

Provost-gram

An Update from Rowan University Provost Ali Houshmand

Volume 4, April 2007

This is the fourth monthly update to the University community on the key activities and events in the Division of Academic Affairs. Future issues will include updates from meetings with the Trustees, Cabinet, Academic Affairs and Deans Councils, as well as summaries of relevant topics including admissions updates, research funding updates, the Campus Master plan and the implications for academic affairs, etc. In essence, the focus will be all things academic. Consistent with the Rowan tradition, your comments and suggestions are welcomed and encouraged.

Remarks from Provost Houshmand

Academic department chairs play a critical role at Rowan University. The leadership they provide is essential to the academic mission, and they are key to any success we may have in this most important enterprise. From hiring to evaluating to budgeting to mediating, department chairs are at the center of activities of the department.

In recognition of this, one of my goals this year and beyond is to enhance the position of academic department chair at this University so that the individuals who serve in this capacity can be recognized and rewarded as they should be. This summer, I believe we are taking an important step in this direction. I realize there has been discussion over the years about providing more appropriate compensation for chairpersons during the summer months (July and August), but to date, due to budget constraints, this has ONLY been a discussion item. I have decided to reallocate funds within my budget to rectify this. Beginning this summer, all chairs will be compensated one month's pro-rated salary based on their ten month base salary. In the past, chairs have been compensated anywhere from three (3) summer credit hours to six (6); thus, this will represent a salary increase for all chairs. Though we are in the

midst of severe fiscal constraints, I believe this is an important step to take at this time.

As part of the increase in compensation, I am asking the Deans to engage in a conversation with their chairs to develop a set of expectations, duties, and responsibilities for these summer months. While there will be some general expectations that apply to all chairs, there are also department-specific expectations that will need to be developed as individual departments engage in different kinds of activities over the summer. I will rely on the good judgment and collegiality of the Deans and chairs to work out the nuances and details of the summer assignments. Certainly, the Union will be consulted throughout and will participate in this process as required by contract and as is the norm at this University.

I am pleased to be able to take this important step forward. I expect that this will be the first of numerous initiatives aimed at enhancing the role of these important academic leaders.



Enrollment Update

--Albert Betts Jr., Director of Admissions

The Office of Admissions is enjoying one of its most productive and successful years. For the fall of 2007 we surpassed the 10,000 total applications mark for the first time ever. This included exceeding both 8000 freshman applications and 2000 transfer applications for the first time. We are well on our way to reaching our targets of 1350 freshmen and 950 transfers for the fall.

Offers of acceptance have been made to about 400 more freshmen and 200 more transfers in an attempt to reach our goals. Offers to minority students are up 33 percent compared to last year and out-of-state student enrollment deposits have already doubled last year's total.

2007 Research Awards

--Jay Kuder, Associate Provost, Research

The Provost's office announced the recipients of the 2007 Rowan University Research Awards. They are: Robert Booth (Physics and Math): Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research; Timothy Vaughn (Mechanical Engineering): Award for Excellence in Graduate Research; and Samuel E. Lofland (Department of Physics and Astronomy): Faculty/Staff Research Achievement Award.

The recipients received their awards at a research recognition ceremony on Friday, April 20. These awards were established to recognize the very best research work at Rowan by undergraduate students, graduate students, and by a faculty or staff member.

Robert Booth ('09) is a double major in Physics and Mathematics. Robert has been working with Dr. Samuel Lofland in studying the magnetic properties of materials that have potential applications for use in nanotechnology. Robert's work with Dr. Lofland has resulted in a poster presentation at the regional Society of Physics Meeting, two co-authored presentations at the Materials Research Society and the International Combinatorial Workshop, and a paper which is being published in *Applied Surface Science*.

Timothy Vaughn, a graduate student in Mechanical Engineering has been collaborating with Dr. Anthony Marchese on research on biofuels. Tim has co-authored six technical papers and made presentations at several national conferences. Timothy is a 2005 graduate of Rowan University, with a B.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering. In his letter of nomination,

Dr. Marchese stated that, "Tim has been, by far, the most productive, prolific and hard working graduate student that I have had the pleasure to work with at Rowan. My entire research program in biofuels has been directly impacted by his presence."

Sam Lofland is a faculty member in the Department of Physics and Astronomy. The main focus of Dr. Lofland's research has been directed toward magnetism, although he works in a variety of areas such as sensor design, biophysics, superconductivity, nanoscience and structural materials. Dr. Lofland has been a PI or Co-PI on numerous grants and received funding from various sources, including over \$1 million from the National Science Foundation and \$1.4 million from the New Jersey Commission on Science and Technology. The latter award led to the establishment of the interdisciplinary Materials Research Group at Rowan as well as a Concentration in Materials Science.

Dr. Lofland has over 130 refereed publications with over 1800 citations in some of the most prestigious journals, such as *Science* and *Nature*. He has been the author or co-author on about 20 invited presentations and nearly 200 presentations in total. Of the more than 80 papers he has published at Rowan, over 30 have undergraduate co-authors involving about 20 different Rowan students. Eight of the nine students who worked for him for at least a year have continued on to graduate school, and seven are currently working toward their Ph.D. in the areas of Chemistry, Biochemistry, Physics, and Materials Science.