

SENIORS OF DISTINCTION



2024

AWARDS BANQUET

Program

Welcome and Introduction

Greetings from our Dean

Keynote Address - Riccardo Dale '20

Dinner

Presentation of Awards

Dean's Message



Dear Seniors of Distinction,

It is with great pride that I extend my heartfelt congratulations to every one of you for being recognized as Seniors of Distinction. Your journey through academia has been marked by exceptional dedication, perseverance, and a commitment to excellence.

Whether through your outstanding academic achievements or your remarkable contributions to extracurricular activities, you have left an enduring mark on your institution and shown a passion for making a difference in the world around you. Your accomplishments inspire your fellow students and bring joy to your professors, your families, and your loved ones.

As you go on to the next chapter of your life, I am confident you will continue to make meaningful contributions to your chosen fields and communities.

Once again, congratulations on this remarkable achievement. May your future be filled with continued success, fulfillment, and endless possibilities.

Nawal Ammar, Dean

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nawal Ammar".

Riccardo Dale '20



At Rowan and beyond, Riccardo Dale has centered his life around community and service to others. As a Liberal Studies graduate of the class of 2020, Mr. Dale served as the voting student trustee on Rowan's Board of Trustees—a position through which he was a staunch advocate for enhanced mental health services and resources for food-insecure students.

Shortly after graduation, Riccardo sought engagement in his community. He sat on the Board of Education for the City of Beverly, advocating for educational resources for all students. Soon after, he assumed his current seat, upon invitation, on the Beverly City Council. As one of the youngest city council members, Riccardo chaired the community outreach committee where he focused on bridging the gap between citizens and local officials and served on the community events committee.

Among his greatest achievements is the founding and expansion of Free All Minds, a supportive service non-profit organization. Through this organization, he leads a year-round Leadership Academy for boys of color, Free All Minds Academy, which has a 100% high school graduation rate and a 100% college or trade school acceptance rate among its participants. Mr. Dale has held dozens of college and career fairs, and helped hundreds of young adults get into college and/or gain employment.

Mr. Dale has been shaped by his experiences with homelessness, academic challenges, and mental health struggles. With a focus on seeking support with mental health, Riccardo travels nationally and internationally sharing his stories of perseverance in hopes of inspiring others.

DEPARTMENT CHAIRS AND COORDINATORS



DR. CHANELLE ROSE
Africana Studies



**DR. KATHERINE
LEONARD**
American Studies



DR. EMILY BLANCK
Center for
Disciplinary Studies



DR. DEMOND MILLER
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Emergency Management



**DR. CATHERINE
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History



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International Studies



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Liberal Studies



DR. NATHAN BAUER
Philosophy &
World Religions



**DR. LAWRENCE
MARKOWITZ**
Political Science
& Economics



DR. MARIA ROSADO
Sociology &
Anthropology



DR. MARILYN MANLEY
World Languages

Africana Studies



BRIANNA REAGAN

Brianna Reagan is a graduating senior majoring in Journalism and Africana Studies, reflecting her commitment to both storytelling and social justice. As president of the Student Government Association, she fearlessly advocates on behalf of her fellow students to create a more inclusive and empowering campus environment. Ms. Reagan is also a proud member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Incorporated, where she actively contributes to community service initiatives and fosters sisterhood among her peers. Her participation in the Camden Educational Opportunity Fund ASCEND program, which provides support and resources to underrepresented students, underscores her commitment to academic excellence and equity. She received the Rowan University Black Alumni Network Emerging Leader Award, a testament to her significant impact and potential as a future leader. Ms. Reagan plans to pursue her career in journalism with a focus on African American history while also obtaining her real estate license.

American Studies

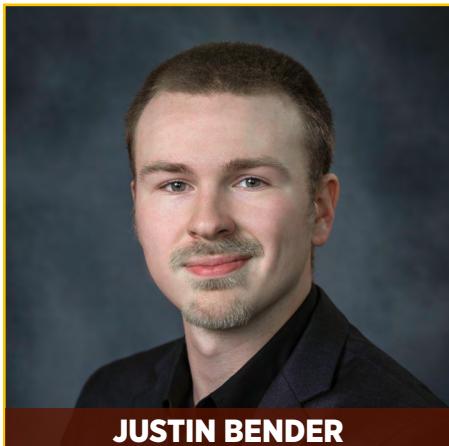


STEVEN HENDERSON

After 9/11, Steven Henderson left a program in Elementary Education at Gloucester County College to serve in the Air Force as an F-16 pilot and ground support equipment mechanic. In Summer 2020, he began maximizing his GI Bill benefits by taking courses nonstop in fall, winter, spring, and summer. He will earn a BA in history with a minor in international studies, along with a BA in American studies with a minor in political science, and a CUGS certificate in Middle Eastern Studies. During this strenuous course he has made the dean's list and was selected as a Rowan President Scholars of Excellence list. Mr. Henderson is a father of three who practices martial arts in his spare time. Serving overseas has given him a strong sense of the US place in the world, and he exemplifies the spirit of interdisciplinarity – indeed, multidisciplinarity! We are very proud of his achievements.

Anthropology

Area Studies



JUSTIN BENDER

Justin Bender has been chosen as the 2024 Senior of Distinction in Anthropology because he is an excellent student who fully integrates his Anthropological training and life experiences to construct an innovative research program in Cultural Anthropology. Following his graduation from high school, the Pitman native was studying electrical engineering in Bremen, Germany, when he decided engineering was not for him. On recommendation from his sister, a psychology major at Rowan, he began studying Anthropology and has shone in both academics and research. Mr. Bender is interested in researching how virtual communities on the dark web influence the thoughts, behaviors, and identities of people inhabiting those spaces. Currently, he is in the happy position of choosing between two British universities who have accepted his application for graduate study and research -- University College London and the University of Liverpool. Anthropology is proud to have Mr. Bender representing our major this year.



ANDROMAHI KARAPALIDES

Andromahi Karapalides graduated in Fall 2023 with majors in Area Studies with a Concentration in Asian Studies, Modern Languages and Linguistics with Japanese as her Advanced Language, Italian as her Intermediate Language, and French as her Novice Language, and World Religions. Additionally, she completed Minors in Italian Studies and Anthropology. To complete her program requirements for Modern Languages & Linguistics, she studied abroad in Tokyo, Japan in Spring 2023 at KCP International. Ms. Karapalides's activities outside the classroom complemented her academic pursuits, including serving as the President of Rowan's Japanese Culture Club and completing the Japanese Cultural Enrichment Program at Rowan in Fall 2020.

Disaster Preparedness & Emergency Management

Economics



JAMES COHEN

Mr. James Cohen II earned a Bachelor of Arts in DPEM, along with two Certificates of Undergraduate Study (CUGS) in Counterterrorism and Emergency Response Operations, as well as Public Health Preparedness and Emergency Response Operations. He served as Treasurer for the DPEM Club, Co-President for the Epsilon Pi Phi Honors Society, and was an active member of the International Association of Emergency Managers since 2020. Mr. Cohen eagerly engages in the Ocean County Community Emergency Response Team and his studies granted him the opportunity to intern at the Ocean County Sheriff's Department's Office of Emergency Management. He is currently pursuing further education in Rowan's Master of Science degree program in Emergency and Threat Response Management. Recently he was offered an internship position with a pharmaceutical manufacturer in their Environmental Health and Safety Department. We are confident that Mr. Cohen will continue to make significant contributions to the field of emergency management and the people of the State of New Jersey.



ANTHONY CHAY

Anthony is a first-generation college student and a child of Guatemalan immigrants, with a strong work ethic and competitive nature. He grew up playing sports where he got the chance to strengthen his teamwork, dedication, and responsibility. Although his family's financial situation led him to believe that higher education was out of the picture, he graduated as salutatorian of his high school class in 2020 and received a full-ride scholarship to ten colleges in New Jersey. At Rowan University, he has achieved Dean's List for 4 consecutive semesters. Additionally, he has had the honor of serving as the United Latinos Association's treasurer where he's gotten the opportunity to network with Latinos from all over the Northeast while also fostering a safe space for Latinos on campus. Outside of his academics, he has held a variety of jobs that have helped him grow as a person and a leader.

English

General Studies



VICTORIA MCGIVERN

Victoria McGivern has earned dual degrees in English and Journalism. She is currently the editor of *The Whit*, an incredibly time- and responsibility-intensive position. Her most recent publications included an in-depth interview with YA author and Rowan English alum Charity Herndon, as well as a front-page editorial criticizing the State of Alabama's controversial position on IVF treatments. Besides keeping up with her two majors and the demands of a weekly newspaper, Victoria also works as a research assistant in the English Department with Dr. Yvonne Hammond and Dr. Kate Slater. She plays an active role in Rowan's chapter of Tri-Alpha, an honor society for first-generation university students. Victoria was just accepted into the University of Pennsylvania's graduate program in higher education; she plans to devote her career to teaching at the college level with incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. When she's not working, she enjoys spending time with friends and family, reading, and gardening.



ISAAC BURTON

Isaac Burton is a remarkable individual who embodies resilience, dedication and a commitment to serving others. Mr. Burton was born in Ghana and brought to the US at the age of 14 for life-saving medical treatment. He was later adopted by loving parents, including his father who was one of the missionaries responsible for getting the care he needed. After graduating high school, Isaac began work at West Berlin Hospital, where he has been employed for 20 years. His commitment to teamwork, patient care and a strong work ethic has garnered him many awards. Despite the demands of a full-time job, and the challenges of mastering English as a second language, Mr. Burton has remained committed to continuing his education, first at Camden County Community College, and then at Rowan University. He has worked diligently over the years to pursue his dream of becoming a social worker for special needs children and earn a college degree.

History

Human Services



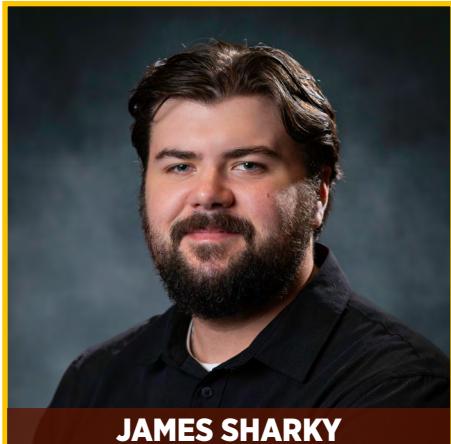
FRANCESCA LOMBARDO

Francesca Lombardo is an exemplary history student and future educator who has demonstrated strong research abilities in history classes and as a student researcher in digital history. Her innovative research focuses on stories that have often been excluded from traditional education. In Digital History, Fran wrote a fascinating paper about the Angel Island Immigration Station in which she analyzed how histories of Asian American immigration have been told. In Caribbean History, Fran's research paper on the Obeah tradition in Jamaica analyzed how and why the practice was made illegal by the British. Francesca has also done impressive collaborative work as a student researcher with the Center for Digital Humanities Research for the Juneteenth Archive and Douglass Day. Francesca's engagement in these research topics demonstrates her curiosity about the effects of colonialism and her commitment to teaching and learning from different cultural perspectives, qualities that exemplify what we hope for in the next generation of history educators.



DIMIRRA BROWN

Dimirra Brown has demonstrated academic excellence and integrity throughout her time in the Human Services program. Mrs. Brown is a leader and serves as an inspiration to her fellow classmates. She has been significantly involved in community service within the city of Camden and received a community service award from the city in 2023. Recently, Rowan University highlighted her journey within the Human Services field and outlined her commitment to the field, as well as the community at large. As a result of Mrs. Brown's academic contributions to the Human Services Major, she has been nominated for several senior-level awards. Her contributions to the classroom community semester-after-semester have not gone unnoticed and they have been much appreciated by her instructors, as well as classmates.



JAMES SHARKY

James Sharkey is set to graduate this year with a degree in International Studies, a choice influenced by its multidisciplinary approach to understanding global complexities. He appreciates the continuous learning the major offers and has seamlessly connected it to his passion for sports. As an ardent sports enthusiast, Mr. Sharkey centered his senior research project on the globalization of baseball and the challenges faced by Latin American and Caribbean prospects. Engaged in the International Studies/MBA Career Advanced Degree Program (CAPD), he will earn his MBA in Data Analytics from Rowan next year. His aspirations lie in a career within the sports industry, aiming to leverage his diverse perspectives gained from International Studies and the College of Business to address challenges creatively.



JAQUELINE ACCARDI

A first-generation college student, Jaqueline Accardi is among the highest ranked graduating seniors in the major and has made Dean's List or President's List every semester she has been at Rowan. She will also graduate with a Certificate of Undergraduate Studies in Community Corrections. Ms. Accardi has been very active in extracurricular activities and honor societies, including the Criminal Justice Preparation Club, Law and Justice Debate Team, Mock Trial Club, Pre-Law Society, Phi Alpha Delta, Society of Scholars, Alpha Phi Sigma, and Psych and Law Club. While at Rowan, Jacqueline interned for John Kane's campaign for the Pennsylvania State Senate, Gloucester County Adult Probation and Child Support, South Jersey Intensive Supervision Program (ISP), and Camden Pretrial Services, and worked as a seasonal Class I Special Law Enforcement Officer in Sea Isle City. Jacqueline plans to finish the Advanced Dual Degree Program and earn her MA in Criminal Justice before becoming a probation or ISP officer, and working as an adjunct professor.

Liberal Studies

Modern Languages & Linguistics



GRACE MULLIGAN

Grace Mulligan is a Liberal Studies major with sequences in Sociology and Health Studies. Grace credits her time in the Liberal Studies program, her professors, and her experience working in a retirement home as inspiring her interest in pursuing a career as a social worker. Her professors have described her as an enthusiast, brilliant, curious, and committed student. She embodies a selfless spirit of volunteerism and community service. During her time at Rowan, Grace has been involved with the GetFit program assisting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and serves as the undergraduate coordinator of The Shop, Rowan's on campus food pantry. Upon graduation, Grace will be beginning the Master of Social Work program at Rowan.



VICTORIA LAPINSON

Victoria Lapinson graduated in Fall 2023 with a Major in Modern Languages and Linguistics with Japanese as her Advanced Language, Italian as her Intermediate Language, and French as her Novice Language, a second major in Psychology, and a Minor in International Studies. To complete her program requirements for Modern Languages & Linguistics, she studied abroad in Tokyo, Japan in Summer and Fall 2022 at KCP International. She also served as Secretary to Rowan's NeuroClub and a member of Rowan's Sigma Iota Rho National Honor Society, Japanese Culture Club, Italian Culture Club, and French Club. She will begin her graduate studies in Linguistics in Fall 2024. In anticipation of her future career, she is already a member of the Linguistic Society of America, the Modern Language Association, and the American Psychological Association.

Philosophy

Political Science



CLIFFORD PHILLIPS

In addition to his degree in Philosophy, Clifford Phillips is graduating with a minor in Asian Studies. He has also received an impressive four previous awards from the Philosophy & World Religions department, including the Charles Wei-Hsun Fu Memorial Scholarship in World Philosophy and Religion and the Clowney Scholarship for Excellence in Philosophy. Cliff has been an active and much-valued presence in the department, serving as President of the Philosophy Club and working as a research assistant for several of our faculty. In his time at Rowan, Mr. Phillips has managed to take every philosophy class we offer, excelling in all of them! He is taking a gap year after he graduates, but will be applying for graduate programs in philosophy next fall.



EMILY SOOBRAYAN

During her time at Rowan, Emily Soobryan has made a significant contribution as an excellent student and engaged member of the community. She was awarded a Trustee Transfer scholarship and has received numerous other academic accolades including being named to the President's List, the Dean's List and a President's Scholar of Excellence. Emily has been an active part of the Rowan community. She has pursued her love of dance through Rowan Rangeela, a Bollywood-fusion dance team for which she served as Senator, costume coordinator and co-choreographer. After participating in the International Model African Union and the National Model United Nations, Emily and a few other students founded The Model Diplomacy Organization with the purpose of expanding opportunities for students to attend diplomacy conferences. As co-founder and vice-president, Emily has had the opportunity to attend conferences across the country with this organization. Emily is also a member of the Pre-Law Club, the Rowan Democrats, and the Political Science Club.

Sociology



ANNA GREEN

Graduating with dual degrees in Sociology and Law & Justice Studies, Anna Green has excelled academically throughout her time at Rowan. Faculty of the Sociology department are always delighted to find her in their classes because she enhances the quality of discourse during class discussions. She is a member of three honor societies: Alpha Kappa Delta International Honor Society of Sociology, the National Law and Justice Honor Society, and the National Honor Society for Transfer Students. While completing her degree, Anna has also volunteered with the National Crisis Hotline for 300 hours. After graduation, she plans to pursue a Masters of Social Work at Rowan University. After completing graduate school, Anna's goal is to become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, with plans to become a mental health therapist. She aspires to work with children who are battling suicidal ideation.

Spanish



JENNIFER MÉNDEZ

Jennifer Méndez will graduate with a dual-degree in K-12 Subject Matter Education and Spanish, an Honors Concentration, and a Certificate of Undergraduate Study in Teaching English as a Second Language. In December 2022, she was inducted into Iota Tau, Rowan's Chapter of Sigma Delta Pi, the National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society. Following graduation, in July and August 2024, she will travel to Oaxaca, Mexico along with Dr. Stephanie Abraham of the College of Education on a program sponsored by Fulbright Hays, aimed at learning about Indigenous Zapotec communities and culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogies in local schools. Jennifer's next step will be to find employment as a Spanish or English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher in South Jersey.

World Religions



ANDROMAHI KARAPALIDES

Andromahi Karapalides graduated Magna Cum Laude at the end of Fall 2023. She majored in World Religions and Modern Languages & Linguistics with a minor Asian Studies, with four additional concentrations and minors. She also studied abroad in Japan, graduating from the KCP International Japanese Language School of Tokyo in Winter 2023. Andromahi has excelled in all of her programs, and she was the 2023 recipient of the Department of Philosophy & World Religion's Dianne Ashton scholarship in World Religions. Despite her busy academic schedule, she has also been active in the Rowan community, including serving as President of the Japanese Culture Club. Andromhai is currently planning a career in her different fields of study, and she will likely pursue a graduate degree in World Religions or Asian Studies.

SEE YOU AT COMMENCEMENT!

We are looking forward to celebrating your accomplishments at our upcoming Commencement Ceremonies.

Wednesday, May 8th

University Green

12:30 p.m.

Africana Studies, Area Studies, American Studies, English, History, Liberal Arts:History, Liberal Studies, Liberal Studies: Humanities and Social Science, Modern Languages and Linguistics, Philosophy, Spanish, and World Religions

4:00 p.m.

Anthropology, Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management, Economics, General Studies, Human Services, International Studies, Law and Justice, Political Science, Sociology



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