

A Psychology Student Examines the Impact of Stigmatizing Experiences

Jonathan Vides studies race, gender, and ethnicity

Jonathan Vides has long been fascinated by the human brain, and by issues of race and gender.

So the School of Arts and Sciences senior designed an ideal undergraduate program. He's majoring in psychology and minoring in both Latino and Caribbean studies and women's and gender studies. He plans an academic career that will fuse these topics into an integrated field of study.

"I want to pursue psychology and find a way to incorporate social concepts such as race," Vides says. "What's going on in the brain when we look at race and gender? Why do we see ourselves as so different from one another, and what are the neural processes that push for that?"

Vides said his academic interests were shaped by his own life. The son of a Dominican mother and a Salvadoran father, Vides grew up in New Brunswick very aware of his Latino immigrant background and insatiably curious about the lasting impact that the experience might have on him and others.

"I am trying to understand my own reality through a scientifically grounded perspective," he says. "How do experiences of stereotyping, social exclusion, or alienation affect us psychologically?"

Senior Jonathan Vides

What are the things that are holding us back that may not be visible?"

Vides, working with Diana Sanchez, a professor in the Department of Psychology, is conducting research that directs those questions to other communities. His current project examines how women of color respond to stigmatizing experiences.

"Ultimately, we want to understand how we can help ameliorate the effects of a stereotype in historically threatening environments," Vides says.

While psychology remains his primary focus, Vides says he'll leave Rutgers empowered and inspired by the courses he took in his two minors. Latino and Caribbean studies helped him become more fully vested in his own history, while women's and gender studies provided what he describes as the intellectual "glue" he needed to develop his theories.

He feels especially grateful to professors Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel and Carlos Decena, who have faculty appointments in both departments, and who inspired him to examine the role of race, ethnicity, and gender in his experience and that of others.

"Honestly, the courses I have taken here at Rutgers have changed me completely," he says.

“My courses at Rutgers have changed me completely.”

Her Rutgers Years Paved the Way to NYC and Career in Finance

Betsy McNeilly helps Rutgers provide access and opportunity

Elizabeth "Betsy" Armstrong McNeilly was crushing it in her first year at Rutgers.

Armed with a 4.0 GPA, this hard-working daughter of Irish immigrants was mulling a bold move: transferring to an Ivy League school.

She applied to Cornell University, seeking to follow in the footsteps of two older sisters, and was accepted.

Then she had a realization. Her goal had always been to get to a school where she'd be surrounded by lots of smart, talented, and highly-motivated students.

She realized she was already attending one.

"In my first year at Rutgers, I met all these impressive students who were the valedictorians at their high schools," says McNeilly RC'85. "It dawned on me that I was already around all these super smart, incredibly hard-working people."

"There was no need to go anywhere else."

Indeed, the year she graduated,

McNeilly (formerly Armstrong) landed nearly 80 job interviews and numerous job offers in the New York area through Rutgers career services.

But the keeper was an invitation by JP Morgan Chase, formerly Chemical Bank, to join its prestigious credit training program—the equivalent of today's intensely competitive investment bank training programs on Wall Street.

By her late 20s, McNeilly was managing a credit team at Chemical Bank, and by her 30s she was a CFO at a large, privately-held company. She also found time to earn her MBA in finance from New York University's Leonard N. Stern School of Business.

Today she's a Senior Director of Wealth Management at BNY Mellon, one of the nation's largest wealth management firms.

Looking back on it all, McNeilly credits her family, in which she was the youngest of five children, with shaping her work ethic.

"My mother was the original tiger mom," she says. "She knew instinctively that education was the basis for better opportunities."

At Rutgers, McNeilly built on that foundation in two principal ways. As an economics major, she gained broad knowledge of the big picture influences on wealth creation, including government policy, politics, and global finance trends, and how human behavior shapes outcomes. She also learned how to think critically and extrapolate that knowledge.

She put those skills to good use. At BNY Mellon, she is a national leader in new business development.

"You have to understand factors influencing the global economy, whether interest rates or market bubbles, to anticipate business cycle booms and busts," she says. "My clients appreciate my extensive investment knowledge, but they also appreciate my steadiness and earnest commitment to their financial goals and personal legacy."

She also said the Rutgers experience encouraged self-reliance and a kind of true grit. "Here I was at this university with enormous resources," she says. "But it was up to me to find them and make them work for me. It was very valuable to be your own change agent, to learn how to be resourceful."

"And those are skills I rely on to this day," McNeilly is extensively involved in community and civic affairs, including at Rutgers, where she serves on the Rutgers University Foundation Board of Overseers. She is also a strong supporter of the Rutgers Future Scholars program.

"Future Scholars is a great program because it brings compassion together with the strong belief that everyone can succeed if they're given the opportunity, access, and tools," she says.

Betsy McNeilly RC'85

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

Liliana Sánchez, Strong Supporter of Heritage Language Rights, Receives Human Dignity Award



"I think of language as a human right," says Liliana Sánchez, a professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese in the School of Arts and Sciences. "We all have a right to preserve our language as an inviolable part of our heritage, our knowledge, and who we are."

Working in communities and classrooms from New Brunswick to Peru, Sánchez has sought to protect that right by creating programs that support heritage language speakers and empower their teachers.

In Peru, she helped develop assessment tools for schools in rural communities so teachers can more effectively serve students from a wide range of language backgrounds, including those who speak indigenous languages like Quechua.

At Rutgers, she has worked with colleagues to develop new programs for the growing number of heritage Spanish speakers, including a certificate program in academic Spanish, and an array of online classes such as "Spanish for the Health Professions" and "Spanish for Business."

Last spring, Sánchez received one of Rutgers University's most cherished honors, the Clement A. Price Human Dignity Award for commitment to diversity, inclusion, equity, and access within Rutgers or in partnership with community organizations.

The award recognized her work advancing the study of Spanish-English and Quechua bilingualism, and for championing heritage language rights and advocating for world languages as critical to social cohesion and human rights.

"I am a linguist by training, and my initial interest was in the description of the languages," she says. "You continue with your interests, but you realize that cannot be all. You're a human being. You see a community with needs, and you respond. There are no protections for the loss of minority languages. There is no language rights bill."

The Human Dignity award was named in honor of the late beloved and eminent Rutgers Dean of Governors Distinguished Service Professor Clement A. Price, historian and founding director of The Rutgers Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience (IECME), which he established in 1996 at Rutgers-Newark.

SAS.RUTGERS.EDU

ARTS AND SCIENCES WELCOMES 10TH CLASS!

Each summer, thousands of incoming first-year students come to Rutgers for New Student Orientation as Arts and Sciences prepares to welcome about 3,700 new first-year students. The group above took a time-out from their crash course on Rutgers to discuss their hopes and plans for the next four years. From budding doctors and nurses to that great way to head out into the Arts and Sciences—undecided!—these students are all on the same page when they discuss the reasons they chose Rutgers. It's unanimous. They wanted: a wide range of academic choices, a diverse campus, and multiple opportunities to get involved with the university community. Learn more at sas.rutgers.edu/2021.



Incoming students get oriented to Rutgers, from left: Brunella Godoy, Zain Khan, Sarah Garcia, Leah Graham, Emily Fung, Ananya Girish.

NARRATING EDISON'S LIFE AND WORK THROUGH HIS DOCUMENTS



The Thomas A. Edison Papers Project at Rutgers is one of the most ambitious editing projects ever undertaken by an American university. For decades, the 5 million pages of documents that chronicle the extraordinary achievements of Thomas Alva Edison remained inaccessible to the general public. Since 1978, a team of editors/scholars has been turning this incomparable trove into a premier educational resource. The project is producing digital and book editions of Edison documents that provide a deep understanding of Edison's life and career. Based on this intensive research, the project has developed curriculum that examines the themes and processes of invention and innovation through the development of Edisonian technologies. Sponsors include the *National Endowment for the Humanities*, *National Historical Publication and Records Commission*, *National Park Service*, and *New Jersey Historical Commission*. Visit edison.rutgers.edu to explore the available resources online.

SCARLET SPEAKERS: IN THE HEART OF MANHATTAN

The Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences launched a new speaker series for alumni that brings Rutgers leaders to them. The first two speakers were former Rutgers Law School Dean and current Rutgers Special Counsel John Farmer presenting "The Past and Future of the American Intelligence Community" and Lenny Kaye RC'67 presenting "Fifty Years of Rock and Roll and Rutgers."

Join Executive Dean Peter March in New York City when Colonel Jack Jacobs RC'66 GSNB'72 and Malcher Chair of Humanities and Public Affairs at the US Military Academy and NBC News analyst presents "The Mess in Washington."

Tuesday, October 10, 2017
5:30 - 7:00pm
The National Arts Club, New York City
RSVP by October 3: sas.rutgers.edu/RUNYC



SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES MARKS 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Ten years ago, the School of Arts and Sciences welcomed its first group of incoming students in what was one of the biggest changes in the history of Rutgers University. Carrying on the tradition set by Rutgers, Livingston, Douglass, and University colleges, the School of Arts and Sciences emerged as an institution dedicated to a broad-based liberal arts education. In the interview below, Executive Dean Peter March reflects on the school's development over the last decade and its plans for the next 10 years.

Q: The School of Arts and Sciences is often described as the oldest and the newest school at Rutgers. What does this anniversary commemorate?

A: In 2006, Rutgers adopted the Transformation of Undergraduate Education, the formal act creating the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) from the union of the four undergraduate colleges, Rutgers, Douglass, Livingston, and University. So, the following fall of 2007 the first students were admitted into this new school.

Q: How big a change was the Transformation of Undergraduate Education in the scope of Rutgers history, which goes back 251 years?

A: It was a major, historic change, and we're still feeling the impact. Undergraduate education at Rutgers was traditionally handled through a confederation of quasi-autonomous colleges. Now it's strongly organized around the academic disciplines, like most of our peer schools in the Big Ten and the majority of public research universities. It leaves us in very good company, and well-equipped to achieve excellence in the school's departments, programs, and core curriculum.

Q: How does that structure help support and strengthen the liberal arts?

A: Each college had its own institutional culture, values, and unique strengths. I'm speaking, for example, of the sense of innovation at Livingston; the historic and pioneering role of Douglass; the colonial heritage of Rutgers; and the expansion of access by University College. We've integrated these legacies into a single vision for the new school. Meanwhile, we've harmonized our core strengths: teaching, research, and service. A strong connection and overlap among all three is now embedded in the school's structure, providing opportunities for all students from undergraduates to post-docs.

One of the hallmarks of the historic colleges—student access to top scholars, including our most renowned research professors—remains a central value of the School of Arts and Sciences. This constant interaction is a testament to the dedication our faculty have to their students.

Q: The School of Arts and Sciences is now the largest school at Rutgers. What do you see as its role in the greater Rutgers community and beyond?

A: I see it as leadership. The School of Arts and Sciences now speaks as the central core of liberal arts at Rutgers, and is building relationships with law, business, and engineering as well as other schools that are beneficial to students in both settings and will lead to innovation in teaching and research. We are also expanding our impact in the world by developing partnerships with Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences and organizations in the public and private sectors.

The School of Arts and Sciences is a public trust that can contribute to the world in



Dean March with junior Maria Gomez and seniors Kathryn Ulett and Matthew Habel, three of the 955 Arts and Sciences students who benefited in 2016-2017 from the generosity of our alumni and friends who created and support scholarships for academic excellence and emergency need.

many ways, from research and service projects to the education of deeply engaged, intellectually curious citizens. We see our leadership as an obligation to work for the greater good—at Rutgers, and in the world.

Q: What's next for the School of Arts and Sciences?

A: We continue on our path of tradition, innovation, and access, but now we're turning outward and telling the world who we are. We developed our strategic plan *Excellence, Opportunity, Leadership* which set forth our mission, values, and priorities.

We are also using the scale and complexity of our school to our advantage. There's a lot of exciting developments from new facilities like the chemistry and College Avenue academic buildings to new programs in big data, genetic counseling, and public history. Our new career explorations initiative connects students to alumni who help them reflect and think through key life questions to determine their future.

So essentially we are embracing our history and looking forward. I think we are in a very good place right now. The goal of the school has always been to be the best liberal arts institution in the nation. I would express that goal in terms of our alumni: There are 200,000 Rutgers liberal arts alumni, the vast majority of whom attended the historic colleges. We at Arts and Sciences want to be the focal point of their pride in Rutgers so that when they look at SAS, they see the strengths, values, and commitment of their own alma maters.

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Inside a Rutgers Lab, a Student Learns About Her Illness and Finds Her Calling

Investigating how abnormal proteins lead to disease

Alliya Kemraj was in high school when doctors diagnosed her with a rare genetic disorder. At Rutgers, she was surprised—and thrilled—to find a research lab that explores the science associated with her illness, Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (EDS), a disease that affects the body's connective tissue.

She soon began working in the lab.

"I was looking for research opportunities that would be a good fit," says the senior from Roselle, New Jersey. "Then I found this lab, and I was completely floored."

Kemraj is an undergraduate research assistant in a lab run by Jean Baum, a professor in the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology in the School of Arts and Sciences. Baum studies the interactions of proteins in the body and their role in Parkinson's disease and other types of illnesses, including EDS, and a disease that affects patients receiving long-term dialysis treatment.

"Most people, understandably, don't spend a lot of time thinking about the interactions between infinitesimal protein molecules in the body," Baum says.

(continued inside)

Alliya Kemraj is an undergraduate research assistant in a lab run by Professor Jean Baum. Kemraj has a rare genetic disorder. Her work in the Baum lab studying protein interactions is giving her the opportunity to study her own illness.

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