THE COMPASS
SPRING 2016
Cindy Vitto, Dean
Larry Butler, Associate Dean
Stephen Fleming, Assistant Dean
Diane Angelucci, Writer/Project Manager
Barbara Brooks, Editor
Will Hendrix, Photographer
Craig Terry, Photographer
Colin Marks, Designer

THE COMPASS is published twice a year by the College of Humanities & Social Sciences to celebrate the achievements of its students, alumni, faculty, and staff.

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A contributor to FiftyThirtyEight, a website offering commentary based on public opinion polls, politics, economics, and more, Pluta has explored how Donald Trump has used Twitter in his campaign, how religion influences voters, and other topics. In addition, assorted media outlets seek Pluta’s political analysis.

“I think public scholarship is really important,” said Pluta, who earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in history and her doctorate in political science. “I think too often in the academy we get trapped in our ivory towers and we don’t share information with the broader public. That often makes us look irrelevant and uninvolved in everyday conversation.”

In the classroom, Pluta nurtures political science majors’ interests and curiosity. She also works to instill an interest in the political process among non-majors. Because the current election has been so contentious, even students who are not interested in politics have been unable to escape election coverage, but Pluta remarks that this election should not be considered unusual.

“There’s a richness of history, the ways that we’ve probably heard or seen something like it before, but we’ve just forgotten about it,” she said. “So I try to remind students that a lot of things that seem unique are not.”

**ROSEMARY GERI SCHOLARSHIP INCREASES STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES**

**With this year’s launch of the Rosemary Geri ’77 Foreign Languages Scholarship for Majors in Spanish and Modern Languages and Linguistics, two students received $2,000 each that will help them deepen and enrich their education.**

The memorial scholarship honors Rosemary Geri, who earned her bachelor’s degree in Spanish from the University in 1977. Teaching at the Northfield Community School for 23 years, Geri was named Teacher of the Year in 2010. She traveled extensively in the United States and around the world. The fall recipient, Thomas Hill, ‘16, is majoring in Spanish and Modern Languages and Linguistics and a minor in German Studies. He plans to become a professor of translation.

The spring recipient, Ana Sanchez Hernandez, ‘17, is majoring in Spanish and Subject Matter Education, with a concentration in International Studies. She plans to become a Spanish teacher.

“Through the space of American history, we probably have seen something like it before, but we’ve just forgotten about it,” said Dr. Marilyn Manley, associate professor of translation. “They will be more motivated to continue their language study into higher levels knowing that it will be recognized on their transcript.”

**DEPARTMENT EXPANDS JAPANESE COURSES, Establishes Certificates**

**To meet students’ growing enthusiasm for Japanese language and culture, the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures expanded its Japanese courses and established a Certificate of Undergraduate Study (CUGS) in Japanese. This is just one of six new CUGS the department now offers.**

“The more opportunities we offer for students to earn a credential in a language, the more attractive it is for them to progress in a language,” said Dr. Marilyn Manley, associate professor of Spanish and chairperson, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. “They will be more motivated to continue their language study into higher levels knowing that it will be recognized on their transcript.”

Students often become interested in Japanese through pop culture, such as Japanese anime, music, and fashion, said Chie Matsunoka Dusk, a new three-quarter time Japanese instructor. However, she explained, they quickly become fascinated by Japanese mantras, traditions, and history after they begin taking the Japanese courses, and eventually they seek to tie it to their occupation or travel to Japan for their careers.

During the second year of study, Dusk encourages students to prepare for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT). “Since it is a well-recognized and worldwide standardized exam of Japanese language proficiency, if they pass the exam, students can add it to their resumes when they look for a job. This allows students to pass the exam, students can add it to their resumes when they look for a job. This allows them to increase their credibility and salary offers in their respective industries,” she said.

As a result of the popularity of the Japanese program, the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures was named Teacher of the Year in 2010. Teaching at the Northfield Community School for 23 years, Geri was named Teacher of the Year in 2010. She traveled extensively in the United States and around the world. The fall recipient, Thomas Hill, ‘16, is majoring in Spanish and Modern Languages and Linguistics and a minor in German Studies. He plans to become a professor of translation.

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**JOSÉ ANTONIO VARGAS BRINGS IMMIGRATION DEBATE TO CAMPUS**

As American political candidates continue to spar over the future of undocumented immigrants, José Antonio Vargas examined an important question on Rowan’s campus in February: What does it mean to be an American?

Focusing on America’s changing identity, the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and filmmaker, who is also an undocumented immigrant, spoke to a packed house in the Eynon Ballroom in the Chamberlain Student Center. His presentation, sponsored by numerous Rowan offices and colleges, including the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, was followed by a question-and-answer session and screening of his film, **Documented.**

Rbrey Singleton, ‘19, a political science major from Haledon, was inspired by the presentation. “I have followed Mr. Vargas’ work over a year or so, and I found his discussion quite moving because of his upbeat and optimistic demeanor despite all of the hardship he has faced,” he said.

Singleton was impressed to hear Vargas speak of the contributions of undocumented immigrants and more. “His message of advocacy through intersectionality resonated with me as he stressed the importance of solidarity between minorities,” he said. “As an Afro-Latino with lineage from the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua, I found this message quite poignant. I even got him to follow me on my Twitter account.”

**PRESIDENT’S LECTURE SERIES PRESENTS CLAUDIA RANKINE**

*New York times best-selling poet and National Book Award finalist Claudia Rankine explored some of the country’s most troubling social issues during her February presentation as part of the President’s Lecture Series.*

Author of five poetry collections and two plays and an editor of several anthologies, Rankine read from her works during her talk.

“Claudia Rankine is one of the most powerful and innovative poets alive, and her probing meditations on race are particularly appropriate during these times,” said Dr. Bill Freind, associate professor of English, who coordinated this event. “That was evident by the diversity of the audience, which included high school students and members of the public, as well as Rowan faculty, staff, and students.”

Rankine’s latest work, *Citizen: An American Lyric,* was a finalist for the 2014 National Book Award. It combines poetry, essays, cultural criticism, and images to illustrate what it is like to be an African-American in the United States.