

# SENIORS OF DISTINCTION 2022 AWARD CEREMONY

Celebrating our accomplished seniors

**The College of Humanities & Social Sciences**



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### Dean's Welcome



*Nawal Ammar*

Dean Nawal 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.*

***Your perseverance will serve you as you begin your journey after graduation.***

## Guest Speaker Muqaddas Ejaz, '15



Muqaddas Ejaz is a community advocate and activist. She is currently serving her second term as a member of New Jersey's Cherry Hill Democratic Committee, where she was the first Muslim elected in 2017. Her leadership skills have been applied on various boards, including the Camden County's Human Relations commission and the Cultural and Heritage Commissions that worked to strengthen the cultural framework of Camden County by educating the community and supporting local organizations with funding and technical assistance to deepen the interactions between cultural practitioners and residents.

Devoted to serving others, Muqaddas remains involved in several grassroots organizations that work towards the development of local communities and the betterment of New Jersey's diverse citizens. She serves as the Director of Community Engagement for The Muslim Network, co-led the First Annual Camden County S.U.R.E. (Students United for Respect & Equity) Summit for the youth, and co-founder of Know Your Muslim Neighbor, South Jersey. Previously, she has also served as the lead for the English as a Second Language and Computer Literacy program at the Muslim American Community Association and has designed, planned, and led other seminars, community, and cultural events for the diverse community.

Muqaddas has been recently recognized by the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) chapter of South Jersey as Community Advocate of the Year 2020. She was also awarded the Camden County Freedom Medal in 2018 for her community service, and U.S. Congressman Donald Norcross (NJ-1) recognized her as a Woman of Honor in Education. She is currently serving as the inaugural advisory board member of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Rowan University.

## Department Chairs and Program Coordinators

AFRICANA STUDIES  
**Chanelle Rose, Coordinator**

AMERICAN STUDIES  
**Katie Turner, Coordinator**

AREA STUDIES and  
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
**Kelly Duke-Bryant, Coordinator**

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS &  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
**DeMond Miller, Coordinator**

ECONOMICS &  
POLITICAL SCIENCE  
**Lawrence Markowitz, Chair**

ENGLISH  
**Zena Meadowsong, Chair**

GENERAL STUDIES  
**Danielle Gougou, Coordinator**

HISTORY  
**Janet Moore-Lindman, Chair**

HUMAN SERVICES  
**Sharon McCann, Coordinator**

LAW & JUSTICE STUDIES  
**Michael Weiss, Chair**

LIBERAL STUDIES  
**Tiffany Tillman, Coordinator**

PHILOSOPHY & WORLD RELIGIONS  
**Ellen Miller, Chair**

SOCIOLOGY & ANTHROPOLOGY  
**Maria Rosado, Chair**

WORLD LANGUAGES  
**Marilyn Manley, Chair**

## OUR DISTINGUISHED SENIORS



**JAMAR GREEN**  
Africana Studies

Jamar is an exemplary model for students with a double major in Africana Studies and Law & Justice Studies because he has drawn from both disciplines to pursue a career that will transform the criminal justice system. He has played a leading role in several student clubs, including the Black Student Union (BSU), Rowan's NAACP chapter, New Life Ministry, and the African Student Association.

In fall 2021, Jamar helped BSU organize its Call to Action plan, which includes a set of demands to make the university a more inclusive place for students of color on campus. This fall, he participated in Rowan's International Model African Union course, representing Eritrea; and his Senior Seminar research paper will focus on Black children and incarcerated parents. Jamar's long-term goal is to pursue politics "to change rules and laws for Black and brown people and for the BIPOC community."



**ABIGAIL HUMMELL**  
American Studies

Abigail exemplifies the inter-disciplinarity, commitment to public history and positive attitude that we value in American Studies. Abigail interned at the Red Bank Battlefield, researching medicinal herbs used during the Revolution. As a Miss America digital project intern, she quickly learned a lot about competition milestones and lore. Abigail is generous with her time and enthusiasm, often speaking to various news media about her work on the project.

In her classes, Abigail displayed hard work and collegial attitude, always initiating and participating in class discussions, and working enthusiastically and constructively in group work. Abigail demonstrated impressive commitment and poise when she traveled with the project director and another student to the Miss America 100th national competition in Connecticut for 4 days in the middle of finals week, after helping to choose the artifacts and creating a digital slideshow. She is well on her way to a career in public history.



**KATHRYN SEU**  
Anthropology

Kathryn is pursuing a double major in History and Anthropology, a minor in International Studies, and a CUGS in Russian language. She has worked alongside Dr. Seran Schug for an ethnographic project with Build a Bridge International. This internship involved an analysis project following the ending of the program, which included thematic analysis and ways that the program could improve. She is president of the Student Association of the Rowan Center for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights, and she was recently selected to serve as president of Lambda Alpha, the Anthropology honors society. She has been named to the CHSS Dean's List for all semesters.



**JESSICA ROGERS**  
Area Studies

Jessica Rogers will graduate with a double major in Area Studies (Asian Studies concentration) and History and with minors in Asian Studies, International Studies, and Japanese. She is a committed student who has an infectious enthusiasm for learning. She is particularly interested in Asian history, cultures, and languages and has conducted research on Asia for her senior seminars in History and in Area Studies. While at Rowan, she interned with the New Jersey Women's History Project, helping to produce content for a digital history website maintained by Rowan. This spring, she has done great work as a research and public relations intern for the Area Studies program, helping compile information for our website and support our programming. She has the distinction of being Rowan's first Area Studies graduate, and we know she will go on to do great things.



### ALEXANDRU LIBBY

Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (DPEM)

Course preparation in emergency response during COVID-19 has prepared Alexandru to address an array of disasters and crises. Mr. Libby will graduate with a dual-major degree in DPEM and Law & Justice Studies, and a Certificate of Undergraduate Studies (CUGS) in Counterterrorism Emergency Response Operations. Currently, he works as an employee of the Gloucester County's Office of Emergency Management providing logistical support for all COVID-19 supplies and Gloucester County's Emergency Medical Services stock. He also conducted preliminary damage assessments on the homes affected by recent tornados alongside local, state, and federal emergency managers, as well as provided aid and comfort to the tornado survivors through donation organization and distribution. During the November elections, he worked in the Office of Elections Emergency Operations Center to provide first-level support to voters and poll volunteers. After completing his undergraduate degree in DPEM as the first Combined Accelerated Degree Program student, he will earn the Master of Science in Emergency & Threat Response Management.



### LADARIAN DESHAWN PERKINS

Economics

Throughout his educational journey, Ladarian – also known as Deshawn – has had a personal revolution. He had a challenging start at college and unfortunately had developed a serious problem with substance-abuse. Then came the news: he was going to be a father. He decided then and there to immediately and permanently turn things around to make a bright future for his family. Deshawn worked 60+ hour workweeks to support his family immediately and transferred to Rowan with the dream of supporting his family in the long run. While raising two young boys, Deshawn has maintained his position on the Dean's List over the past two years. Even further, he joined the club wrestling team and qualified for nationals. Entering his final year, Deshawn has found his calling as a Data Analyst and he looks forward to providing a happy and healthy life for the family he has started.



### REBECCA OTTO

English

Rebecca Otto is extraordinary—a student who will be remembered for her brilliance and curiosity, her deft analyses of literary texts, and her social conscience. Dr. Emily Hyde writes of the care with which Rebecca “lays out the steps of her arguments”—but then “surprises you by opening up enormous questions” about, for instance, “the shape of time.” Dr. Marci Carrasquillo recalls her “moving paper on Pietri’s ‘Puerto Rican Obituary’”—an incisive analysis of how capitalism not only estranges Puerto Ricans from their island heritage but commodifies their connection to that past. And Dr. Christina Solomon remembers how Rebecca’s interests transcended their class, as she embarked on Viet Nguyen’s “(literally and figuratively) heavy tome,” *The Sympathizer*, over break. After graduating, Rebecca plans to teach English in Korea, putting her degree to work for the growing good of the world. We applaud her achievements and look forward to everything she will become in the future.



### DEBBIE DEPIETRO

General Studies

Debbie began college in the 1980s, but left just shy of completing her degree to pursue a career. During that time, Debbie worked in a variety of fields before finding her way to Rowan University where she has served as an accounts payable specialist since 2016. Debbie credits the Bachelor of General Studies program with giving her the opportunity to finish her degree. She states that, “A degree, along with my professional experience, will open new doors for me. However, the personal satisfaction of finally seeing my name on a diploma is the most rewarding aspect of this achievement.” She encourages students in her situation, or younger students who cannot decide where their path lies, to take advantage of the program. We are happy to select Debbie as our Senior of Distinction for her excellence as a student, her perseverance in completing her degree, and her enthusiasm for taking advantage of all that the program has to offer.





**KAITLYN LEY**  
History

Kaitlyn Ley earned a A.S. in Education at the Rowan College of Burlington County in 2020 and is currently a History Major with dual minors in German Studies and International Studies. She presented her research at the History Department Poster Session in March 2022 on “Conservative Values and the Education of New Racism in Western Societies.” She is a member of the Academic Integrity Board at Rowan University. She has made the Dean’s List every year since 2018 and is a member of Tau Sigma, Phi Alpha Theta, and the National Honors Society of Leadership and Success.



**DYRONDA VICKERS**  
Human Services

As a polymath, Dyronda was having a hard time finding a major that encompassed all of her interests. So she decided to take several! She settled on Human Services, with a minor in Psychology, but soon after added on Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management. She became an ambassador for CHSS, as well as a mentor in the Dr. Harley Flack Mentoring program, where she was mentoring incoming freshmen and sophomores.

She was also president of the Human Services club even as it struggled to get moving and, despite setbacks attributed to COVID, she came back as co-president the next year. In addition to garnering club recognition, she fostered the club in service works, providing toiletries bags for the homeless in Camden. Dyronda has been accepted into the Summer 2022 Americorp NCC program, stationed in Sacramento, California, where she will volunteer and train for a year with Fema Corps. From there, she plans to apply to FEMA, the Federal Agency, and apply her well-rounded skills and endless enthusiasm.



**KIAH BENSON**  
International Studies

Kiah Benson will graduate with her BA in International Studies and a Certificate of Undergraduate Study in French, and she is a member of Sigma Iota Rho—the national honor society for International Studies. Kiah was in her element when she took our Model United Nations course in spring 2021, and her leadership, enthusiasm, and research skills made Rowan’s Model UN delegation stronger. Kiah did great work as an intern, helping develop a website on global security for International Studies at Rowan. Last fall, she studied abroad in Morocco, where she learned about human rights, international development, and the environment. Committed to global environmental and human rights issues, she wrote her senior seminar paper on “The Role of Water in the Israel-Palestine Conflict,” and she recently attended the World Water Forum in Dakar, Senegal. Fittingly, in her future career, she hopes to solve problems related to global water access.



**NICHOLAS SALVUCCI**  
Law & Justice Studies

Nicholas Salvucci is a double major in Law & Justice and Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management. Nicholas achieved academic excellence in both majors, even while serving a year-long deployment with the National Guard during his first year at Rowan. During this time, Nicholas was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal. Upon returning to campus, Nicholas found ways to connect with other veteran students and not only became involved with, but took on leadership roles in a number of organizations including the Criminal Justice Preparation Club and Epsilon Pi Phi Honor Society. He also completed internships with the US Marshals Regional Fugitive Task Force and the Federal Air Marshal Service. What truly distinguishes Nicholas is his service to others through his participation in community blood drives and partnering with a number of local organizations to provide assistance to veterans and people experiencing homelessness. Nicholas is currently pursuing employment opportunities as an intelligence analyst.



**VALENTINA BLANDO**  
Liberal Studies

Valentina Blando is a Liberal Studies major with sequences in Sociology and Public Relations as well as a minor in Psychology. She is an outstanding student with a zest for learning from an array of academic disciplines that truly exemplifies the spirit of an interdisciplinary education. Valentina has maintained an exceptionally high GPA and has been on the President's List every semester during her time at Rowan. In addition to her impressive academic achievements, Valentina has also been an active member of the Public Relations Student Society of America. She also serves her community through various volunteer efforts in working with people with disabilities. The Liberal Studies Program is proud to recognize Valentina as our 2022 Senior of Distinction!



**GONZALO MCGUCKIN**  
Modern Languages & Linguistics

The Department of World Languages is very proud of Gonzalo McGuckin, our Senior of Distinction for the major in Modern Languages & Linguistics (MLL). Gonzalo has truly made the most of his academic career at Rowan by completing an impressive number of programs. He will graduate in May 2022 with a double major in MLL and International Studies with a Concentration in European and Russian Studies. For MLL, he has completed Concentrations in Spanish, French, and Italian. Additionally, he has completed minor programs in Japanese and Asian Studies. To complement his studies, Gonzalo has worked as a tutor at Literacy New Jersey, teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to adult learners. Following graduation, he plans to either work as an Assistant Language Teacher for the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program (JET) in Japan or as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in South Korea.



**JAMES O'CONNOR**  
Philosophy

James O'Connor embodies excellence in his academic, professional, and service activities. He is an active member of the Philosophy Club where he serves as SGA Senator. James is a member of Phi Sigma Tau International Honor Society, and he was awarded the David Clowney Scholarship in Philosophy in 2021. James has been a commission member for the Gloucester County Cultural Heritage Commission for four years. He works full time at the Gloucester County Library where he manages the makerspace studio. He developed a community garden at the library that is in its seventh year of operation. Most of the produce grown is donated to the Glassboro Foodbank or is used for educational programming. James is also an exhibiting artist with a recent showing at the Glassboro Historical Society. His next goal is to complete a Master's degree that will enable him to become a professional librarian. The department is grateful for all James has contributed through his numerous talents and community-focus.



**SARAH MCCLURE**  
Political Science

Sarah is a dual major in Political Science and International Studies, with a minor in German Studies. She is a member of the Honors College, Rowan's Model United Nations team, and both the Political Science and International Studies honor societies. Graduating summa cum laude, Sarah is a recipient of the Caswell Scholarship from the Rowan Institute for Public Policy & Citizenship and has earned her Bronze and Silver Leadership Certificates from the Rowan Leadership program. Outside of the classroom, Sarah served for two years on the Student Government Association Executive Board, first as Secretary, then as Vice President, and helped found Project Period, a movement that advocates for the distribution of free menstrual products on campus. While President of the Honors Student Organization, Sarah founded the Food Insecurity Program to provide free healthy meals for Honors students. She also mentored incoming students through the BLAST peer mentorship program. This Fall, Sarah will be attending Rutgers New Brunswick to pursue a Master's degree in Political Science through their United Nations and Global Policy Studies program.



**WENDELY WRIGHT**  
Sociology

Wendely Wright excelled at her academics as a first-generation, non-traditional college student, a mother of two and wife. She worked as a paralegal in law for approximately fifteen years. Wendy returned to college in the Fall of 2018 to complete her degree, obtaining an Associates in Social Work with honors at Rowan College of South Jersey, in 2019. She will be graduating with a bachelor's degree in Sociology and a minor in Psychology with honors. She also completed her Certificate Undergraduate Studies in Human Services-Direct Care. She has been a member of the Dean's List every semester. Her other academic honors include memberships in several honor societies, including Phi Theta Kappa, Tau Sigma, Alpha Kappa Delta, and Psi Chi. After graduation, Wendely plans to enter a master's program with a focus on either Sociology or Gerontology. Her passion lies with helping the elder community, and she wants to use her knowledge and experience to advocate for the rights and safety of the gerontologic community.



**MICHAEL FOGLIO**  
Spanish

The Department of World Languages is very proud of Michael Foglio, our Senior of Distinction for the Spanish major. In May 2022, Michael will complete his double-major in Spanish and Modern Languages and Linguistics with Concentrations in Spanish and French. He is also currently pursuing Rowan's Master of Science in Teaching. In the future, Michael has plans to study in a Spanish-speaking country and either teach Spanish at the high school level or teach English in a Spanish-speaking country. He is also interested in obtaining a doctoral degree in education.

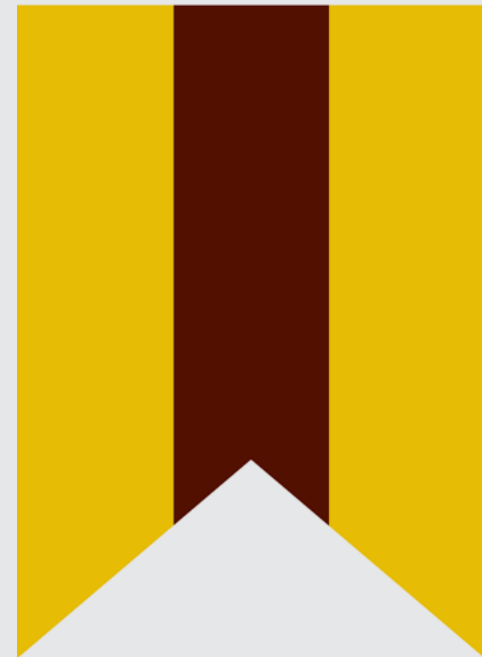


**Bria Riley-Rivello**  
World Religions

Bria is a summa cum laude graduate with a double major in World Religions and Psychology and a minor in Women's and Gender Studies. She received the Dianne Ashton Scholarship for the top Junior World Religions major. Bria completed two internships at Rowan: social media outreach for the Office of Social Justice, Inclusion, and Conflict Resolution and digital outreach internship for the Camden County Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. She created and implemented an original outreach project focused on codependency. She also wrote for Textbroker International while she was completing her degrees. Bria works as a substitute teacher and has done extensive volunteer work. Bria plans to attend graduate school for academic advising, work full time, and continue her work as a writer. She has already published several books, including *The Art of a Healing Soul*. Bria is committed to helping and inspiring others to never give up on themselves. The department looks forward to hearing how Bria uses her knowledge, commitment to service, and drive in the next chapter of her life.



## HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES







COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES  
& SOCIAL SCIENCES

201 Mullica Hill Dr.  
Glassboro, NJ 08028

856-256-4580  
info@chss.edu  
www.chss.rowan.edu

