

CLAS News

The newsletter for the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences



Message from Dean Parviz Ansari

During this pivotal time in Rowan University's history, we are responding with creative solutions to strengthen our College and best serve our constituents.

Together with the College of Engineering, we are engaged in a biomedical initiative spurred on by our partnership with Cooper University Hospital for Cooper Medical School of Rowan University. We are investigating the feasibility of establishing a Center for Biomedical Research and a School of Biomedical Science and Engineering with selected undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

We are also positioning ourselves to take a regional lead in environmental and public policy initiatives. To assist in this effort, we recently completed a program consolidation to re-organize and strengthen our offerings.

Next summer, we anticipate establishing the Department of Geography & the Environment (incorporating our highly successful interdisciplinary program in Environmental Studies); the Department of Sociology & Anthropology; and the Department of Political Science & Economics.

Please read more about the accomplishments of our faculty, staff and students in our College's first Annual Report for 2009-10 (www.rowan.edu/las under "About the College"). Selected new accomplishments are found in this newsletter.

CLAS of Fulbrights

Chanelle Wilson, '10, heads to classroom in South Africa

Reaching for your dreams is a motto that Chanelle Wilson not only lives by but also wants to teach to others. In January this 2010 Rowan graduate will be fulfilling her dream of returning to South Africa when she begins her teaching assistantship through the Fulbright Scholarship Program.

Wilson will be teaching English to students at Walmer High School in Port Elizabeth. She also hopes to expose them to a university setting by taking them to Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University to work with students in community arts programs.

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OFF TO SOUTH AFRICA: Chanelle Wilson is the 10th Rowan student in a decade—and the fifth CLAS student in the past five years—to land a prestigious Fulbright scholarship. Wilson visited the country for the first time in 2009.

English Department's Odom studies theater in Nigeria

English professor Glenn Odom spent the fall semester in Nigeria, where theatricality reigns among the people of Yoruba.

"Everything in Yoruba is a performance in some way or another," says Odom, who received a prestigious Fulbright Fellowship to research and teach at the University of Ibadan—Nigeria's oldest university.

"It's a culture that sings and dances and performs. You can't go a minute in Yoruba without some kind of performance. It's everywhere in the country."

Odom's research in Nigeria focuses on the history of the development of performance genres in the Yoruba world in comparison to contemporary Nigerian theater. Additionally,

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College welcomes nine new faculty members to Rowan

Bringing expertise in everything from insects to ecological apocalypse to gang violence, nine new professors have joined the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, the University's largest college.

The college welcomed four new Biological Sciences professors with a variety of interests.

They include: Mathew Bealor, an ecologist and evolutionary biologist who focuses on evolutionary and functional aspects of feeding behavior and predator-prey interactions in vertebrates; Kristin Hensley, whose research interests include neural coding and sensory perception; Nancy LaFleur, who focuses on understanding on how animal behavior mediates plant distributions; and Dayalan Srinivasan, whose current research on the mechanism and evolution of reproductive plasticity in insects began during his postdoctoral work at Princeton University.

The English Department has two new faculty members: Melinda DiStefano and Zena Meadowsong. DiStefano's interests include 20th century American literature, ecocriticism and Native American literature. Her current research examines how ecological apocalypse is connected with social, familial and gendered concepts. Meadowsong specializes in 19th and 20th-century British literature, focusing on modernism. Most recently, she held a postdoctoral fellowship in the humanities at Stanford University.

Physics & Astronomy has welcomed Tabetha Dobbins, currently on leave from her joint appointment as an associate professor of physics at Grambling State University and Louisiana Tech University. Her research explores the relationship between structure and dynamics in nanocomposite materials that impact energy, medicine and the environment.

Law & Justice Studies has added Joseph Johnson to its faculty, while Chemistry & Biochemistry has welcomed Timothy Vaden. Johnson's research interests include guns, gang and/or clique violence and prevention programming, while Vaden's research interests include atmospheric aerosols as well as computational and experimental studies of ion-peptide complexes.

Vaden spent three years as a Royal Society Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Oxford and one year researching at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.

Summer research grants awarded to faculty

Is there water on Mars? How can we decrease carbon dioxide in the atmosphere? Can computer-based therapy help schizophrenia patients? These are just a few of the questions that recipients of the 2010 Summer Grant Awards are investigating.

Continuing its support of scholarship and grant activity, the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences last summer awarded six grants worth up to \$3,000 each to faculty members from departments throughout the college. The projects strengthen the college's research base. Several of them incorporate students in the research process.

Psychology professor Thomas Dinzeo is researching cognitive remediation in patients with schizophrenia. He is evaluating the use of computer-based software and group-based activities to address cognitive impairments in



FOCUSED ON RESEARCH: CLAS Dean **Parviz Ansari** (standing, center) and Associate Provost for Academic Affairs **Jim Newell** (standing, fourth from right) congratulate grant awardees. They include: (standing, from left) **David Klassen**, Physics & Astronomy; **David Bales**, research volunteer; **Sandra Bales**, alumna; **Lee Talley**, English; **Thomas Dinzeo**, Psychology; **Jessica Hayes**, graduate student; **Matt Plum**, alumnus; and seated (from left) **Jeffrey Hettinger**, Physics & Astronomy; **Ian Dougherty**, Rowan senior; **Ieva Zake**, Sociology; and **Lei Yu**, Chemistry & Biochemistry.

people with psychosis. Physics & Astronomy Professors Jeffrey Hettinger and David Klassen both received grants. Hettinger is investigating the synthesis and characterization of thin film coatings. The thin film coatings will have three primary applications, including bactericidal silver coating of orthopedic implants, carbide materials for "on-chip" energy storage devices and diamond-like-carbon for protective coatings on oxide substrates.

Klassen is working with an undergraduate student to analyze data from the Mars Odyssey spacecraft against data from the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter. The comparison sets limits on the depth of the ice in newly discovered subsurface glaciers, which will help determine when the ice was formed and if it's accessible.

During World War II, millions of children were evacuated from British cities to the countryside to protect them from German bombings. English Professor Lee Talley is juxtaposing child narratives (letters and diaries) about this experience—named "Operation Pied Piper" by the government—with children's literature from the 1940s to the present to analyze the cultural construction of childhood.

Professors Lei Yu and Louis Whaley from Chemistry & Biochemistry are investigating ways to turn carbon dioxide into usable materials through ionic liquids.

Sociology Professor Ieva Zake is researching if the way in which ethnic groups have been used in American politics led to their greater integration—or increased their separation from the rest of the voting population.

For Sociology's Miller, mentoring is a life-long endeavor

When it comes to young people, Sociology Professor DeMond Miller doesn't give any thought to time or place. Having mentored well over 20 to date—"I simply do not count mentees," he says—it doesn't matter to him where he hears from them...or when.

"When they need advisement, even at 2 a.m., I am there," Miller says.

It's this devotion that won Miller the Gary Hunter Award for Excellence in Mentoring, which he received during Rowan Day last spring. The award is given by the American Federation of Teachers and, according to its website, "acknowledges the efforts of those who mentor students, making sure that while such efforts often go unnoticed, they are not unappreciated."

Just a small sampling of Miller's Rowan mentees include: Jason Rivera (History, '06), Charles Ozuna (Radio/Television/Film, '06) and Angel Hernandez (Computer Science, '05). Some of them were introduced to him via mentoring programs at Rowan, while others came to him through



OUTSTANDING MENTOR: His mentees from the Camden Academy Charter High School were there to cheer **DeMond Miller** when he received the Gary Hunter Award for Excellence in Mentoring.

serendipitous circumstances.

"Angel began asking questions and remained around. Eventually we formed a mentoring bond based on mutual respect. I am proud to say that he has worked to create a scholarship fund for graduates of Camden and Pennsauken-area high schools," Miller says.

Ozuna was introduced through Rowan's Harley E. Flack Student Mentor-

ing Program. "Charles is now, himself, a mentor who works in urban areas in northern New Jersey," Miller explains.

Rivera ultimately co-authored a book with Miller, which won Rivera the 2008 Stanford M. Lyman Distinguished Book Award.

Understanding all too well that mentorship is important before the college experience begins, Miller has begun taking high school students from the Camden Academy Charter High School under his wing. He serves as president of the school's board of trustees.

Mentors aren't always born. Sometimes they are made. Miller credits his own mentors with putting him on a path to assist others.

"I simply had excellent mentors myself," he says. "I feel mentoring is the result of a bonding process that takes time to develop, mature and transform. Sometimes these relationships develop as a result of need, mutual interests or academic pursuits.

"For me, mentoring is a life-long endeavor. Once you are part of a mentoring relationship, you are forever touched."

First post-doctoral fellow gets to work in CLAS

With the appointment of Blake Laing as a post-doctoral fellow in the Physics & Astronomy Department, the benefits—to the college, to the department and to Rowan students—are widespread.

"Blake's appointment will allow us to both expand the scope and accelerate the pace of our research," says Physics & Astronomy Professor Hong Ling. "This position was created through a grant from the Army Research Office in support of my research in the field of ultra cold atomic and molecular physics.

"Blake was chosen because he has both analytical and numerical experience in the field of atomic and molecular physics, both as a Ph.D. student and a postdoctoral fellow. Furthermore, he is interested in a career which combines teaching with research in an environment very much like Rowan's."

Rowan was a great fit for numerous reasons, Laing says.

"I was looking for a research fellowship

to take me closer to my goal of directing undergraduate research at a PUI (Primarily Undergraduate Institution)," says Laing. "One obtains a Ph.D. from a research-oriented graduate program, but most professor positions are at PUIs. After some searching I found only three examples of post docs in atomic physics at a PUI.

"Research with undergraduates requires different strategies, and the Physics department at Rowan has several successful models I wish to learn from. I feel fortunate that Professor Ling's research is such a great match for me and that he was hiring at the right time."

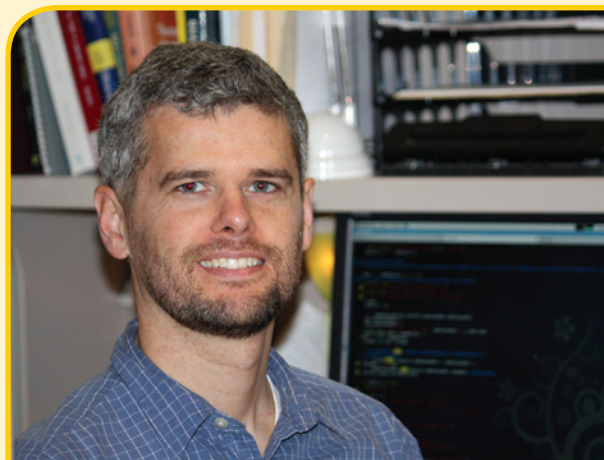
Laing's appointment will not only benefit Ling in his quest but will go a long way in helping his students reach their potential.

"My undergraduate education in physics and mathematics was an arduous journey of personal transformation," he says. "It was in that crucible that I chose the career goal of guiding other

undergraduates on their own journeys of discovery while I continue to explore atomic physics as a professor.

"I also wanted to work in a smaller setting where I can get to know my students. I feel so lucky to have been awarded my position at Rowan," he says.

FIRST IN CLAS: **Blake Laing** is the first post-doctoral fellow in the College.



Chanelle Wilson, '10, heads to classroom in South Africa

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"I understand that an education can open up a world of endless possibilities, and I want to have my students discover the same truth," says Wilson.

In the summer of 2009, Wilson traveled to South Africa through a World Study Scholarship from Arcadia University. She took classes in service learning and contemporary issues facing the country and taught English to students.

"When I was leaving, I said to

myself, 'I have to get back here.' What I did in six weeks there, I felt, wasn't enough," says Wilson.

The highly competitive Fulbright program awards only eight English teaching assistantships to South Africa each year, but Wilson is used to a challenge. While at Rowan, she majored in English and education with concentrations in Honors and African American Studies, as well as an endorsement in reading. Wilson is the 10th Rowan student in the past 10 years to receive a Fulbright.



CLASS LEADER: The daughter of a teacher, Chanelle Wilson is determined to make an impact on the education of her students in South Africa.

English Department's Odom studies theater in Nigeria

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he's analyzing the political implications of the mixtures of genres found in contemporary theater.

His work, which builds upon his dissertation at the University of California, Irvine, will eventually become a book.

Unlike theater in the United States, Yoruba theater expects the audience to become part of the performance, something that intrigues—and fascinates—Odom.

"In the West, we've lost this idea of theater as being magical," says Odom. "Yoruba culture is still very, very much about the idea of performance. I like the vitality and the life to it.

'In the West, we've lost this idea of theater as being magical.'

"The audience is already part of the performance in Yoruba theater," he continues, recalling, with humor, his trip to Nigeria last summer when

he experienced performances first hand for the first time.

"Anyone who's been to Nigeria knows there's just a feeling to Yoruba theater," Odom says. "I got pulled up and made to dance. I became part of the performance. It was not pretty."

Odom's Fulbright Fellowship included work on a play with Femi Osofisan, a professor of drama at the University of Ibadan who is the most regularly performed playwright in Nigeria.



On THEATRICALITY: English Professor Glenn Odom is drawn to—and intrigued by—the vitality of Yoruba theater and culture.

Law & Justice alumnus excels in the classroom

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Glen Mills focuses on academic, athletic and social growth. Bradley sees this as a reflection of his time at Rowan. As men's swim team captain and winner of the 2003 William Halt Leadership Award, Bradley extended his education beyond the classroom.

"Swimming at Rowan gave me a positive athletic and social experience, and I try to incorporate similar lessons for my students," says Bradley, who has coached swimming at Glen Mills for three years.

"I want to provide my students with opportunities they've never considered," says Bradley. "If it weren't for the educational advantages and guidance I received, I wouldn't be where I am today."

Dean's Distinguished Lecture Series

Who will share their research and expertise at the Dean's Distinguished Lecture Series in the spring? Stay abreast of the latest speakers in the annual series at

www.rowan.edu/colleges/las.

Oslerfest: Like Ozzfest... only cooler (and much more scholarly)

World-renowned mathematics scholars descended on Rowan last spring to pay tribute to Mathematics Professor Tom Osler. In an event organized by the department, Oslerfest celebrated Osler's 70th birthday and his legacy of teaching and scholarly research at Rowan.

Osler has been teaching for 49 years and the past 38 have been at Rowan. When he was 21, Osler planned on becoming an engineer, but that changed when he got the chance to teach a calculus class.

"After the first week I knew that my life's work must be college teaching," said Osler. "I have taught every year since then and never regretted that decision. Teaching is a wonderful opportunity to help people, and that is what life is all about."

Students played an important role in organizing Oslerfest, allowing them to recognize the man who has given them so much. "Tom has always been a great mentor for students," says Math Department Chairman Hieu Nguyen.

According to Osler, "One of the great joys of being a teacher is to have a sense that you've meant something to somebody. The students are my professional life."

Osler lives by those words. In the past decade, he has co-written 38 articles with students while mentoring many more.

Oslerfest featured presentations from a host of distinguished scholars. Bruce Berndt of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is the world's expert in the work of Srinivasa Ramanujan, the genius Indian mathematician. Berndt and George Andrews from Penn State presented on Ramanujan. Richard Askey of the University of Wisconsin at Madison discussed the start of trigonometry and related results.

"The three main speakers are world-famous for their work," says Osler. "You can't do any better than them." And many at Rowan will say that you can't do any better than Osler.

Says Nguyen of Osler: "He's kind of our department superstar."

HONORING OSLER: CLAS students and alumni came out in force to honor Professor **Tom Osler** during Oslerfest. Joining Osler (third from right) are (from left): alumnus **Jeffrey Tsay**; graduate student **Lee Collins**; and alumni **Christopher Tippie**, **Sky Pelletier**, **Ira Fine**, **John Atsu-Swanzy** and **Walt Jacob**.



WINNING KNOWLEDGE: CLAS Assistant Dean **Kristen diNovi** (left) and Associate Dean **Cindy Vitto** congratulate 2010 New Jersey National Geographic Bee champion **David Yin** of Plainsboro.

Top junior geographers in NJ compete at Rowan

Geography professor Zach Moore brought the New Jersey finals of the National Geographic Bee to Rowan last spring, but it took plenty of teamwork from student volunteers to make the Bee a rousing success.

"We had students coming out of the woodwork," says Moore. "It was a student-centered event, but it also was a student-organized event here at Rowan."

More than 40 Rowan students volunteered their time to organize the Bee. The event was so successful that it will be held at Rowan for the next three years.

"Hosting the Bee is a wonderful addition to Rowan. It reflects the direction the University is heading," says Moore.

The Bee exemplifies the evolution of education, according to Moore.

In addition to learning places, contestants needed to understand the relationship among people, cultures, the environment and technology.

More than 100 middle school students competed at Rowan for the chance to become the state champion and advance to the national finals.

"I'm always stumped by a question," laughs Moore. "It's amazing what the kids know. I wouldn't even try to compete with some of them."

This national competition began at the school level for students in grades four to eight. The top 100 students then competed at the state level and those winners competed for the national title.

David Yin earned the title of N.J. National Geographic Bee Champion when he correctly identified Germany as the location of Saxony.

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Law & Justice alumnus excels in the classroom

Most law and justice students think of working in courtrooms and patrol cars, but for Matthew Bradley, the classroom is a better fit.

At The Glen Mills Schools in Concordville, Pa., a private residential school for court adjudicated male delinquents, Bradley applies his knowledge of law and justice in an area he loves. He is so successful that he was named the 2010 Teacher of the Year.

“My family and friends thought I should pursue a teaching degree because I loved working with kids,” says Bradley, 2004 Law & Justice Studies alumnus. “But I was interested in the study of crime and law.”

While at Rowan, Bradley considered law school. But research at the University’s Career & Academic Planning Center helped him find an opening at Glen Mills.

“Teaching at Glen Mills combines my two passions. It also allows me to better understand young adults who have made mistakes but want to change their lives educationally and socially,” says Bradley, whose research interest at Rowan was juvenile delinquents.

Bradley works with males ages 15 to 18. He teaches freshman level math, reading, writing, social studies and science with the hope that the students will be able to get their GED or return to high school.

Besides traditional curriculum, Bradley promotes positive social and behavior goals through Moral Reconciliation Therapy. Initially used with adult offenders, this therapy is designed to increase moral reasoning and decrease recidivism. Glen Mills is working with researchers at Penn State to analyze the program’s effects on juveniles.



A PERFECT MATCH: Matthew Bradley '04 combines his passion for law and justice and interest in working with children while teaching at a school for court adjudicated male delinquents.

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