



UNIVERSITY OF REGINA
School of Arts and Sciences

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Access

Excellence in the Arts and Sciences

A Compelling New Approach to Studying Public Health

A sociology program draws aspiring medical students and science majors

eha Sikka has a clear calling: the Rutgers junior wants to become a physician and work in the developing world for groups like Doctors without Borders and the Inland Red Cross.

A whiz in math and science, she's studying biomedical engineering and mulling over medical schools. But at the **School of Arts and Sciences**, Sikka has discovered a program that's complementing and expanding her premed studies, exposing her to some of the most challenging issues facing health care professionals in the 21st century.

She's among the first wave of students to enroll in the Department of Sociology's new minor: health and society. In courses like "The Sociology of Medicine and Health Care," Sikka is discovering how poverty, stress, and other factors can cause illness and disease. And she's also confronting the challenges patients face in getting access to quality, affordable health care.

"It's eye-opening," Sikka says. "Medical studies tend to be very focused on the internal. But in sociology you get the external, and I think that's crucial for effective patient care."

The minor, which follows Rutgers' recent transformation into a major center of health science education, reflects the department's longtime focus on medical sociology, a specialty in which the relationship between humans and health is studied from many different angles.

"Because I'm a medical sociologist, I teach about issues such as health and inequality, and the relationship between gender and health—even in my 'Introduction to Sociology' course," explains department chair Deborah Carr, who worked with sociology colleagues to design the minor. "For years, I've had undergraduates say to me: 'I'm a science major, but I love learning about the so-

(continued inside)



Neha Sikka, who plans to become a doctor, says that sociology courses have opened her eyes to contemporary health care issues.



Senior Jeremy Yeaton

A Love for Learning Languages

Jeremy Yeaton says his facility with foreign tongues “just popped up along the genetic lines”

Jeremy Yeaton, who’s fluent in French, speaks Chinese, knows a bit of Spanish, and dabbles in Russian, says he has no idea where he gets his knack for language. His parents are both accountants who speak only English. His brother works at the Federal Reserve Bank.

“Everyone else does numbers—I do letters,” the **School of Arts and Sciences** senior says. “I have no clue how this happened. It just popped up along the genetic lines.”

By the time Yeaton graduated from Northern Highlands Regional High School, he was an advanced French student with some Spanish and Chinese under his belt.

Arriving for his first year at Rutgers, he was stunned by the array of possibilities: more than two dozen language offerings, a strong linguistics department, a robust Study Abroad program, and a highly diverse, constantly evolving student population that serves as a rich source of new vocabulary as well as a means to practice.

“The number of options at Rutgers is pretty amazing,” Yeaton says.

There was even a fledgling language exchange club started by students—Rutgers

Lingua—in which participants meet at Alexander Library and learn languages directly from native-speaking students.

“There’s a large Chinese population at Rutgers that speaks the dialect I want to learn,” Yeaton says. “They come to practice their English, and I come to improve my Chinese.”

Living in an honors residence, Brett Hall, was also a benefit. “A lot of housemates were studying foreign languages, so there was ample opportunity to practice,” he says.

Yeaton graduates in 2015 with a double major in French and linguistics, and a minor in Chinese. He has studied in Paris and Beijing, conducted linguistic research projects, and won third place in a regional Chinese proficiency contest. He’s considering careers in academia and in government.

But whatever he decides, the appeal of learning a language, especially its linguistic quirks, is enduring.

“There are some languages, for example, where the structure makes everything in the passive voice, like: ‘The seal is killed by the hunter,’” Yeaton says. “That’s obviously different from the way we might see the world, but it makes you reflect and gives you new ways to express ideas.”

“The number of options at Rutgers is pretty amazing.”

Staying True to His Parents’ Values, He Made a New Beginning at Rutgers

John Sivoletta found support, friendship, and academic fulfillment

John Sivoletta was 10 when his father died suddenly.

“It was bleak for a while,” he says. “But my mom was very strong; she stepped up and raised us on what was really a fixed income.”

Sivoletta, who grew up in Springfield, New Jersey, responded by embracing the values he learned from his parents and extended family. He studied hard, played sports, and struggled to turn the tragedy of his father’s death into a legacy of hope.

“My dad came from a large Italian family that stressed education as a way to define your life,” he says. “I very much saw education as a way to turn my situation into a positive.”

When he arrived at Rutgers in 1983, after a brief stint at Georgetown University, it felt like a bright new beginning.

He found a friendly, diverse student population, an intellectually rich, multidisciplinary academic program, and supportive faculty mentors like now-retired history professor James Reed.

“It felt like home right away,” says Sivoletta, who majored in history and was Phi Beta Kappa and a Henry Rutgers Scholar.

He went on to a successful career practicing corporate law in New York City and serving as senior assistant counsel in the ‘90s to then New Jersey Governor Christie Whitman.

More recently, however, he has come full circle, returning to academia as a professor of political science, teaching at Columbia University, and—beginning in spring 2015—at Rutgers. His courses include a seminar drawn from his doctoral dissertation research on U.S. federal agencies, presidential power, public law, and the federal courts.

Besides the opportunity to teach and do research, Sivoletta says his academic career has another important perk: the opportunity to help students just as he was helped at Rutgers.

“I remember what it was like going in five different directions, worried about classes, worried about paying bills,” he says.

“Just having somebody give you five minutes to provide some guidance made a huge difference.

I will always make the time for students. I will never say no.”

Sivoletta has provided critical support for the **School of Arts and Sciences**, including hosting an alumni gathering at his Massachusetts home, where attendees learned about the many changes at Rutgers. He has also provided philanthropic gifts to the Dean’s Fund for Academic Excellence and the Pre-law Advisory Fund.

“The students here are great,” he says. “I love helping them find their way in law or in any other area they want to explore.”

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John Sivoletta RC '87

(continued from front)

A Compelling New Approach to Studying Public Health



From left: student Neha Sikka and sociology department chair Deborah Carr.

cial aspects of health.”

Last year, as Rutgers began integrating most of the former University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, including two medical schools, Carr decided it was time to move forward with the idea for a minor. Since its launch in the fall of 2013, the program has drawn nearly 100 students from a range of majors—about twice the number expected.

“The response shows a growing awareness of the social and interpersonal factors that guide health,” Carr says. “There’s a need to understand the social, cultural, and economic conditions. It’s really about the whole person, and the students get that.”

Sikka, who grew up in Branchburg, New Jersey, has been interested in such issues since the eighth grade, when on a family trip to India and Thailand she witnessed poverty on a scale she had never imagined.

“I’ve always liked arguing about society’s effect on people,” she says. “Throughout school, in all my history classes, my favorite part was studying the

cultural and societal aspects.”

Edwin Cruz, a biology and criminal justice major who opted for the minor, says the exposure to sociology courses has challenged some of his long-held assumptions about nature versus nurture.

“I’d always look at something like mental illness through the lens of genetics,” he states. “Now I’m learning about the sociological and environmental factors. I’m learning about the impact of family or poor neighborhoods.”

Cruz, a Clifton, New Jersey, native who wants to run his own laboratory, says the courses raise complex but compelling questions for anyone interested in public health.

“How do we as a society go about treating the sick and the elderly? How are we going to prevent them from being marginalized?” Cruz asks. “These are the types of questions we’re confronting every day.”

For more information on the new health and society minor, visit sociology.rutgers.edu or call 848-932-4029.

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AN EARTH SCIENTIST’S URGENT MISSION

Robert Kopp builds a multidisciplinary response to climate change

As a student, Robert Kopp was fascinated with astrobiology, a field that poses big questions about life on other planets. But he also found himself drawn to questions about life on this planet. Unsettling questions like: are humans reshaping climate in a way that could be catastrophic for civilization?

“I became interested in the Earth and how it evolved over time,” says the 32-year-old professor of Earth and planetary sciences in the **School of Arts and Sciences**. “And it became clear to me that as a society we have critical challenges to deal with.”

Last year Kopp and other geoscientists at Rutgers and Tufts universities warned that the sea-level rise will likely cause storms to bring unprecedented flooding to the Jersey shore by the middle of the 21st century.

But Kopp’s engagement with climate change transcends any single area of study. He has become an influential public scholar, bringing

“Humanity has become one of the most powerful geological forces on the planet,” Kopp says. “We have to develop the decision-making capabilities appropriate for a planetary civilization, or we are going to end up making life unpleasant for ourselves and potentially untenable for our grandchildren.”

He recently served as lead scientist for the technical report underlying the Risky Business project organized by former New York City mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, former U.S. treasury secretary Henry Paulson, and the philanthropist and former hedge fund manager Tom Steyer. The report drew widespread media coverage with its prediction that unmitigated climate change would have a devastating impact on America’s economy, including large-scale loss of coastal property, reduced labor productivity, and shifting crop yields and agricultural patterns.

For Kopp, an important aspect of this experience was working alongside economists. Prior to coming to Rutgers, he was involved in similar col-



Robert Kopp, a professor of Earth and planetary sciences, conducts research at Mendenhall Glacier in Alaska and analyzes historical patterns to improve projections for future sea level changes.

“Learning how to talk to social scientists is an important part of getting science to inform policy.”

laborative experiences, including a stint as a fellow at the U.S. Department of Energy.

“What I learned in government is that science is just one of many inputs into policymaking,” he says. “Learning how to talk to social scientists is an important part of getting science to inform policy.”

It’s no surprise Kopp is involved in policy. His mother is a former Maryland legislator and the current state treasurer. His father served for years as an attorney in the U.S. Department of Justice. “I was raised in an environment saturated in policy discussions,” the Bethesda, Maryland, native says.

At Rutgers, his course, “Building and Maintaining a Habitable Planet,” draws a broad cross-section of undergraduates with its examination of climate issues. And as associate director of the Rutgers Energy Institute, he helps integrate the

university’s expertise in science, engineering, economics, and public policy toward the goal of decarbonizing the global energy system.

The abundance of scholars at Rutgers offers hope for the future, he says: “You have a couple dozen faculty members whose work touches on coastal climate resilience and dozens of others working on climate and energy systems. I am sure there are not many institutions in the world where you have that many scholars stretching the entire research chain.”

LIFE SCIENCES



From left, Jared Reichenberg, a current medical student, and Nikhil Jain, who intends to apply to medical school, are School of Arts and Sciences graduates who credit the Health Professions Office with preparing them for the daunting application process.

New Generation of Students Connect with French

Food, theater, and film are all part of the experience ▶▶▶

What better way to communicate the joys of French?

On Rutgers Day, as scores of people walked through campus, checking out dazzling displays of science, technology, and art, professor Mary Shaw was ready with a question. “Would you like to take a cheese test?” she asked passersby on Voorhees Mall.

Standing behind her, a handful of undergraduates and a fellow faculty member from the Department of French speedily sliced mounds of cheese into bite-sized pieces to be placed on toothpicks.

The “cheese test,” better known as “Fromage Frenzy,” a Rutgers Day staple attraction, challenges participants to sample five types of cheese and then identify them based on written descriptions. At day’s end, more than 600 people had taken the test, consuming nearly 5 kilos of cheese.

“This is one part of French culture that everyone loves,” Shaw says.

But the spirit of French fun did not end at Rutgers Day. Nor was it limited to cheese. This year the department in the **School of Arts and Sciences** held its first-

ever French at Rutgers Week, beginning on Rutgers Day and continuing with poetry readings, film screenings, and even a Renaissance fencing demonstration.

“Having a week of this or a week of that—it’s a very French concept,” Shaw explains.

The showcasing of French culture provided a glimpse into French studies at Rutgers, where professors are known for their scholarship but also for their fun, hip, and creative approach to teaching about all things French.

“We strive to be original,” says department chair Carole Allamand. Indeed, in addition to courses in history, literature, and language, students take intriguing seminars like “French and Francophone Comics” (François Cornilliat), “Songs of Modern France” (Uri Eisenzweig), and “Cultures of Taste” (Ana Pairet).

Daniel Stornetta, a senior majoring in French and biological sciences, raves about professor Alan Williams’s courses in French cinema. “French filmmaking tackles so many serious subjects,” Stornetta says. “It’s wonderful to be able to study it at Rutgers.”

At the department’s core is a deep commitment to literature. “Many of us are active writers,” says Allamand, a published novelist. “Our strength and originality is a deep involvement with language, fiction, and storytelling.”

That strength draws students like Jennifer Smith, a 2014 SAS graduate who majored in English and

minored in French. “My French minor really helped me develop as a writer,” she says. “I was exposed to so many great authors, and I also came away with an understanding of French theater.”

The department has long been ahead of the curve. Rutgers was the first public university in the United States to partner with France’s most celebrated museum, the Louvre. This year the French faculty is unveiling a new winter intercession program—three weeks in Aix-en-Provence for students with limited French experience.

Mark Busch, a 1964 Rutgers graduate and prominent New Jersey attorney, offered an additional advantage to majoring in French. “I fell in love with the language and culture,” he says. “And I soon discovered that reading, analyzing, and expressing ideas in a language not your own is superb preparation for law school.”

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SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF MEDICAL STUDENTS

Health Professions Office guides students on the journey to med school

Nikhil Jain figured Rutgers would be “a piece of cake” on the way to medical school. But after a humbling first year, he began having doubts. “My GPA wasn’t competitive for medical school,” Jain says. “I was considering doing a ‘180’ into business finance.”

Enter the Rutgers Health Professions Office (HPO), a dedicated group of advisers who’ve prepared thousands of Rutgers students for competition in the battleground of medical school admissions.

After a frank discussion with the HPO staff, Jain devised a comeback plan. It included a focus on time management skills and better study habits. Last spring he graduated magna cum laude from the **School of Arts and Sciences**. And after a gap year working at the New Jersey Department of Health, he wants to apply to medical schools and pursue a career in emergency medicine.

“I owe a lot to the HPO,” Jain says. “They were quite candid about the fact that I was in a tough spot, and helped me sort out exactly what I needed to do.”

For longtime HPO director Bruce Babiarz, an SAS professor in the Department of Cell Biology and Neuroscience, it’s all in a day’s work. “Everybody who walks through our door has a different problem, a different story, a unique set of circumstances,” he says. “Our job is to help them make the right decisions.”

The HPO, part of the SAS Division of Life Sciences, was founded in 1988 by W. Robert Jenkins, a now-retired professor of biological sciences. The office currently has about 3,000 students on its

rolls—twice the number it had in the late 1990s. Each year advisers work with up to 700 students applying to medical and dental schools and other health professions programs.

On any given day, Babiarz, assistant director Elizabeth Vogel, and other staffers advise students on specific courses and sequences, extracurricular and gap year activities, and opportunities for research and clinical experience. The office also oversees physician-shadowing programs, coordi-

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nates tutoring services, writes recommendation letters, and conducts interviews with students that mirror what they’ll encounter at medical school admissions interviews.

Then there’s the job of keeping students on track. Sometimes that means giving a pat on the back or an inspiring pep talk.

“We’re the only unit at Rutgers with a Kleenex budget,” Babiarz jokes.

Other times staffers must do a bit of academic troubleshooting. “Some students have a bad year and decide to pile on an incredible number of courses to prove they can do it,” Babiarz says.

“We say: ‘Don’t do that, you’ll dig yourself a deeper hole.’”

Jain, who was in the top 1 percent of his class in high school, says the HPO helped him figure out where he had gotten off track in his first year at Rutgers. “I was always an 11th-hour student,” he says. “You can’t do that when you get to this level.”

Rutgers alumni praise the office for guiding them through a thicket of deadlines, details, and decisions—and always with a caring attitude and

sense of humor. “They’re really good at crisis control,” says Jared Reichenberg, a 2012 SAS graduate now in his third year at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. “For me, they could always answer those hard questions like: ‘Instead of taking calculus can I take an upper-level statistics course?’”

Pediatrician Samantha Leib RC ‘95 became acquainted with the HPO as a Rutgers student in the 1990s and ended up working in the office for most of her undergraduate years.

“It’s a warm, friendly place, and Bob Jenkins was my mentor,” says Leib, who practices at Union Hill Pediatrics in Manalapan, New Jersey. “I came, I stayed, and I never left.”

SAS.RUTGERS.EDU



It’s been a delightful summer for me—transitioning to the **School of Arts and Sciences**, learning my way around Rutgers University–New Brunswick, and getting to know my wonderful new colleagues. They’ve been welcoming, engaging, and supportive, and for that I’m most grateful. This experience confirmed my initial sense of the attractiveness of joining Rutgers: its people. I’m confident that with such passionate and accomplished students, faculty, staff, and alumni, SAS will soon realize its vision to be the most distinguished school of arts and sciences in the nation.

My most vivid first impression of Rutgers is the astonishing pace of change! We’ve joined the Big Ten® and its academic counterpart, the Committee on Institutional Cooperation. On College Avenue, a new honors college and academic building are under construction, and on Busch Campus, we broke ground on a state-of-the-art chemistry and chemical biology facility. The newly formed Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences, meanwhile, is already a significant new partner for the School of Arts and Sciences.

In fact, this edition of ACCESS explores some of the innovative ways SAS is responding to Rutgers’ transformation into a comprehensive center for the study of human health.

The stories include the front-page piece on the Department of Sociology’s new health-focused minor and a behind-the-scenes look at the busy Health Professions Office, where SAS professor Bruce Babiarz and his staff help undergraduates become competitive medical school applicants.

In the humanities, the Department of French feature and the interview with the Center for Global Education director show the breadth and depth of SAS’s foreign language programs, which draw students like multilingual prodigy Jeremy Yeaton.

I hope you’ll enjoy reading the new edition of ACCESS, and I encourage you to get in touch with us to share your reaction, your experience, and your sense of Rutgers pride!

PMarch

Peter March
Executive Dean

SAS

● The School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) is the school for liberal arts and sciences at Rutgers University–New Brunswick. SAS carries on the tradition of excellence founded nearly 250 years ago by Rutgers College and expanded in the 20th century by Douglass, Livingston, and University Colleges. With more than 20,000 students, 800 full-time faculty, and more than 70 majors and minors in biological and physical sciences, humanities, mathematics, and social and behavioral sciences, SAS offers programs of unparalleled breadth and depth, combining excellence in teaching with world-class research.

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Film screenings, poetry readings, and . . . fencing? It was all part of the fun of French at Rutgers Week 2014. Émiline Baudet, at left, fencing instructor, graduate student from the department’s annual exchange with the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris, and conversation instructor in the College Avenue French Living and Learning and Douglass Global Village Communities during 2013–14, proposed the idea of French Week. *Formidable!*

ROUNDUP

Things You May Not Know about the School of Arts and Sciences



From Microcosm to Cosmos, SAS Science Students Shine

The research accomplishments and academic records of three **School of Arts and Sciences** students have earned them prestigious Barry M. Goldwater Scholarships, awarded for excellence in mathematics, science, and engineering. Left to right, seniors Alina Rashid of Edison, Kaiser Loell of Maplewood, and Asher Wasserman of Aberdeen are among 283 undergraduates selected by the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation to receive awards this year. Rashid studies how nerve cells reshape themselves when stressed; Loell makes 3-D models of proteins and uses them to simulate protein interactions; Wasserman focuses on the evolution of galaxies in space.

4,750 students graduated in the Class of 2014



● Rutgers University–New Brunswick has joined a preeminent academic group whose roots are found in the American midwest. The Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) is an academic consortium of 15 top-tier universities, including the University of Chicago and the 14 members of the Big Ten®. Rutgers is proud to join this established and prestigious academic collaboration. With its acceptance into the CIC, Rutgers builds on a network of relationships that it has enjoyed for many years with these elite research universities.

The Top 10 Majors

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| ■ Psychology | ■ Exercise Science and Sport Management |
| ■ Biological Sciences | ■ English |
| ■ Economics | ■ History |
| ■ Criminal Justice | ■ Computer Science |
| ■ Political Science | ■ Mathematics |

Art Historian Wins Guggenheim

Susan Sidlauskas was one of 177 artists, scholars, and scientists to receive a 2014 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship. During her fellowship term, she will explore the influence of anatomical illustration on John Singer Sargent's turn-of-the-century portraits.



Mastering the Arts and Sciences

Responding to increased demand for advanced learning opportunities in the humanities and sciences, the **School of Arts and Sciences** has developed a diverse portfolio of new master's degree programs:

Applied Economics M.S.: Provides advanced quantitative training for those wanting to understand the role played by economic issues in an increasingly complex and interconnected world (Fall '16).

Computational Imaging and Biopharmaceutical Science M.S.: Examines computer-generated image reconstruction as well as clinical research (including drug development), biology of disease, and functional imaging (Fall '15).

East Asian Studies M.A.: Provides an intensive immersion in the literature, visual culture, history, religion, language, and linguistics of the civilizations of China, Japan, and/or Korea.

Global and Comparative History M.A.: Draws on the strength of a faculty with nearly 20 members who have made major scholarly contributions to the field.

Global Sports Business M.S.: Prepares students for sports business and administration, corporate sponsorship and branding, athletic representation, media and entertainment production, and other related careers (Fall '16)

Jewish Studies M.A.: Designed for those seeking to prepare for doctoral-level work or to further their careers in fields such as education, communal service, library science, and public affairs.

Political Science M.A./United Nations and Global Policy Studies: Designed specifically to meet the training and professional development needs of United Nation legations and research agencies.

Religious Studies M.A.: Explores religion in the public sphere, with topical tracks in Religion in America, Religion and Conflict, and Contemplative Studies.

CHARTING NEW DIRECTIONS FOR OVERSEAS STUDY

Short-term trips emerge as an option for students

For generations of college students, it's among the most treasured of experiences: spending a year or a semester in a foreign country. The Center for Global Education offers many opportunities, from classes in the world's most magnificent universities and galleries to volunteer stints working in clinics and schools in the developing world. The center is expanding the concept of overseas study by creating more options for today's busy students. Director Giorgio DiMauro spoke about some of the exciting new directions.

Q: How has overseas study evolved over the years?

A: The traditional experience is to go for a semester or longer, typically in the junior year. We're still committed to that model, but we're also expanding short-term opportunities, such as faculty-led programs. Rutgers professors can bring students to a country where they have contacts and interests, share their knowledge, and provide a first-hand experience related to what they are learning about in class.

Q: What would be an example of a short-term program?

A: A new model we're working on with faculty is an embedded program connected to a one-semester course. Going abroad at spring break or at the end of the semester is a great way to enrich a particular topic. For students who have spent little or no time abroad, even a couple of weeks in another country can be an eye-opening experience. There's also our service learning program, which provides immersive opportunities focused on experiential learning and volunteerism.



Rutgers students travel the world.



Q: What countries do students choose to visit?

A: Students still predominantly go to Western Europe. But we have now developed many more opportunities in other parts of the world. We have seen an increase in students going to Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

Q: What should Rutgers students know about the experience of overseas study?

A: Students may worry that it will delay their graduation or it's not going to fit in somehow, but the experience is integrated into the academic structure. The departments are very open to it. We also have scholarships, and depending on where students go, the cost of living may not be high. So there are ways to make it work financially. I'd also like students to realize that study abroad can be a life-changing experience—

one that offers tangible academic, personal, and career benefits. It's something employers definitely notice, and it provides students with a rich store of experiences they can share in an interview.

Q: How can students get more information about Study Abroad?

A: Stop by the office (102 College Avenue, New Brunswick) or contact us (848-932-7787; RU_Abroad@gaiacenters.rutgers.edu). Even if you don't know where you want to go, we can work with you to find the type and length of program that will work best for you almost anywhere in the world.