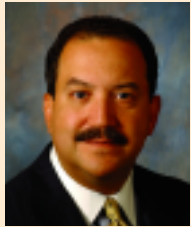


# CLAS *notes*

The Newsletter of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences



## Message from the Dean

In medieval universities, the core curriculum consisted of the seven subjects of the trivium – grammar, logic and rhetoric – and the quadrivium – arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy. To be considered enlightened or liberally educated, young men pursued these studies to gain knowledge and to develop intellectual skills they would use in their world.

The concept of a liberal education, broader now than in medieval times, continues in Rowan's College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. The College prepares young men and women to be intellectually curious, to think logically, to evaluate new material, to seek out the truth and to clearly communicate their understanding. Companies seek these capabilities, and they enable any number of career paths, including ones not yet defined.

In this issue we report on, among other stories, a stand-up comedienne who graduated with a degree in biology, an English major studying abroad through a Gilman Scholarship, and alumni who flourish because of their liberal arts and African-American Studies backgrounds. They are all applying abilities learned through classes in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences.

I hope you enjoy it.

Sincerely,  
Jay Harper, Dean

## Rowan Team Aids Katrina Relief

Instead of a spring break filled with lazy days, a Rowan group worked up a sweat during a trip to Louisiana where the volunteers helped rebuild homes destroyed last August when Hurricane Katrina battered the Gulf Coast.

"I'm happy that we gave up our spring break to come help," said Jenitza Aponte '06, a sociology major from Pemberton. Everything was everywhere, she noted, from photos to air conditioners. On one day, she helped rake and move debris toward the street for removal in a St. Bernard's neighborhood, along with Sofia Heredia '06, of Vineland, who said, "When I found out how many people we could help I figured I'd do what I had to do. I'm glad Rowan gave me this opportunity."

Aponte and Heredia were part of a 44-member team from the Colleges of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Engineering, Education, Communication, and Business

who packed gloves, goggles and boots to work with Habitat for Humanity for a week in March. While there, the group lived in a Federal Emergency Management Agency tent city in St. Bernard Parish adjacent to New Orleans.

"This is an integration of teaching, research and service to meet an immediate social need. By participating in the trip, students learned new skills while applying the knowledge they have learned through study," said Dr. DeMond Miller, associate professor of sociology, head of the Liberal Arts & Sciences Institute and one of the trip coordinators. Dr. Leigh Weiss, associate professor of computer science, and College of Engineering professors also provided guidance for the effort.

Hassan Glenn '07, a sociology major from Millville, said the people there appreciated the help, and the team relished the opportunity to make a difference for others.



**Dr. DeMond Miller**, associate professor of sociology, talks about the impact of Hurricane Katrina on a walk through the Lower 9th Ward of New Orleans, Louisiana.

## Dena Blizzard '94 Finds Humor in Motherhood and Miss America

Standup comedienne Dena (Querubin) Blizzard '94 got her start in entertainment telling stories about her school days in regular visits with an ill older relative. She's still telling stories.

The former Miss New Jersey recalls that children and a big birthday nudged her into something she had always wanted to do: "I told my husband I wanted to try stand-up and he bought me a six-week class at the Comedy Cabaret," she said.

Blizzard loved the class and soon found a niche making jokes about Miss America, marriage and motherhood – she even performed throughout a pregnancy. Her humor has earned the former biology major the nickname "One Funny Mother."

Last year *Backstage* magazine included her in their 2005 Top 10 Standout Stand-ups and she won the 2004 Ladies of Laughter New Talent title at the New York Improv. Blizzard performs at area clubs, and each year she shares her perspective on life during a campus comedy show sponsored by the Rowan Alumni Association – and books other comics for the event as well.

Blizzard credits Rowan for the capability to try new things. "If there was anything I wanted to learn, I could. That was the number one thing Rowan taught me," Blizzard said. "There is a lot I'm afraid of, but if I'd let that stop me I wouldn't have done a lot of things." Those things include teaching, a master's in gerontology, pageants, marriage, and motherhood – and now humor. And for the world of comedy – that's a good thing.



Comedienne **Dena Blizzard '94** entertains at a recent campus comedy event.

## Concentration in African American Studies Benefits Rowan Students

Rowan's African American Studies program engages University students in learning about the history, contributions and experience of African Americans and others of African descent.

**"The most important thing Rowan did for me was to grant me the freedom to pursue all of my interests."**

"Developed from its inception with an interdisciplinary approach, African American Studies covers a number of departments in the university. It consists of both courses and extracurricular work," said Dr. Corann Okorodudu, professor of psychology and program coordinator.

Okorodudu dates the program's roots to the early civil rights movement. In 1969, the History Department offered the first related course, and growth over the years culminated in the 1989 establishment of the concentration. Today, 12 departments offer a large group of electives in addition to two core courses required to fulfill the needed 18 semester hours. Students also have the opportunity to plan and attend such extracurricular activities as Black History Month events.



**Ilyyana Jones '09, Dr. Corann Okorodudu, professor of psychology, and Akisha Gonzalez '09** (left to right) discuss African American Studies.

Rowan alumni find the program to be valuable. "The AAS concentration taught me the importance of understanding the tensions of race and gender that permeate all of American history," said Laurie Lahey '04, a George Washington University doctoral student from Mantua. "The most important thing Rowan did for me was to grant me the freedom to pursue all of my interests," she added. "This license has really informed the way I approach learning and research in my graduate career."

The program, which may be expanded, offers important opportunities to all who enroll. "Some students come to get to know about their background in significant ways," Okorodudu said, "and others to broaden their understanding of the black experience."

As Tiffany Jackson '05, who works in marketing at Transaction Publishers in Somerset, said, "The concentration is not only an educational experience. I took so much more from it than that. It helped in my personal growth."

## Rowan Excels in Medical School Placement

A lot of people in South Jersey with the title "Dr." before their names got their higher education start at Rowan University.

More than three decades ago, Rowan initiated a pre-professional program for students interested in medical fields. Throughout those years, the program consistently has placed students in medical, dental, podiatry, allied health and veterinary programs, among others, at exceptionally high rates.

During the last three years, 100 percent of Rowan students who applied to a medical program were accepted, according to Dr. Elizabeth Brooks, biological sciences assistant professor/associate pre-professional advisor, who works with Dr. Richard Meagher, biological sciences professor/pre-professional advisor and founder of the program. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, approximately 45 percent of applicants in 2005 were accepted by medical schools.

While Rowan does not include the

pre-med concentration on diplomas, faculty members do devote the time and attention needed to draw students eyeing the medical field to Rowan.

From freshman year, students work with pre-professional and academic advisors. Rowan offers a mentoring program that lets students shadow physicians. The University participates in a research assistant program with Cooper Hospital and has articulation agreements with numerous schools.

"We have an excellent rate getting students in, and I think it's because from their freshman year we counsel them about what they need to do," Brooks said. "There never are any surprises."

Heather Ragozine '04, of Marlton, a first-year student at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, is a Rowan success story. "Rowan prepared me in many ways for medical school," she said. "The small class sizes and one-on-one attention were huge contributing factors in my success."



**Matt Giangola '06, Dr. Elizabeth Brooks, and Jacyln Cox '06** (left to right) talk about medical school. Cox will attend New York College of Osteopathic Medicine and Giangola will attend Ross University School of Medicine this fall.

## Rowan Senior Wins Gilman Scholarship to Study Abroad

Against the backdrop of an ancient city, Karim Elkorany '06 currently studies in Egypt through the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship he won from the U.S. Department of State. Abroad through Rowan's International Center, Elkorany is taking courses in Arabic, and Middle Eastern economics and history this semester at the American University in Cairo.

**"Rowan prepared me for my current opportunity, both academically and culturally."**

An English major with a political science minor and an international studies concentration, Elkorany first traveled to Europe and Egypt last summer: "My father is Egyptian and my mother is Spanish. I decided to study abroad partly out of a desire to travel, and partly out of a desire

to explore my own heritage," Elkorany said. His stay in Cairo motivated him to apply for the Gilman Scholarship.

Elkorany credits Rowan for his successful transition to university studies in Egypt. "Rowan prepared me for my current opportunity, both academically and



**Karim Elkorany '06**, who is studying abroad this semester through a Gilman Scholarship, talks with some young friends in Cairo, Egypt.

culturally, as much as any American university can prepare someone culturally to live in Cairo," he said. "While the course work here is difficult, I have never once felt overwhelmed or in over my head, and I certainly attribute that scholastic calm to the work I did at Rowan."

Foreign study is important, Elkorany believes. "The impact of studying abroad cannot be understated, especially for American students, who by virtue of geography are more isolated than students in Italy or Spain, for example. In today's increasingly globalized world, college graduates should not consider their education complete unless they've had the opportunity to experience another culture and society," he said.

Elkorany keeps in touch about his studies and travels through email. He also will create videos and participate in conference calls to encourage other Rowan students to apply for Gilman Scholarships and study abroad.

# Dr. Joel Crichlow Researches Distributed Systems

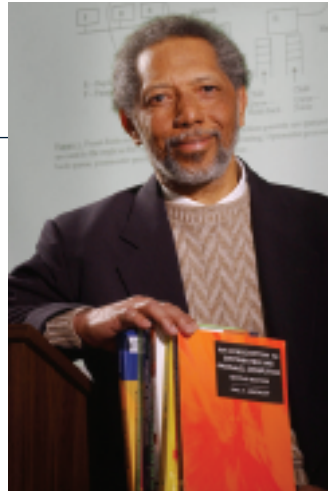
Online airline reservations and internet banking run on distributed computer systems, and Dr. Joel Crichlow's research aims to improve their operations.

The associate computer science professor's affinity for distributed systems – interconnected machines carrying out separate but possibly related tasks – is not new. "My interest began in the mid 1980s when I was a commonwealth academic staff fellow at the Computing Laboratory, University of Kent, and continued through my faculty positions at the University of the West Indies (UWI) and now here at Rowan," he said.

When Crichlow, who started his career as a math teacher, looked for reference information about distributed computing, he had trouble finding any textbooks. So he wrote his own. Prentice Hall published his first work, *An Introduction to Distributed and Parallel Computing*, in 1988, and a second edition in 1997.

The growth of the Internet brought more interest in distributed systems; and Prentice Hall (UK) requested another book so Crichlow wrote *The Essence of Distributed Systems*, published in 2000. The work has since been translated into Dutch, Finnish and Hungarian. "I'm still gratified when I see my works cited," he said.

Crichlow has also published technical articles based on experiments with a model distributed system. He now works with Dr. Steve Hartley, computer science associate professor, students and UWI faculty on a prototype distributed system linked to machines in the Caribbean and at Stockton State College, when he's not teaching class.



**Dr. Joel Crichlow displays books he has written about distributed computing systems.**

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**Natacha Valerius '07 and Vanessa Saint-Elie '07** aid cleanup efforts in Chalmette, Louisiana, as part of the Rowan University Hurricane Katrina relief team's work over spring break. See story on page 1.

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