

Celebrating Excellence Awards Ceremony

April 6, 2023



Rowan University

WELCOME

Tony Lowman, *Provost*

GREETINGS

Ali A. Houshmand, *President*

AWARD PRESENTATIONS

Employee Recognition Awards

Presented by

Ali A. Houshmand

Henry Oh, *Associate Vice President for Human Resources*

Engagement

RECIPIENT

Kira Aguilar

Student-Centeredness

RECIPIENT

Altonia Bryant

Entrepreneurship

RECIPIENT

Jessica Vattima

Inclusivity

RECIPIENT

Ash Lierman

Customer Service

RECIPIENT

Pallavi Jalakam

Teamwork (Individual honor)

RECIPIENT

Brittine Pratt

Teamwork (Team honor)

RECIPIENT

Technology Support Center, Information Resources & Technology

Rowan Senate Excellence in Diversity Awards

Presented by Henry Oh

Excellence in Diversity for a Group Project

RECIPIENT

Inclusive Technical & Professional Writing Pedagogy

Excellence in Diversity for Scholarship

RECIPIENT

College of Education Diversity in Action Committee

Excellence in Diversity for Social Activism

RECIPIENT

Project Team,

“The Penny Executive: The Maggie Lena Walker Story”

Lindback Distinguished Teaching Award

Presented by Tony Lowman

RECIPIENT

Leslie Spencer

Joseph A. Barnes Award for Outstanding Service

Presented by Bill Freind, President, University Senate

RECIPIENT

Christine Larsen-Britt

Gary J. Hunter Excellence in Mentoring Award

Presented by Joe Basso, President, AFT

RECIPIENT

Jennifer Courtney

Frances S. Johnson Junior Faculty Innovative Teaching Award

*Presented by Joe Higgins, Award Co-Coordinator
Director of Bands and Associate Professor of Music*

RECIPIENT

Kate Seltzer

Research Awards

*Presented by Tabbetha Dobbins,
Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School*

Rowan University Research Achievement Award

RECIPIENT

James Heinzen

Breakthrough Research Award

RECIPIENT

Chun Wu's Computer-Aided Drug Design Lab

CONCLUSION

Tony Lowman

Employee Recognition Awards

Engagement

The Engagement recipient is committed to the University's mission and contributes to its success. The recipient's contributions may include designing a workplace where employees feel inspired by their work, attracting talented employees, fostering collegiality, responsiveness and trust, establishing avenues and dialogue that help employees, students and alumni feel valued and appreciated, and reflecting Rowan's pillars, vision and values through action.

Student-Centeredness

The Student-Centeredness honoree is focused on students' interests, abilities, and learning styles. The recipient promotes a culture that engenders a caring and supportive environment that helps each individual student feel valued, demonstrates commitment to a safe environment where students feel comfortable to learn and grow, and empowers students to take responsibility for their academic work, social life and career development.

Entrepreneurship

The Entrepreneurship Award honors a recipient who initiates new ideas and practices to benefit the University. The honoree collaborates to solve problems, embraces change as an opportunity for growth and innovation, is proactive in finding sustainable solutions to University challenges, demonstrates a high degree of financial responsibility and improves work flow.

Inclusivity

The Inclusivity Award recognizes an employee who promotes an inclusive workplace by inviting diverse viewpoints, encouraging collaboration and modeling appreciation and respect toward colleagues. The recipient embraces the importance of cultural sensitivity in the workplace, actively working to resolve conflicts to ensure all individuals and groups are represented and included.

Customer Service

This award recognizes an employee who values and demonstrates the importance of delivering high-quality service to both internal and external customers. Such contributions include but are not limited to delivering courteous and prompt service, taking personal responsibility for resolving customer concerns, striving to exceed customer expectations and anticipating the needs of others by offering proactive and flexible solutions.

Teamwork (Individual honor)

The Teamwork recipient recognizes that the accomplishment of the team is more significant than that of the individual. The honoree works with others across the University to assess a situation, plan a solution or resolve a problem. He or she actively recognizes each member's contribution to the team, works to achieve measurable improvement in interactions with others and institutes significant positive changes at the University.

Teamwork (Team honor)

This award recognizes a team's commitment to common goals based on open and honest communication while demonstrating respect, concern and support for one another. The team works as one to seek out varying perspectives, communicate and achieve measurable improvement in interactions with others. The honored team measurably impacts the University community in a positive manner and collectively values group success over individual success.

HONOREES

KIRA AGUILAR

Engagement

Kira Aguilar, professional service specialist in the Financial Aid Office, helps students and their families stay up to date on the latest financial aid details, maintaining the financial aid website, social media and publications. The eight-year Rowan employee also coordinates the Federal Work Study program, facilitates online webinars and provides customer assistance. Since the pandemic, the department has made a major push to connect with students. Aguilar has coordinated events and developed innovative approaches to reach students and promote financial aid awareness, such as Financial Outreach Days and Financial Aid Day. She produced an interactive online session to help students understand Rowan's Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements to remain eligible for federal financial aid. In addition, Aguilar organized a hot cocoa bar to cheer students at the end of the fall 2022 semester and a Valentine's Day event to connect with students and provide financial aid information. "Our office has been making strides in achieving our objectives, and a big part of our success has been the work of Kira Aguilar," a nominator says.

PAST HONOREES: Keyona Gonzalez-Walker, Gregory Young, Zeynep Isik-Ercan, Benjamin A. Dworkin, David Naphy, Lisa Vernon-Dotson, Christina Davidson-Tucci, Dennis Collins.

ALTONIA BRYANT

Student-Centeredness

Altonia Bryant leads by listening to students. To fit their specific needs, the assistant director of Career Programming in the Office of Career Advancement tailors workshops, networking events, career fairs and other experiences and programming. “Altonia has a particular talent for making students feel seen and heard and for creating a safe and inclusive environment where all students feel welcome,” a colleague says. She established the first Edelman College of Communication & Creative Arts Career Expo, chairing a committee of students, staff and faculty and administrators. This led to college-specific career fairs each spring — all with a student-centered focus. For example, the six-year employee collaborated with a music professor to host a music industry career fair for College of Performing Arts majors. She also hosts readiness events before career fairs to prepare students, helping them polish their interviewing and resume skills. Says a colleague: “Her dedication and hard work on behalf of students is unmatched, and it is an honor to work with her on programming that is relevant to our students’ development and career readiness.”

PAST HONOREES: Russell Trafford, Cecile Sam, Raquel Wright-Mair, Stephen Fleming, Margaret Van Brunt, Sangita Phadtare, Brenda Harkins, Julie A. Peterson.

JESSICA VATTIMA

Entrepreneurship

With creativity, an innovative mindset and exemplary problem-solving skills, Jessica Vattima promotes the growth of the entrepreneurship program at Rowan and the accomplishments of its budding entrepreneurs. “Jessica is a core leader in Rowan’s entrepreneurial ecosystem who has unquestionably contributed to the numerous successes and advancements of our entrepreneurship program,” a colleague says of Vattima, assistant director of the Rowan Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship. With the launch of the School of Innovation & Entrepreneurship, she led the branding and identity-creation process, expanded co-curricular planning and designed the new entrepreneurship website, producing one of the most effective school web pages at Rowan. “She is creative and pragmatic, leverages resources and builds strong networks, and importantly, she brings passion to her work every day, becoming a leader and role model to several students, faculty and staff on campus,” a colleague says. Students embrace the connections the five-year employee fosters with entrepreneurs and business leaders to develop workshops and mentorship sessions. Says a student leader: “She continues to provide seed-funding initiatives throughout the year that help every student interested in launching, growing and scaling their businesses.”

PAST HONOREES: Yusuf Mehta, Yatin Karpe, Gokhan Alkanat, Sean Hendricks, Karl Dyer, Anna Skrupky, Constantine Alexakos, Bharathwaj Vijayakumar.

ASH LIERMAN

Inclusivity

Demonstrating a clear commitment to inclusion, Ash Lierman, instruction and education librarian in the Campbell Library and an exceptional leader of its Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee, covers all of the bases, making sure every voice is represented in the conversation. A nearly five-year employee, Lierman spearheaded the committee's 21-point strategic plan, which addresses internal policies and practices, public-facing services and a series of activities promoting awareness for staff across all campuses. In addition, they led research initiatives into best practices for hiring diverse candidates to advocate for revision of policies and changes in search committee formation. Lierman performed surveys of users regarding in-person services, using the data to promote new procedures for library patrons. Moreover, Lierman and the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee performed equity audits of the library's existing services and offered best practices training to staff. "Ash serves as a model of 'walking the talk' as they lead monthly discussions or activities for staff," their nominator says. "The discussions that emerge from the activities are rich with different voices."

PAST HONOREES: Kha' Sadler, Stephanie Farrell, Paule L. Turner, Ambre J. McKenna, Joseph Higgins, Gary Baker, Yolanda Virella, Majeeda Hason.

PALLAVI JALAKAM

Customer Service

When COVID-19 forced a shift from classroom to remote learning, questions abounded. But no inquiry was too small or too difficult for Pallavi Jalakam, LMS administrator and instructional designer, who has been working with Rowan Online since June of 2021. In her work, Jalakam promptly provides customer service to students and faculty to address questions, explaining strategies in multiple ways to ensure users understand her solutions to technological difficulties. "Pallavi always completed the task to the end and made sure I had a resolution to my issue or problem before she signed off," a faculty member says. She also follows up to ensure that her solutions have met the user's needs. In addition to helping those new to online learning, Jalakam patiently and calmly untangles complicated technological problems for experienced creators of online educational material, a colleague says. In addition, she views material from the student's perspective, providing valuable input regarding the presentation, flow and clarity of the instruction, the faculty member continues, adding, "She has consistently exceeded any expectations of a top-flight LMS administrator and designer and has coupled her extensive knowledge with a sincere desire to help faculty and students."

PAST HONOREES: Sheena A. Pierce, Dana Galligani, Michael W. Mowery, Lindsay Rosato, Nikki Colasanti, Donald Bland, Barbara Wynn, Terrence Brown, Patrick Hall.

BRITTINE PRATT

Teamwork (Individual honor)

Described by colleagues as the ultimate team player, Britttine Pratt diligently dives into new endeavors for the greater good of Rowan University. While managing her responsibilities as associate director of finance and administration in the Henry M. Rowan College of Engineering, Pratt has voluntarily offered immeasurable support in the launch and early operations of the Rowan-Virtua School of Translational Biomedical Engineering & Sciences in the Virtua Health College of Medicine & Life Sciences of Rowan University. “She exemplifies teamwork and recognized that we had tremendous needs and offered to fill those needs until staffing the new school started,” a colleague says. The five-year employee has helped with administrative duties, finance, purchasing, event planning for four major Rowan-Virtua events and roundtables including hundreds of attendees, budget forecasting, faculty searches, training new administrative staff and much more. Her efforts extend to the entire University, where she selflessly works with departments campus-wide to improve processes and efficiency. “She has been invaluable to our success and a big part of why we have reached agreement milestones relating to the new college creation in the Virtua-Rowan agreement,” her nominator says.

PAST HONOREES: Kathleen Locklear, Lisa Toman, Sarah Ferguson, Suhail Johnson, Lynne Musick, Tom Dinzeo, Rosie Esposito, Matthew Lockbaum.

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT CENTER, INFORMATION RESOURCES & TECHNOLOGY

Teamwork (Team honor)

More than 50,000 phone calls, emails and live chat conversations. The Technology Support Center handles them all. Each year, the nine full-time technicians, six student workers and the director of the Technology Support Center in Information Resources and Technology work together to patiently and professionally handle every technological and nontechnological tangle and question that faculty, staff and students bring to them. And their track record? This skillful team resolves issues 97% of the time on the first call. In addition to assisting users virtually, during more than 20 orientation sessions and Accepted Students Day, the Technology Support team helps students and faculty with supported technology, connects their laptops, enrolls Duo tokens, answers questions and manages other tasks. And the magnitude and scope of their work continue to expand as the University grows and new features, applications and buildings emerge on all of Rowan’s campuses. “They demonstrate the utmost professionalism and continually show the true nature of customer service and teamwork,” a colleague says.

PAST HONOREES: The Wellness Center, COVID-19 Vaccine Leadership Team, ASPIRE (Student Leadership Development Experience Team), First-Generation Task Force, First-Year Writing Program, University Publications, Department of Health & Exercise Science, Department Chairs in the College of Education, the Rowan Retention Team.

Rowan Senate Excellence in Diversity Awards

The Rowan Senate Excellence in Diversity Awards acknowledge Rowan's outstanding students, faculty, staff, and administrators for their exceptional contributions in the areas of scholarship, multicultural awareness and social justice initiatives that improve Rowan's overall educational experience and campus climate. Awards are presented to faculty, administrators, and staff in the categories of scholarship, group projects, social activism and professional performance, which includes but is not limited to the fine and performing arts.

HONOREES

THE INCLUSIVE TECHNICAL & PROFESSIONAL WRITING PEDAGOGY **Excellence in Diversity for a Group Project**

Injustice continues to emerge, jeopardizing marginalized populations. To address these issues, the nine-member Inclusive Technical & Professional Writing Pedagogy Working Group recognized the need for new pedagogies in the growing Technical & Professional Writing (TPW) program. Emphasizing inclusion and social justice as core values to the program, this action-oriented group had two goals: to participate in professional development for inclusive pedagogies of technical and professional writing and build a source of lessons based on inclusion and social justice. They discussed the latest research on inclusive, anti-racist, social justice-oriented and feminist pedagogy in TPW. In addition, nationally recognized teacher-scholars offered presentations to Writing Arts faculty about integrating inclusive pedagogical techniques into classrooms. Seeking to translate passive learning into pedagogical action, this group developed innovative and timely TPW assignments focused on diversity, equity and inclusion, which they presented at a workshop and offered to all TPW faculty. Subsequently, the working group developed inclusive curriculum that helps students recognize oppression and discrimination and support diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace.

PAST HONOREES: Development of Inclusive Pedagogy and Practices Certificate Program, Cate Romano and Anna Bassiri, Rosa Parks Luncheon Committee, Katie Barillas and Steve Fernandez, Michelle Kowalsky and John Woodruff, Department of Management & Entrepreneurship, Pact 5, the Multicultural Men's Retreat.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION DIVERSITY IN ACTION COMMITTEE

Excellence in Diversity for Scholarship

The College of Education's Diversity in Action Committee goes beyond words. The group highlighted its active strategies to combat injustice in "Diversity in Action: From Data to Doing," a chapter in the edited volume "Reconceptualizing Social Justice in Teacher Education: Moving to Antiracist Pedagogy" (Palgrave Macmillan). Although Kate Kedley, associate professor in the Language, Literacy & Sociocultural Education Department, authored the chapter, the text represents the work of the entire committee. The faculty-led group builds upon a college- and University-wide commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. The committee initially concentrated on discussion, writing reports and data analysis. However, after group members saw injustices on campus, locally and nationally, they developed a plan of action to create change. The group holds Coffee, Critical Conversations and Community events fostering discussion about inequity and injustice; provides social justice resources for preservice teachers; hosts workshops and opportunities for discussion; and presents other initiatives. "We wanted to actively participate in creating more inclusive spaces, having a broader impact and representing a more dynamic College of Education at Rowan University," Kedley writes.

PAST HONOREES: First-Year Writing Self-Study on Racial Equity in Assessment and Grading, Stephanie Abraham, Deneen Hendrick, Ruben Britt Jr., Maria Rosado, Beth Wassell, Stephanie Farrell, Paula Watkins, Theresa Cone.

PROJECT TEAM FOR "THE PENNY EXECUTIVE: THE MAGGIE LENA WALKER STORY"

Excellence in Diversity for Social Activism

The stage may not be the usual backdrop for a business class. But "The Penny Executive" Project Team took a unique approach to introduce under-told stories of business leaders from marginalized and underrepresented communities into the business curriculum, which is a critical part of antiracist pedagogy. Faculty, staff and students from the Department of Management and the Department of Theater & Dance presented a one-woman play, "The Penny Executive: The Maggie Lena Walker Story," to students in the Rohrer College of Business and University-wide. Research shows that live theater inspires viewers to work for the benefit of others, including speaking out against racism and urging others to do the same. Hearing these stories, students develop the insight needed to lead organizations that contribute to a democratic society. Faculty, staff, students and the community responded enthusiastically to the performance. The "Penny Executive" Project Team has been invited to present the play at Maggie L. Walker High School and Brightpoint Community College in Virginia. The team hopes to produce additional

one-actor plays that portray under-told stories of Americans from marginalized communities.

PAST HONOREES: Dawn Marie Bazemore, Paula Watkins, Kate E. Kedley, Tabbetha Dobbins, Alicia Monroe.

Celebrating Excellence Awards

Lindback Distinguished Teaching Award

As an institution dedicated to excellence in teaching and learning, Rowan joins with the Office of the Provost and the Lindback Foundation, funded through a gift from the Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback Foundation, to honor one tenured faculty member with an outstanding record of teaching and a sustained record of commitment to student learning.

Joseph A. Barnes Award for Outstanding Service

Joseph Barnes served the University for 23 years as a professional staff member and a tenured librarian, and he regularly taught courses in the College of Communication. The University Senate, AFT and Campbell Library established and fund this annual award to recognize the outstanding contributions of a current member of the faculty or professional staff who has provided consistent, extraordinary and longstanding contributions to Rowan University.

Gary Hunter Excellence in Mentoring Award

The Gary J. Hunter Excellence in Mentoring Award, sponsored by AFT Local 2373 and Rowan University, acknowledges those faculty, professional staff, coaches and librarians who go to extraordinary lengths to mentor students in the spirit of Gary Hunter, a professor of history at Rowan for 29 years. Honorees demonstrate exceptional abilities in supporting, encouraging and promoting the development of students' academic, personal and professional growth.

Frances S. Johnson Junior Faculty Innovative Teaching Award

The Frances S. Johnson Junior Faculty Innovative Teaching Award honors the memory of the late Frances S. Johnson, a writing arts professor and former director of the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning. The award was established by Writing Arts Professor Sanford Tweedie to recognize junior faculty members who challenge their students in unique, important and interesting ways.

Rowan University Research Achievement Award

This award honors full-time faculty members for their outstanding achievements in research activity, either for a specific project or for a body of work accumulated over multiple years.

Breakthrough Research Award

The Breakthrough Research Award is given to a research team led by a full-time faculty member. It recognizes a recent discovery that represents a significant advance in understanding a particular subject or problem-solving approach. The breakthrough must show evidence of public dissemination and documented impact that the work has led to discovering new information, developed an innovative technology, technique or approach, or has explained a previously unexplained phenomenon.

HONOREES

LESLIE SPENCER

Lindback Distinguished Teaching Award

Leslie Spencer, a professor in the Department of Health & Exercise Science, inspires students to become high-quality health professionals by teaching innovative, skill-driven classes while cultivating a supportive community. “Dr. Spencer really cares about preparing her students and goes the extra mile to provide strong feedback, respond to questions and provide great materials,” a student says. According to a colleague, the 28-year Rowan faculty member’s leadership was invaluable as the department helped form the Virtua School of Nursing & Health Professions. Spencer has played significant roles in creating three undergraduate and graduate majors and has also developed 10 undergraduate and four graduate courses while chairing two doctoral dissertations and three master’s theses. Her research focuses on motivational interviewing and behavior change and improving wellness for people with disabilities. In 2008, Spencer established the GetFIT @ Rowan program to improve wellness in adults with disabilities. In partnership with Student Support Services, she is also lead trainer of the Student Success Coaching Program. “She sets the tone for how students should remain curious and challenges students appropriately to become great learners and health professionals,” a colleague says.

PAST HONOREES: Smitesh Bakrania, Carl Hausman, Suzanne FitzGerald, Kevin D. Dahm, Gregory Blake Biren, Edward J. Schoen, David Clowney, Krishan Bhatia, Lee A. Talley, Jennifer S. Kay, Joy M. Cypher, George Romeo, Patrick Westcott, Zenaida Otero Gephardt, Maria Rosado, Karen Magee-Sauer, Ned Eckhardt, Tirupathi Chandrupatla, Sanford Tweedie, Maria Tahamont, Joseph Robinette, Barbara Sjostrom, Jay Kuder, Bertram Greenspan, Jay Chaskes.

CHRISTINE LARSEN-BRITT

Joseph A. Barnes Award for Outstanding Service

Through her service to Rowan University, Christine Larsen-Britt, with integrity and boundless energy, passionately advocates for students. In the process, she inspires faculty, staff and students. As a senior academic advisor in the College of Humanities & Social Sciences, the 13-year Rowan employee has advised thousands of students in a range of majors. Larsen-Britt serves on nine committees, task forces and advisory boards at Rowan and helps organize campus initiatives to improve students' experience. "Her role on the Affordability Task Force enables her to contribute to other University-wide initiatives such as The SHOP, the Textbook Affordability Program and the new financial literacy course offered through the Rohrer College of Business," a colleague says. She has supported staff and faculty as University Senate secretary and a senator since May 2016 and chaired the Flexible Work Committee for the University of the Future Initiative to create greater work flexibility for Rowan employees. "She is never silent on any issue that she believes will impact our University community and strives to make Rowan a better place," a colleague says. Says another: "The light she illuminates shines bright and motivates others to live out their purpose and full potential."

PAST HONOREES: Jeff Schwartz, Jess Everett, Mary M. Staehle, Erin M. Hannah, Monica Reid Kerrigan, Eric Constans, Julia Beth Rey, Eric Milou, Donald Stoll, Lori Brucker, Bruce Caswell, Karen Sieftring, Julie Mallory Church, Nicholas Yovnello, William Myers (posthumous), Richard Grupenhoff, Carl Calliari, Marilyn S. Manley, David R. Klassen, Catherine A. Wilcoxson.

JENNIFER COURTNEY

Gary Hunter Excellence in Mentoring Award

Associate professor in the Department of Writing Arts, Jennifer Courtney has mentored more than 70 graduate student teachers in the Teaching Experience program (TEP) of the Master's in Writing program. New teachers in this program trust her as a source of expert advice and turn to her for guidance as they address students' academic, personal and other issues. Courtney mentors them from their first semester of teaching through graduation... and beyond. A colleague describes the nearly 20-year Rowan professional as "a continuously calm, sage presence in their lives who spends hours every week listening to them, talking through scenarios, giving second opinions on grading" and assisting with much more. For three years during Courtney's time in this role, she served as department chair while continuing to generously mentor TEP students. Her value is evident in the glowing observations and evaluations her students receive. Several have presented at regional and national conferences. "Her mentoring helped me dig

into challenging coursework, navigate tricky situations as a graduate instructor and inspired me to work as hard as I could to live up to my full potential,” a student says.

PAST HONOREES: Robert A. Thorpe, Sandra Joy, Ruben Britt Jr., Alicia S. Monroe, Karen T. Siefiring, Faye Robinson, Corinne Blake, Stanley B. Yeldell, Janet Moss, DeMond Miller, Claudia Cuddy, Thomas Osler, Kauser Jahan, Herbert Douglas, Larry Litwin, Harold W. Lucius, Joy F. Xin.

KATE SELTZER

Frances S. Johnson Junior Faculty Innovative Teaching Award

Kate Seltzer’s transformative project inspires preservice and in-service teachers to envision innovative ways of teaching English language learners in bilingual classrooms for greater educational justice. Seltzer, a fifth-year assistant professor of ESL and bilingual education in the Department of Language, Literacy & Sociocultural Education, challenged students to create virtual “classroom tours” for an emergent bilingual student who would join their classroom. Students used translanguaging, implementing all of their communication skills. They applied digital tools, made pedagogical choices supported by research, tailored their approaches to emergent bilingual students’ needs and rooted these elements in an overarching assets-based stance. Students responded positively. “The classroom tour has helped me to organize my ideas about how I am going to organize my future classroom while using my translanguaging lens,” one student says. Translanguaging was a mindset that informed every choice they made, another student says. Seltzer hopes bilingual and ESL teachers envisioning the potential of these students will “create such policies and structures in their future classrooms and speak back to the deficit-oriented thinking and pedagogical approaches that too often shape the education of emergent bilingual students.”

PAST HONOREES: Doreen A. Fera, Justin Freedman, Jennifer Kitson, Brent C. Elder, Joseph Higgins, Christine Poteau, Amy Accardo, Robert Wieman, Dayalan G. Srinivasan, Mary Staehle, Kara Ieva, Mark Berkey-Gerard, Theresa Cone, Patrick Crumrine, David Sullivan, Marilyn S. Manley, Andrew Hottle, John Spencer.

JAMES HEINZEN

Rowan University Research Achievement Award

As reports of Russian aggression dominate the media, Rowan historian James Heinzen expands understanding of Russian history and contemporary life — his lifelong mission. Since joining Rowan in 2000, Heinzen has published two widely acclaimed books on the Soviet state and society: “Inventing the Soviet Countryside: State Power and the Transformation of Rural Russia” (University of Pittsburgh Press) and “The Art of the Bribe: Corruption Under Stalin 1943-1953” (Yale University Press). His third book, “Underground Entrepreneurs and the

Soviet Shadow Economy Under Late Socialism, 1950s-1980s,” is underway. “All of these books are based on extensive research in Russian archives and include significant troves of recently declassified material that Dr. Heinzen was among the first western scholars in the world to examine,” a colleague says. Also director of Rowan’s Hollybush Institute for Global Peace & Security, Heinzen has published numerous scholarly articles and has won highly competitive national grants, including from the National Endowment for the Humanities. “The quality of Dr. Heinzen’s research led several prestigious higher education institutions to invite him as a visiting scholar,” another colleague says. These include Princeton University and L’École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris.

PAST HONOREES: James P. Grinias, Jess Everett, Joseph F. Stanzione, Luke Trusel, Jonathan Olshefski, Nidal Carla Bouaynaya, Catherine Yang, Dmitry Temiakov, Yusuf Mehta, Q. Edward Wang, Adrian Rusu, Hong Ling, Mary Louise Kerwin, Kandalam V. Ramanujachary, Robi Polikar, Samuel E. Lofland, Jr.

CHUN WU’S COMPUTER-AIDED DRUG DESIGN LAB

Breakthrough Research Award

As SARS-COV-2, which ignited the COVID-19 pandemic, continues to raise complex questions, Chun Wu’s Computer-Aided Drug Design (CADD) Lab is unearthing potential answers. Located in the Departments of Chemistry & Biochemistry and Biological & Biomedical Sciences in the College of Science & Mathematics, using the genomic data of this virus, the team proposed a new evolution theory — near-neutral balanced selection — and disproved three existing evolution theories. Understanding the virus’s evolution is a vital part of developing therapeutics and updating vaccines. “This theory could resolve the long-standing ‘neutralist-selectionist’ debate and Lewontin’s paradox in evolutionary biology,” the team reported. Their work has been published in “Computers in Biology and Medicine” and other publications and presented at national conferences. It won the Trainee Poster Award in the 2021 annual MidAtlantic Bioinformatics Conference and first place in the 2023 Coriell Institute Science Fair. Wu also collaborated with a colleague to present a series of international workshops on genomic research of SARS-COV-2 and other pathogens and CADD. “I have no doubt that they will continue to make a positive impact on the world through their research,” a colleague says.



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