bakri's thoughts frequently drift to a refugee camp in Beirut, Lebanon, where she has volunteered since she was 14.

"I can only imagine what is going on there," said Bakri, '20, a Pompton Lakes resident who earned her bachelor's degree in English with a minor in education. "They can't even social distance because they're living with more than 10 people in close quarters. Some people might not even be their immediate family."

Volunteering at the camp two weeks each summer with her sister, Bakri teaches Syrian and Palestinian women and children how to speak and write English. She also helps them learn business terminology so they can work in the refugee camp.

Bakri began volunteering at the camp in 2015 when she lived in Beirut for more than a year. "It turned into something I really enjoy doing," she said. "I love to look at the lightbulb go off in my students' heads. I like to see them apply the information that I

have taught them to their everyday lives and their everyday language."

The experience has also shaped her world view. "You don't know what is out there until you experience it and see it with your own eyes," she said. "You don't know how much people struggle and how much people have to do to make it day by day. Especially in our media, I feel like we turn a blind eye to it. I wish I could just go and help everyone."



**Farah Bakri**

## 2020 Grads Secure Spots in Coveted Program



**Rachael Van Lare**

If all goes according to plan, two recent CHSS graduates will fly to Japan in the fall to be assistant teachers of English through the Japanese Exchange and Teaching (JET) program.

"Since I was about 15, I've been trying to find a way to get to Japan," said Rachael Van Lare, '20, a modern languages and linguistics major from Woodbury. "I became interested in languages and that eventually developed into

a love for Japanese. When I saw the JET program, which gives you a chance to be immersed in the culture and language and try out teaching as a career, I felt that was perfect."

"The JET program is the only program hosted by the Japanese government," said Professor Chie Dusk, lecturer in Japanese.

"They will be provided with a monthly salary and housing and will be assistant teachers of English, so they will have many Japanese coworkers who will guide them."

Participants spend at least one year with the program and can

stay as long as five years.

Van Lare eagerly anticipates the connections she will make. "I look forward to getting to know my students, about their lives, what they love, why they want to learn English," she said.

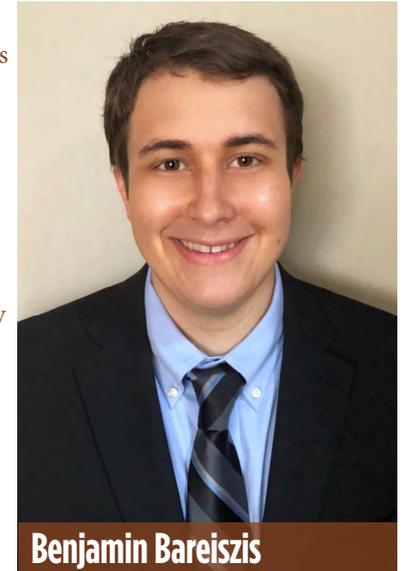
She ultimately plans to become a translator, particularly of Japanese media, or a teacher of Japanese.

Benjamin Bareiszis, '20, an international studies major from Tabernacle, is also excited to become fluent in Japanese.

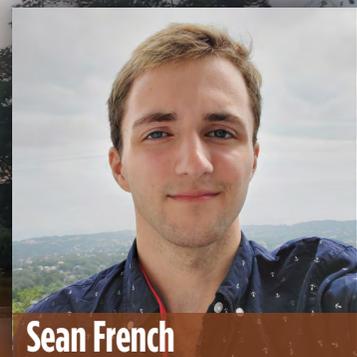
"There's no better place to learn a language than in the native country where it is spoken," he said. He wants to make international friends and become part of the community.

"Since Japanese is a very difficult language and it's not widely spoken in a lot of places, I think it will make me a bit more marketable," Bareiszis said.

"I hope that experience, as well as learning teaching skills, will help me in any field I decide to work in, but I hope to either work in an international business or international consulate setting."



**Benjamin Bareiszis**



**Sean French**

## Boren Recipient Studies, Volunteers in Japan

Studying and living in Japan for several months, international studies major and Boren recipient Sean French, '21, absorbed cultural perspectives that will benefit him for a lifetime.

Enrolled in the J.F. Oberlin University summer and fall programs, the Haddon Township resident studied Japanese, the culture and other subjects, while also exploring cities and local areas.

He also volunteered in the mountainous countryside town of Fujino, Japan, through World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms.

Few spoke English in Fujino, where he gained a deeper appreciation of the country.

“I spent most of my days farming, volunteering at my host’s Korean restaurant/inn and getting to know a fellow volunteer from Poland who is studying at a medical school in Warsaw,” he said. “I was fortunate to meet her and so many other people during my

time in Japan. They exposed me to ideas and cultures that were once foreign to me.”

A friend from Macau talked with him about protests in Hong Kong, sharing his personal views. Hoping to work in Foreign Service in his career, French valued his friend’s perspectives.

“If I were fortunate enough to make it through the long application process, I would likely be working with individuals and governments who may hold views entirely the opposite of the U.S. government and have to communicate with them in the way I did with my friend, trying to bridge the gap between our views.”

As a Boren recipient, he is required to serve the U.S. government for one year after graduation and is interested in improving access to water, food and education. “Ideally, I would like to work in a position dealing with issues that directly aid people in their everyday lives,” he said.

## Exploring the Globe

Since 2015, CHSS students have studied abroad all over the world. Among their destinations:

- Amman, Jordan
- Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- Arusha, Tanzania
- Bangkok, Thailand
- Barcelona, Spain
- Barranquilla, Colombia
- Beijing, China
- Berlin, Germany
- Bilbao, Spain
- Cannes, France
- Cusco, Peru
- Dublin, Ireland
- Florence, Italy

- Galway, Ireland
- Gold Coast, Australia
- Granada, Spain
- Grenoble, France
- Heredia, Costa Rica
- Limerick, Ireland
- London, England
- Madrid, Spain
- Maynooth, Ireland
- Meknes, Morocco
- Paris, France
- Prague, Czech Republic
- Rome, Italy

- Salamanca, Spain
- Salzburg, Austria
- San Jose, Costa Rica
- Santiago, Dominican Republic
- Seoul, South Korea
- Sevilla, Spain
- Shanghai, China
- St. Petersburg, Russia
- Stirling, Scotland
- Suva, Fiji
- Sydney, Australia
- Tokyo, Japan
- Valencia, Spain



## Experience of a Lifetime

Justina Petaccio is a big fan of second chances.

In May, she earned her bachelor's degree in law and justice at the age of 47. This accomplishment was beyond her wildest dreams when she dropped out of high school as a teen and endured many struggles. She later earned her high school diploma and paralegal certificate and single-handedly raised two college graduates.

Although she had a passion for criminal justice, she was afraid to take the next step. In 2013, as her son approached his high school graduation, the Medford resident knew it was time.

She began the 3 + 1 program at Rowan College at Burlington County (RCBC) toward earning associate's and bachelor's degrees. "I was literally trembling, but it was the best thing I ever did for myself. I'm a whole different person," said Petaccio (above).

Seven years later she raves about her Rowan experiences.

"I have had the ultimate experience going through RCBC and transitioning into Rowan. I have a fantastic friend group. I'm friends with professors. I earned As. It's been an awesome experience," she said.

Petaccio radiates the enthusiasm of many students returning to college. "So many of them have such a thirst for learning and

such a desire to take advantage of a second or even third chance at completing their degree," said Michelle Mignot, academic advisor, Office of Advising and Student Information Services.

On the final lap of Petaccio's journey, COVID-19 swept in and altered her Commencement dreams. She was devastated but focuses on the big picture.

"I still did it. I graduated with honors," she said. Petaccio is eager to help prison inmates who need a second chance. "My whole life I saw what the prison system did to people, how unjust everything was," she said. She's also investigating internships that would enable her to teach inmates.

"I would like to be a warden in the prisons," she said. "I would like to run a facility where we can make a positive change, instead of having a continuous recidivism cycle, for a better community and a better world."

Like Petaccio, many CHSS students benefit from the flexibility and savings of 3 + 1 programs in liberal studies and law and justice, through partnerships with RCBC and Rowan College of South Jersey.

"We try to make it as flexible as possible because we realize most students have other competing priorities in their lives," Mignot said.





## New Centers Promote Success

To further support students, CHSS has established two new centers: the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies (CINDS) and the Center for Professional Success (CPS).

CINDS brings the College's graduate and undergraduate interdisciplinary programs under one umbrella, streamlining their operation and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration across CHSS and the University.

"It helps us think about ways to break down the silos of our departments and think about how we can do things together, whether it is on the student level, collaborative research or other programming," said Dr. Emily Blanck, executive director.

For example, CINDS launched the 1619 Project in December, a set of University-wide collaborative programs marking 400 years since slavery began in the United States.

CINDS will provide major benefits for students, providing a centralized home for those with interdisciplinary majors and promoting student research across disciplines, Blanck explained.

CPS is a one-stop student career readiness resource center. It provides networking and professional development events, travel



Team members (above) present their case study solution to a panel of judges.

funding and career development services, such as assistance with resumes, career counseling and cover letters. CPS also channels students into experiential learning opportunities within the College.

"Students feel that they have a location that they can call home to help them with their career goals and with that next step of their journey," said Patrick Massaro, assistant director for academic engagement in the

Center for Professional Success. "It's a platform for students so we can help them get to where they want to be, whether that's a full-time job, an internship or grad school."

During the pandemic, CPS shifted many of its services online and added a specialized section to its website focusing on career preparation during the crisis. In collaboration with the Office of Career Advancement, CPS offers more than 16 virtual presentations.

"An entire page focuses on informational interviewing and how networking is such an important component in the current job search market due to competition," he said. "We share how students can get a leg up on that."

# FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Professors Publish New Books

The notion of ballet class often evokes images of little girls in fluffy pink tutus and pointe shoes, but much more is going on beneath the surface.

This is revealed in *Ballet Class: An American History*, by Dr. Melissa R. Klapper, professor of history and coordinator, Women's & Gender Studies program, which was recently published by Oxford University Press. The book is among others published by CHSS professors this year.

"Ballet class is connected to all of the major currents of American social and cultural history in the 20th century," Klapper said. "It was deeply connected to changing ideas about gender, to changing ideas about race and about sexuality."

Spanning the later part of the 19th century into the early 21st century, the book describes events that inspired growing interest in recreational ballet class. "There are so many ways in which ballet is part of American culture," Klapper said. "That's not surprising because of how many kids have taken ballet class at some point, even if it's only for a year."

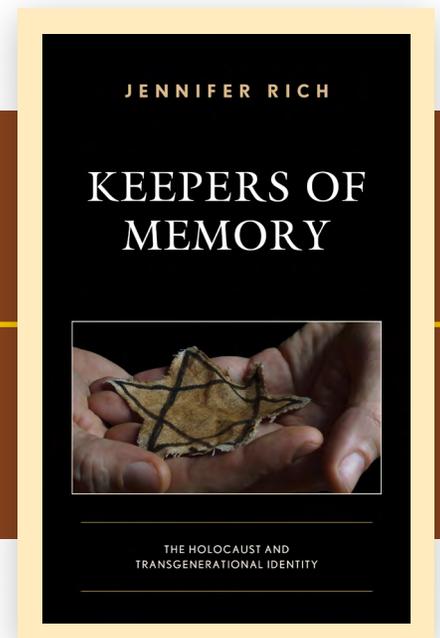
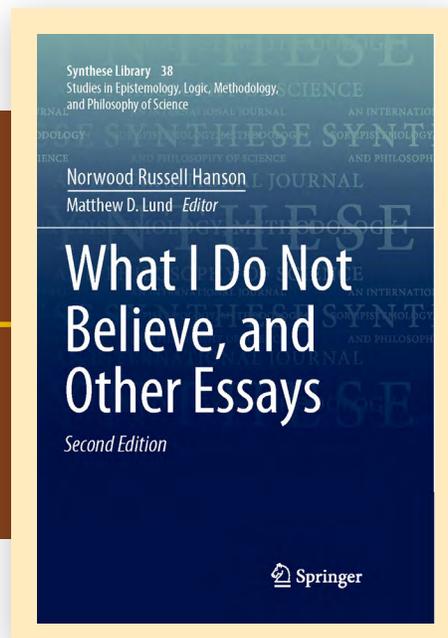
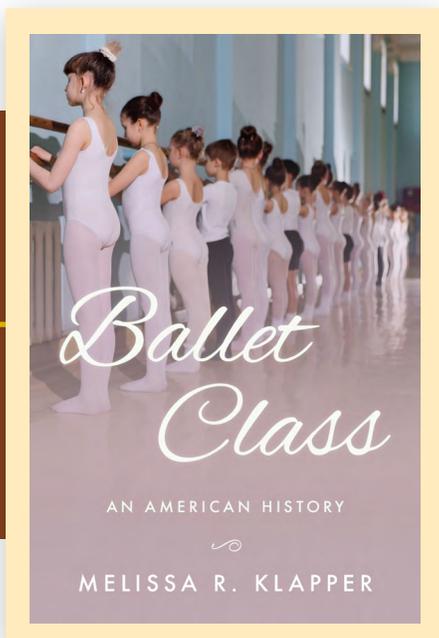
However, people often have a gendered mentality about ballet, associating it with girls. "Boys always took ballet class. That was something that was very important to my book," she said.

Klapper's book is a scholarly work, but it is written for a broad readership. "The audience is anybody who has ever taken a ballet class, seen *The Nutcracker* or a ballet movie or watched dance on TV," she said.

### Other CHSS faculty also have published recent works, including:

Dr. Matthew Lund, associate professor, Philosophy & World Religions, edited *What I Do Not Believe, and Other Essays*, 2nd edition. This collection was published by Springer in 2020. It features a comprehensive new introduction, along with Norwood Russell Hanson's seminal essays on philosophy of language, history and philosophy of science, religious belief, cosmology, observation and the development of the theory of flight.

Dr. Jennifer Rich's recent book is *Keepers of Memory: The Holocaust and Transgenerational Identity*, published by Lexington Books in 2019. In this book, the assistant professor in the Sociology & Anthropology Department and executive director of the Rowan Center for the Study of Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights, uses personal stories and interviews to reveal how Holocaust survivors' families remember this event that occurred before they were born and how it impacts their lives.





## New Faculty Work to Inspire CHSS Students

New faculty (above from left) from a diverse range of backgrounds influenced and instructed CHSS students in classrooms and virtual environments this year.

**Dr. Eva Boodman**, assistant professor, Philosophy & World Religions, focuses on social and political philosophy, applied and feminist ethics, philosophy of race and carceral studies. In her recent research, she has examined how institutions reproduce or mitigate structural dynamics. She earned her doctorate from Stony Brook University, master's degrees from Catholic University of Leuven and bachelor's degree from McGill University.

**Dr. Debbie Sharnak**, assistant professor, History, earned her bachelor's degree from Vassar College and her master's degree and doctorate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She joined Rowan after serving as a lecturer in the History and Literature Honors program at Harvard University. She is currently revising *Of Light and Struggle in Uruguay: Contesting the International History of Human Rights*, a book based on her dissertation.

**Dr. Jennifer Rich**, assistant professor, is based in the Sociology & Anthropology Department. She is executive director of the Rowan Center for the Study of Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights. Her first book is titled *Keepers of Memory:*

*The Holocaust and Transgenerational Identity*. She earned her bachelor's degree from Muhlenberg College, her master's degree from Bank Street College of Education and her doctorate from Rutgers University.

**Dr. Marquita Smith**, assistant professor, English, focuses on African American literature and culture, hip-hop studies, gender and sexuality, and critical race studies in her teaching and research. Her book, *Through the Glass: African American Literature and Carceral Feeling*, explores how African American narratives reflect the impact of carcerality on those outside the prison system. She earned her doctorate from McMaster University and bachelor's and master's degrees from Rutgers University.

**Dr. John Shjarback**, assistant professor, Law & Justice Studies, came to Rowan from the University of Texas at El Paso, where he was an assistant professor for three years. His research concentrates on American policing, specifically on environmental and organizational contexts and contemporary issues in the field. He earned his doctorate from Arizona State University, his master's degree from Monmouth University and his bachelor's degree from Penn State University.

## Recognizing Excellence

The College awarded two Excellence in Research Awards, which recognize exceptionally influential research. Dr. Harriet Hartman, professor, Sociology & Anthropology, received the Excellence in Research, Senior Researcher Award. She also received the Marshall Sklare Award from the Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry for significant contributions to the social scientific study of Jewry. Dr. Joel Capellan, assistant professor, Law & Justice Studies, received the Excellence in Research, Pre-Tenure Researcher Award.

Dr. Sandra Joy, professor, Sociology & Anthropology, and Professor Jeff Schwartz, Law & Justice Studies, received Excellence in Service Awards, highlighting their outstanding efforts to provide service to students, programs, departments,

the College or the University.

Dr. Bill Carrigan, professor, History, and Professor Brian Redondo, Law & Justice, were honored with Excellence in Teaching Awards.

Excellence in teaching is exhibited by clearly delivering a demanding curriculum and providing necessary student support, implementing engaging teaching methods, building learning relationships with students outside the classroom and showing passionate interest in subject matter and other attributes.

Ten CHSS faculty and advisors were nominated for Rowan University's Wall of Fame. They were nominated by the previous year's graduates for excellence in teaching or advising.

# FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Professors Receive Prestigious Grants

Dr. Emily Hyde, assistant professor, English, received the highly sought Summer Stipend grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Her \$6,000 grant will be applied toward ongoing research for her book, *Postcolonial Modernism and the Visual Book, 1947-1968*, which discusses modernist visual practices in postcolonial novels.

CHSS faculty also received the following grants:

- Dr. Melissa Klapper, “At Home in the World: American Jewish Women Abroad, 1865-1940,” sponsored by the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies
- Dr. Christine Saum and Dr. Kimberly Houser, Federal Mental Health Court Project, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice

- Dr. Jim Heinzen, “Underground Entrepreneurs and the Soviet Shadow Economy Under Late Socialism, 1950s-1980s,” sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies
- Dr. Ellen Miller, Ethics and Skills Workshop, sponsored by the American Philosophical Association and “Learning Engineering Ethics Through High-Impact Collaborative and Competitive Scenarios,” sponsored by the National Science Foundation
- Dr. Bill Carrigan, the Megan Giordano Fellow in Public History, sponsored by Gloucester County Parks & Recreation
- Dr. Harriet Hartman, Revolutionizing Engineering Departments Grant, sponsored by the National Science Foundation
- Dr. Misty Knight-Finley, GESIS EUROLAB Visiting Scholar Grant

## Camden Health Research Initiative Grants

The following faculty received Camden Health Research Initiative grants:

- Dr. Yupeng Li, “Improving Intervention Decision of Aortic Aneurysm through Statistical & Deep-Learning Approach”
- Dr. Stuti Jha, “Primary Care Vaping Assessment, Prevalence, and Economics Project”

- Dr. Jeanne Mastrocinque (co-principal investigator), “Using Trauma-Informed Training and Standardized Patient Encounters to Assist Physicians’ Interactions with Trauma Victims: Improving Identification, Interactions and Resource Connections Through the Observed Standardized Clinical Examination”
- Dr. DeMond Miller (co-principal investigator), “Tracking Opioid Consumption in the City of Camden Using Wastewater Epidemiology”
- Dr. Evan Sorg, “The Violent Crime and Public Health Implications of the Camden County Metro Police Department’s Priority Deployment Plan: A Quasi-Experimental Evaluation”

## Faculty Productivity

5

Monographs and edited anthologies

Federal, state and other grants

5

14

Faculty editing or serving on editorial boards of academic journals

Book reviews

22

23

Press editorials or commentaries

Book chapters

24

25

Academic presentations at universities beyond Rowan

Community talks

45+

# ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Law & Justice Alumni Create PATH for Aspiring Officers

Law enforcement demands that officers are in top form physically, mentally and intellectually.

To help current and aspiring officers maximize these qualities, Lawrence Achey, '13, M'14, and Christopher Popper, '13, M'14, co-founded the Police Academy Training Help (PATH) program.

This is just one of the CHSS graduates' many accomplishments that led the University to name them 2020 Distinguished Young Alumni.

"PATH was created to help aspiring law enforcement officers prepare for the police academy by providing them with the training, diet and proper resources to excel in the academy and in their careers," said Achey, an instructor for the program who is a detective with the Office of the Atlantic County Prosecutor.

In addition, it helps current law enforcement officers ensure they are physically and mentally fit.

"Aside from getting into the best shape of their lives, having a platform where our clients can communicate with a group of current and aspiring law enforcement officers allows them to ask

questions and relate to others who can help them succeed," said Popper, also a PATH instructor who is a homicide detective with the Office of the Atlantic County Prosecutor.

Popper and Achey also encourage and motivate Rowan students to achieve success while giving invited classroom

presentations on campus. "Rowan provided us with the education and connections to learn how to identify issues in our criminal justice system and to recognize the need for highly qualified police officers to shape the future of those who choose to protect and serve," Achey said.

"The professors in this program challenged and shaped us into the most educated and motivated versions of ourselves within the field," Popper said.



Lawrence Achey

Chris Popper

## Alumni Land History Fellowships

Two CHSS alumni won highly competitive James Madison Fellowships, which support teachers of American history, American government and civics as they pursue graduate studies in American history.

The fellowships are supported by the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation, Alexandria, Virginia.

The recipients are Steven Anderson, '12, and Tessa Knight Belluscio, '10, who both earned bachelor's degrees in history and subject matter education.

Anderson teaches at Timber Creek Regional High School in Sicklerville and will take his graduate courses at Rowan, and Belluscio teaches at the Kosloff Torah Academy in Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, and will take graduate courses at Rutgers University-Camden.

52

Peer reviews of monographs, academic papers and textbooks

78

Refereed articles

Lectures, talks

60+

Conference presentations

83

# Alumna Acquires Dual Perspective in Vietnam

As an English Language Fellow in Vinh, Vietnam, Mary Spanarkel, '11, soaked in the history of the country while gaining new direction for her future.

“As a former history major, it was a fascinating place to visit in terms of learning more about the Vietnam War and how American-Vietnamese relations have developed over time,” said the Tinton Falls resident, who was part of the English Language Programs of the U.S. Department of State.

“The fellowship reminded me that I enjoyed teaching and that I would like to continue doing that again,” said Spanarkel (front row, fourth from left). “One of the more exciting aspects of my fellowship included providing insight and assistance on a new national assessment suite that’s in development in Vietnam, and I continue to do freelance work in assessment now.”

Spanarkel has had a diverse range of educational experiences since earning her bachelor’s degree in history and education from Rowan. She was a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant at Balikesir University in Turkey. She later earned a master’s degree in teaching English as a second or foreign language from American University in Washington, D.C. She has been director of curriculum for an adult English as a second language (ESL) school

and taught academic writing in higher education settings.

Spanarkel hopes to return to the classroom as an ESL teacher, but the pandemic may reduce the availability of teaching positions.



She explained that principals are often attracted to her history and ESL backgrounds. “I can help a student who is an English language learner, but I can help them very directly in the content area of social studies,” she said.

## Transforming Tragedy Into Triumph

Born in Liberia the day before its second civil war began, alumna Debah Tiah, '19, is no stranger to trauma, homelessness and tragedy.

But her painful escape from war and subsequent struggles fuel her passion to help others.

“I believe that my story, my testimony and everything I have overcome are not for me,” said Tiah, who is from Newark. “Yes, I’m a person who went through these situations, but it’s for someone else out there, like a little girl, a woman or victims of war who might be inspired by my story.”

While earning her bachelor’s degree in sociology, with a minor in psychology, she initially considered a career in social work after mentoring foster youth with the Rowan University First Star Academy.

At a policy camp during her junior year, however, she discovered she could accomplish much more with a public policy degree. In June, she earned her master’s degree in public administration from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University.

“I can achieve all of my personal goals and professional goals with this degree,” said Tiah, who is engaged in a remote internship with an organization in Kenya that helps vulnerable children and orphans. She hopes to land a full-

time federal government position and eventually work for the U.S Foreign Service. “My dream is to be a diplomat,” she said.

While taking graduate public policy and leadership classes, she also learned about budgeting, which will be important when she launches her nonprofit organization in Liberia to help marginalized people.

Tiah wants to invest in women, children and marginalized groups, mentoring others as many mentored her at Rowan. They included Nichole Pollard, associate director of financial aid; Sharon McCann, sociology instructor; Dr. Sandra Joy, sociology professor; and Richard Jones, vice president of student engagement. “They helped me get to this point,” she said.



**Debah Tiah**

# MARKING MILESTONES

CHSS shared its expertise University-wide and with a larger audience, highlighting many historical milestones:

## Inaugural 1619 Project @ Rowan

This series of events marked the four centuries since British Americans first purchased and enslaved African people and how slavery and racism dramatically shaped and influenced American institutions. The events highlight African Americans' history, struggles and accomplishments. The first event, "Groove," was a dance performance that demonstrated the joy, freedom, pride and community of African Americans. During a subsequent series of events, "Conversations and Food," attendees enjoyed foods of the African diaspora and discussed issues inspired by the *New York Times Magazine's* 1619 Project podcast.

## Passage of the 19th Amendment

"Women Winning the Vote: Commemorating the Centennial of the 19th Amendment, 2019-2020," a series of events, was hosted by the Department of History and Women's & Gender Studies program. It included "Reflections on the Nineteenth Amendment," a panel discussion; *Equal Means Equal* film screenings and discussions; a President's Day presentation by Dr. Cathleen Cahill, a professor from Penn State; and *New York Times* columnist Gail Collins's Presidential Lecture Series address.

## Red Summer Race Riots

Critical Junctures, an International Studies lecture series, hosted Dr. Mychal Odom, from the University of California, San Diego, who presented "Pressed to the Wall, but Fighting Back: The Black Radical Legacies of Red Summer." This talk commemorated the 100th anniversary of the Red Summer race riots, a seminal event in the development of moderate and Black radical politics from the civil rights movement to internationalism and Pan-Africanism.

## Liberation of Auschwitz

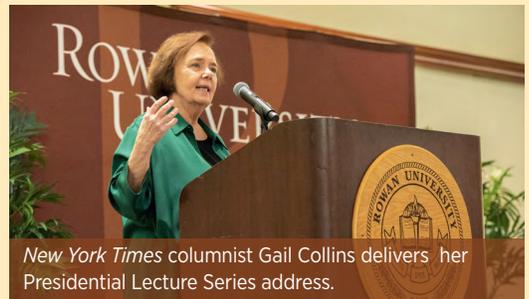
Professor Jody Russell Manning presented "Living in the Shadows of Auschwitz: 75 Years Later" at the Harriet & Kenneth Kupferberg Holocaust Center at Queensborough Community College, Queens, New York.

## Rwandan Genocide

Retired Canadian Lieutenant General Roméo Dallaire presented "Conflict Prevention in a Globalized World: Rwanda Twenty-Five Years Later," the Dr. Paul B. Winkler Annual CHSS Lecture. He was the Force Commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda before and during the genocide of 1994.



History and Modern Languages and Linguistics double major Laura Bell participates in discussions during the 1619 Project conversation series.



*New York Times* columnist Gail Collins delivers her Presidential Lecture Series address.



Jody Manning, lecturer in History, discusses the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.



Lieutenant General Roméo Dallaire speaks at the Paul B. Winkler Annual Lecture.

## Call to Action for Social Justice

LaTosha Brown shares an impassioned message of change with attendees of the annual Rosa Parks Luncheon.

Africana Studies hosted LaTosha Brown as keynote speaker during its annual Rosa Parks Luncheon in February. Brown, who is co-founder of the Black Voters Matter Fund, a jazz singer and fellow at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, was the latest in a long line of noted speakers for this event.

"Organizers have been fortunate to feature speakers with connections to Parks, a groundbreaking civil rights activist," said Denise Williams, History Department administrative assistant.

"The luncheon has become one of the top events at Rowan because it presents speakers that bring about issues of social justice," she said. "It meets the times we're in now, reflecting back on how the Civil Rights Movement has moved forward or not moved forward."

The luncheon was established by Dr. Corann Okorodudu, professor emeritus, working with the late Dr. Gary Hunter and Dr. Herbert Douglas, professor emeritus. "They always looked at how they could leave a footprint for people to guide them through their journey at Rowan, and the Rosa Parks Luncheon was part of that," said Julie Peterson, director, Student Enrichment & Family Connections.

The event increased awareness of social justice on campus and ultimately funded the Gary Hunter Memorial Scholarship.

"It's one of the few events that continue to honor the civil rights legacy of Rosa Parks and the organizing tradition of the movement," said Dr. Chanelle Rose, coordinator, Africana Studies,

and associate professor of history. She explained that Parks and other organizers in the Black community fought against Jim Crow segregation and systemic oppression.

"Our speakers draw on some of that to show the historical relevance, but they always directly relate it to what is happening today. There is always a call to action."

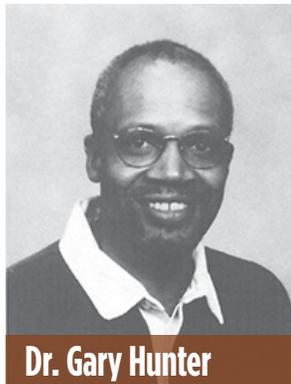


Dr. Corann Okorodudu (left) with Denise Williams

# A Legacy of Giving

The late Dr. Gary Hunter, founder of Rowan's Africana Studies concentration and History chair from 1992-98, was a gifted story teller, mentor and giver. His generosity still inspires others to follow his example.

"If students were in need financially, it wasn't unheard of that Gary would just pay something off for them," said Julie Peterson, director, Student Enrichment & Family Connections. "That was Gary. If they needed food or additional funding, Gary would just pay it. He did it all of the time. That was his true legacy."



**Dr. Gary Hunter**

He passed away after 29 years at Rowan, leading the History Department to fund the Gary Hunter Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship continues to be funded

by charitable giving and proceeds from the annual Rosa Parks Luncheon, now in its 15th year.

Each year a senior also receives the Gary Hunter Medallion

for Excellence in History. This year the scholarship was awarded to Derick Luciano, and Marco Carolla received the medallion. In addition, the American Federation of Teachers union established the Gary J. Hunter Excellence in Mentoring Award.

After his death, the History Department also published his book *Neighborhoods of Color: African American Communities in Southern New Jersey, 1660-2000*, the first African American history of southern New Jersey.

"His legacy speaks for itself," said Denise Williams, History Department administrative assistant. "I'm still constantly getting calls from people who want his book."

While at Rowan, he was honored by the New Jersey Association of Black Educators and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He was appointed to the New Jersey State Historical Records Review Board in 1998.

"If you were to ask alumni, they would say one of the most impactful individuals they met was Gary Hunter because he spent time and encouraged students to do extraordinary things," Peterson said. "It was never enough to just be knowledgeable. What are you doing for others? That was Gary."

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