

# MAGAZINE

## RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

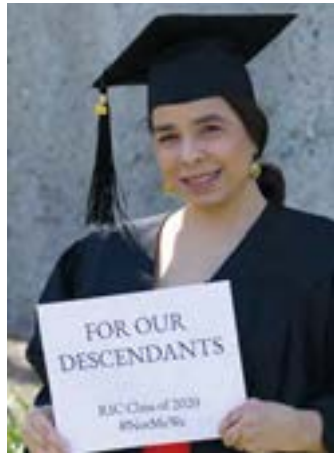
SUMMER 2020  
VOL. 1 | NO. 1

MEETING CHALLENGE  
WITH OPPORTUNITY





# VIRTUAL CELEBRATION

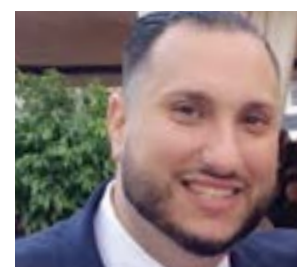




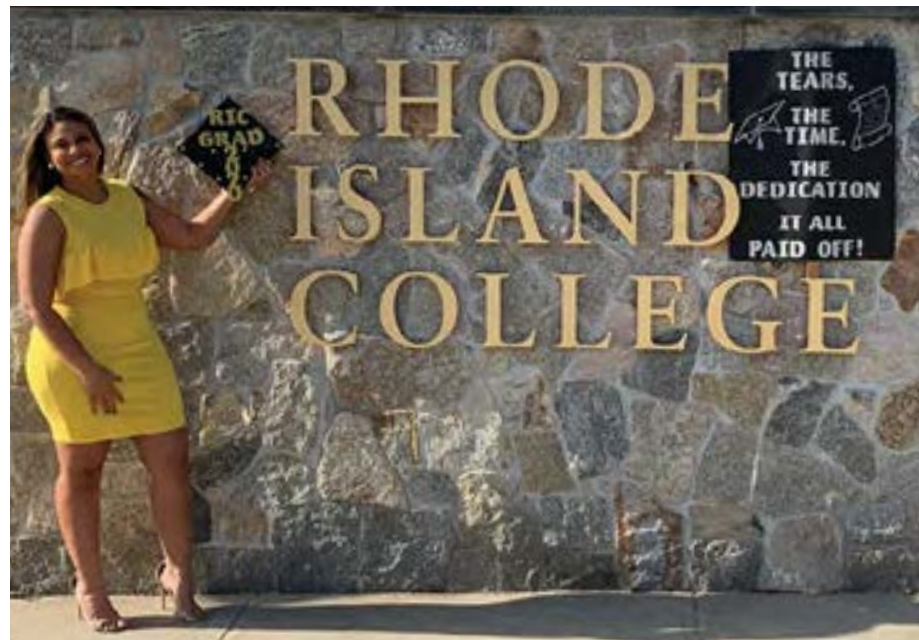


On Saturday, May 16, the graduates of the Class of 2020 celebrated a virtual commencement, featuring video messages from Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo, President Frank D. Sánchez, Class of 2020 President Jeni Melo, the Rhode Island College Alumni Association and the Golden Anniversary Class of 1970. School presentations featured photos submitted by more than 500 graduating students, some of which appear here. View them all [ric.edu/2020-virtual-celebration](http://ric.edu/2020-virtual-celebration)











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Our RIC community is diverse—made up of students, faculty, staff, alumni and parents. Let’s hear *all* your voices. Tell us what you think of the stories. Let us know the topics you want to read about. Submit life’s milestones for the Class Notes section by emailing [alumni@ric.edu](mailto:alumni@ric.edu).

*Rhode Island College Magazine is published two times a year and produced by the Office of Marketing and Communications in cooperation with the Division of College Advancement and External Relations.*



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Find out what your classmates are up to and submit news for the next issue via email: [alumni@ric.edu](mailto:alumni@ric.edu)

## MASTHEAD

**ART DIRECTOR,  
EDITOR IN CHIEF**  
Chad Minnich

**EDITOR**  
John Taraborelli

**DESIGN**  
Ashley Mercado

**PHOTOGRAPHY**  
Gene St. Pierre  
Paul Connors

**CONTRIBUTORS**  
Suzy Alba  
Gita Brown  
Jhon Cardona  
Jenna Cipriano  
Kimberly Conway Dumpson  
Grace Lentini  
Marcia Selinger  
Emily Synan  
John Taraborelli  
Jeff Theodore  
Caylen Williams

## COVER IMAGE

The cover photo was taken by Paul Connors in the RIC Campus Garden on April 29, before Governor Raimondo's executive order mandating the use of cloth face coverings went into effect on May 8. We chose it for the cover because it represents so much about our college community's experiences over the past few months: the difficult, often confusing adjustment to "new norms" such as social distancing and covering our faces in public; the quiet stillness of a college campus without most of its students, faculty and staff; the disruption to the spring semester, which is normally a time of robust activity and celebration on campus. But we also chose it because it strikes a note of hope: the promise of renewal, the persistence of #RICSpirit, and the unwavering belief that we can grow and flourish even in times of turmoil. The student in the mask is Jeni Melo, President of the Class of 2020. A little more than two weeks after this photo was taken, she delivered a video address to her classmates during the first (and, we hope, final) "virtual commencement" in the college's 166-year history.



# AN ANCHOR IN THE COMMUNITY



Dear Reader,

This first edition of the *Rhode Island College Magazine* embodies our #RICSpirit and the true character of our beloved college. It builds upon the foundation of prior alumni magazines by broadening our reach and telling stories that showcase the impact of our college community as we live our mission.

As Rhode Island's first institution of public higher education, we have weathered many storms since 1854. Through the Civil War, the Great Depression, the Vietnam War, 9/11, the financial

crash of 2008 and beyond, this college has remained a steadfast anchor for the community. We know that in the midst of crisis and uncertainty, there is often opportunity to be realized. These are the times to take bold action, affirm our mission and make a greater impact.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an example of this. We are teaching and learning remotely, driven by the innovation of our faculty and the resilience of our students. Our frontline staff are keeping critical campus operations going while other staff are working remotely to ensure the success of our mission. Our students and alumni are serving on the front lines as nurses, social workers, first responders and educators. In support of the statewide response, even our main campus in Providence and our Workforce Development Hub in Central Falls are supporting the state's response and serving as COVID-19 testing sites.

For Rhode Island College and our community of students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends, this crisis has highlighted three of our college's strengths: our perseverance, our ability to adapt, and our value to Rhode Island. We will not let the challenges of the moment stop us from fulfilling our mission, because it is not going to stop our students in achieving their goals. Instead, we will leverage our expertise to prepare and educate the workforce that will rebuild our economy and lead our state. Indeed, the success of the state and region depends on it.

Through it all, we will continue to offer high-quality academic programs at the bachelors, masters and doctoral levels. Whether our classes are in-person, online or hybrid, we will deliver the same high-value education and personalized experience that has made us one of the best postsecondary education values in the Northeast.

We will persist, because it is who we are – and have been for 166 years.

Yours in education,

Frank D. Sánchez  
President  
Rhode Island College

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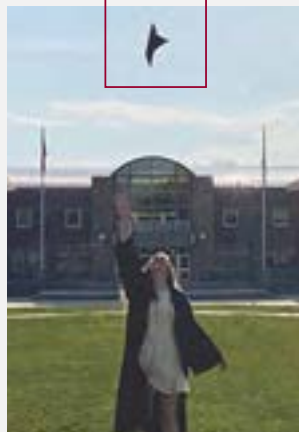
*Student Success*





Today is #NationalNursesDay and we want to thank all the brave women and men who serve on the frontlines of our #healthcare system every single day (not just during a pandemic). Here is a #waybackwednesday look at the very first graduating class of the RIC School of Nursing, which celebrates its #50th anniversary this year.

#ThankYouNurses #RICnews #experienceRIC #RICspirit #rhodeislandcollege #nationalnursesweek #throwbackthursday #1970 #bandwphotography #archive #backintheday #healthcareworkers #healthcareheroes #schoolofnursing



You did it! Congrats to all who graduated in our #virtualcommencement on Saturday! Even though we could not celebrate in person, the #classof2020 did an incredible job of showcasing their #RICspirit from anywhere and everywhere.

#RICnews #experienceRIC #RICGrad2020 #commencement #collegegraduation #commencement2020 #schoolspirit

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Let's have a salute to the brave, hardworking staff who are keeping campus running even while most of us are away from it! Thank you to the folks in dining services, housekeeping, maintenance, groundskeeping, facilities, and the library. We see you and we're so grateful for your service to our campus community! #RICnews #experienceRIC #RICspirit #frontlineworkers #frontlineheroes #everydayheroes #campus #college #essentialworkers



We don't mean to brag, but this photo contains 4 @Milken Award-winning @RICAlumni: @mich12420 '06, M.Ed. '14, Milken '18; Dr. Michael Barnes '87, M.Ed. '89, Milken '97; @YanaizaGallant '01, M.Ed. '11, Milken '12; and the latest addition, @jent3112 '06, Milken '20!

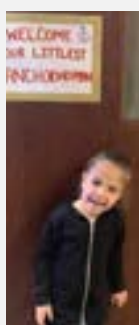


Two generations of #RICspirit from incoming #musicmajor Domenic Fusco & his dad! Are you coming to RIC in the fall? Share your photos with us using the hash tag #RICcepted2020! And be sure to tag and follow @ricadmissions too for the chance to enter their contest.

#newanchors #rhodeislandcollege #classof2024 #incomingfreshmen #newstudents #fall2020



The RIC Dance Company is home sitting & laying around just like everyone else ... well, not quite like everyone else!



Paige Alston might not be the biggest player on the court (just 3'3"), but she stands tall as an inspiration for @go\_anchorwbb! At just five years old she has undergone more than 20 surgeries. But that doesn't stop her from loving #basketball. @coachjcos, the anchorwomen & @goteamimpact have made her an honorary member of the team. She even signed a letter of intent yesterday! "It's just bigger than basketball at this point," Anchorwoman @macidorantes told @abcwline. "I think it's a big deal for her to be able to see that she's not alone and that there's people standing behind her at all times." The entire @goanchormen community is behind you, Paige!

#RICathletics #anchorstrong #GoPaige #teamimpact #inspiration #womensbasketball #littleanchor #littleastconference

“

What are the proficiencies & skill sets for the next generation of highly effective teachers? We launched a brand new curriculum this year where 100% of our grads will be endorsed in special education or ELL." -Pres. @FrankDSanchez

#RICnews #rhodemaplive @DanMcGowan @BostonGlobe



Reba Mitchell '14 is a #rockmusician, #emcee, salon #stylist, voiceover artist, audiobook narrator, vocal coach and founding board member of @girlsrockri, a nonprofit that helps girls, women, trans and nonbinary folks empower themselves through music. She enrolled at RIC intending to be a music teacher, but eventually a #gender and #womensstudies class with Prof. Leslie Schuster changed Reba's trajectory. "For the first time, I didn't feel gaslighted by society," she says.



# RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE TODAY

Members of the RIC community make a direct impact on and off campus

## **Nursing Students Develop Connections Across Generations**

In the fall, the School of Nursing piloted an intergenerational service-learning course that placed students at Charlesgate Park West senior living facility in Providence. Hilda Mial, 84, and Eileen MacCathy, 71, were able to connect with eight students, including Maria Lako, a senior, and Rosilene DeOliveira, a sophomore, through weekly visits. "She's funny and pretty cool," Lako says of Mial, a great-grandmother. "I love the way she carries herself. She's kind of like a grandmother to me." RIC Professor of Nursing Sharon Galloway is working toward making the course a fixture of the college's general education curriculum, hoping to attract students of all majors.



Maria Lako (right) shares a laugh with Hilda Mial at Charlesgate Park West.



## **Bringing Math to Under-represented Groups**

Salam Turki, a native of Lebanon and assistant professor of mathematics, remembers her relatives questioning why she, a woman, would go into math. But Turki believes women and people of color will thrive in STEM fields, if they're given the opportunity. That's why she, along with two of her colleagues and math student Jamie Dobson, launched an afterschool program in the fall at Nathanael Greene Middle School to encourage the pursuit of mathematics among groups that are historically underrepresented in the field. "If everyone had the same opportunity and resources, they would thrive," Turki says. "We hope to be that extra resource for these children."

Professor Turki and students have fun with math at new afterschool program.



## Professor Lauded by International Social Work Organization



School of Social Work Professor Frederic Reamer received the inaugural Contributor Award from the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB). Reamer, a professor in the graduate social work program since 1983, was chosen for the honor because of his long-standing voluntary partnership with ASWB and his leadership in the study of professional ethics.

## School Chaplain Advocates Equal Rights for Everyone



The Rev. Dante Tavolaro '11, who received the 2019 Young Alumni Award, serves as Rhode Island College chaplain and assistant rector of St. Luke's Episcopal Church

About 1.4 million Americans identify as trans, according to a 2016 study by the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law, the most recent demographics available regarding the group. Rhode Island College Chaplain the Rev. Dante Tavolaro '11 counts himself among that number. As a member of the Unity Center team, he tries to create a safe and welcoming atmosphere for those still struggling with acceptance from mainstream society, including trans students. "Equal rights for the trans community should be important for all Americans because everybody deserves the right to feel safe when they leave their homes," Tavolaro says.



Behind Rhode Island College Sustainability Coordinator James Murphy are the newly installed solar panels on the Donovan Dining Center roof.

## RIC Sustained by Energy from First Solar Panel Array

A 110 kW solar panel array atop the Donovan Dining Center and Student Union is one of Rhode Island College's latest investments in renewable energy. James Murphy, RIC's sustainability coordinator, said the array will produce approximately \$25,000 in electricity annually. It will also reduce the college's carbon footprint by 1,358 metric tons of carbon dioxide annually, the equivalent of erasing carbon emissions from 163 homes or taking 288 cars off the road. "This initiative shows our students that we're investing in sustainable energy, looking at our carbon footprint and trying to do better," says Murphy. Our investment in saving energy and preserving the environment at Rhode Island College through generating clean, renewable energy is a priority," added RIC President Frank D. Sánchez.





## Faculty Member Tapped by U.S. Department of Education

Associate Professor Julie Richardson M.A. '10, C.A.G.S. '16, school psychologist at the Henry Barnard School, was awarded a School Ambassador Fellowship by the U.S. Department of Education in 2018-2019 and now an extended fellowship spanning 2019-2020. Richardson is the first school psychologist ever selected for this prestigious fellowship.

RIC Associate Professor Julie Richardson meets with the Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education Frank Brogan.

## Training the Next Generation in the Practice of Nonviolence

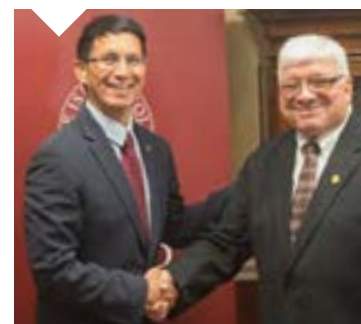


Two English teachers and RIC alumni – Aimee Marsland Ryan '10 and her husband Jason Lorenz Ryan '09 – have made North Providence High School the first in Rhode Island to integrate Kingian Nonviolence, a conflict-resolution philosophy based on the work of Martin Luther King Jr., into the curriculum. Students who take this training form bonds of friendship with students they never would have otherwise. "We find that assumptions and misinformation are often the source of conflict," Aimee says. "One of the first things we get our students to do is humanize the other person. When you can get two people to remember that they have shared emotions and experiences, it's a lot easier to de-escalate a conflict."



Aimee (top) and Jason Ryan (left) would like to see Kingian Nonviolence training in every elementary, secondary and higher education institution.

## RIC Foundation Introduces New Scholarship



The Moran-Ventre Charitable Foundation, which supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, has appointed the RIC Foundation to manage its Ben Moran Endowed Scholarship. Moran-Ventre is contributing a \$50,000 gift toward the scholarship, which will start in academic year 2020-21 and provide \$2,000 annually to RIC students pursuing degrees in special education.



## Alumni in Cyberspace

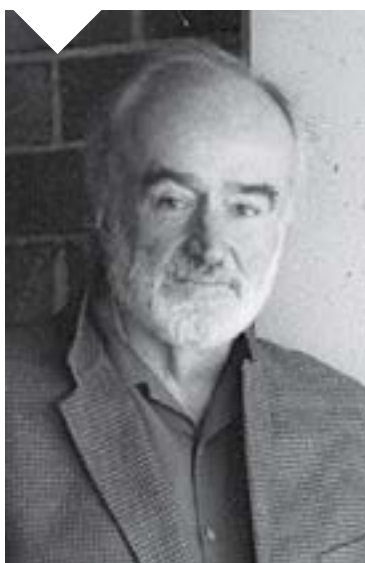
Two alumni – Roberta Powell '09 and Maureen Taylor '78, M.A. '95, C.G.S. '17 – are working to create web-based resources that they hope will make medical data and local history, respectively, more accessible. Powell, who returned to school to study nursing after a career in finance, developed an app called Q2Q (Quantitative to Qualitative Health), which translates complex medical information into easy-to-understand layperson's terms and images so patients can better understand their own health. Meanwhile, Taylor, a historian and genealogist dubbed the "nation's foremost historical photo detective" by the Wall Street Journal, launched OldPVD.com, an interactive website on which visitors can explore Providence's architectural history.



TOP: Roberta Powell '09, former nurse educator and atypical app inventor.

LEFT: OldPVD.com, an interactive website created by Maureen Taylor '78, M.A. '95, C.G.S. '17

## McLarty's Legacy Lives On



One of RIC's most celebrated alumni, actor, author and audio book narrator Ron McLarty '69 passed away in February at 72. Fortunately, his legacy lives on through the Adams Library. In 2017 he donated much of his work to the archives, including original manuscripts, plays, poems, audiobook narrations, acting clips and more.

## Student Athletes Earn Honors



FROM LEFT: Nicole Grammas '20 and Eleni Grammas '20

RIC placed 126 student-athletes on the Little East Conference 2019 Fall Academic Honor Roll. To be named on the Honor Roll, a student-athlete must earn a semester GPA of 3.0 or better and have been an active member of the team at the conclusion of their fall semester season.

## Bob Walsh Inducted into Little East Conference Hall of Fame



Former Men's Head Basketball Coach Bob Walsh (center) with Director of Athletics Don Tencher (left) and Associate Commissioner of the Little East Conference Darryl Konicki

Former men's basketball head coach Bob Walsh is officially in the Little East Conference Hall of Fame. Walsh, who was inducted in a pre-game ceremony in January where he addressed the crowd, was joined by his family and later celebrated the event with RIC men's basketball alumni.









# FROM THE SHORES OF LISBON TO NARRAGANSETT BAY

Early experiences with nature shaped  
marine biologist Anabela Maia in  
profound ways

BY GRACE LENTINI

PHOTOS BY GENE ST. PIERRE

By the time Anabela Maia was 16, she was SCUBA certified and began sailing. By the time she was applying to colleges, she wanted to study sharks as a marine biologist and become a professor. Through her hard work and determination, she would eventually become an assistant professor at Rhode Island College and focus her research in the marine environment.

Maia's childhood was filled with moments in the natural world: Splashing along the shores of Lisbon, learning about the ecosystem on a head of cabbage at her grandparents farm in the north of Portugal, gazing at the bear enclosure at the Lisbon Zoo from her bedroom window. There were always animals in her grade school classroom. Gerbils, bunnies and caterpillars, as you would expect. Not so expected were the goats and chickens. The class would often take

walks in the neighboring Monsanto Forest Park (not related to the chemical company), also known as the green lung of Portugal. Its 1,000 hectares make it one of the largest urban forests in all of Europe. It's there that students would collect moss, leaves and pinecones.

She was accepted into the University of Lisbon's marine biology program. During her time there, she had numerous opportunities to intern with different professors. "I helped analyze data on cricket hearing, measure fish from biodiversity surveys and count mussels on the rocky shore," she explains. Not only did she graduate in the 100th percentile, her honor's thesis covered the foraging ecology and reproduction of the shortfin mako shark off the southwest coast of Portugal. She was well on her way to the career that she had always dreamed of.





For her Ph.D., she jumped the pond and found herself at the University of Rhode Island. Her research focused on the functional morphology of shark dorsal fins. After receiving her doctorate she researched seahorse tail prehension and suction flow modeling in Belgium, the effects of turbulence on swimming fish in Boston and the study of fish biomechanics in Illinois. When an opportunity to return to the coast presented itself, she jumped on it.

Now happily situated in her lab at RIC, she continues her research. But being within driving distance of the ocean wasn't the only draw. "I think what mainly drew me to RIC is the impact that we can have on students who might not have had everything handed to them," she says. "Being close to the ocean - but at the same time in a city setting - helps recruit students that are interested in fish biology and marine conservation."

This translates to having a pool of students eager to get experience in her lab. "I am always impressed by the commitment of the students in my lab and how excited they are by research," she explains. "They all have different strengths and personalities, which, in my opinion, is what makes the lab so special."

One point she continually stresses to her students is the importance of being able to explain the applications of their research. While fundamental research is important, the application of research is key to explaining to the public why tax dollars should be invested. Because of that, Maia's research covers three applied facets: conservation, bioinspiration and neuromuscular control.

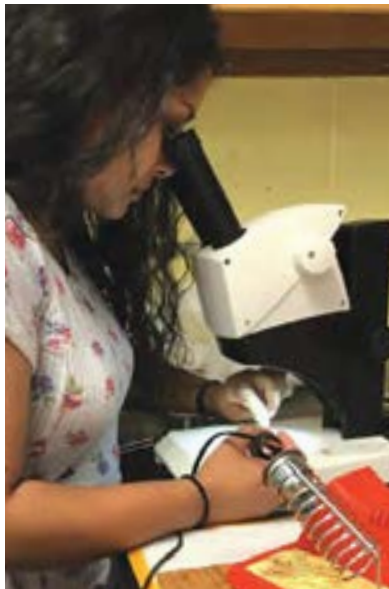
Her research as it pertains to conservation focuses on a few things. First, how fish communities in Narragansett Bay are affected by medium- and long-term temperature changes. Second, how fish movement and distribution in the bay are affected by changes in turbulence. Third, how native species are affected by humans.

With bioinspiration, Maia is interested in what can be learned from fish to make better underwater vehicles. Some of the discoveries can also be applied to cars, airplanes or even appliances. Fans, for example.

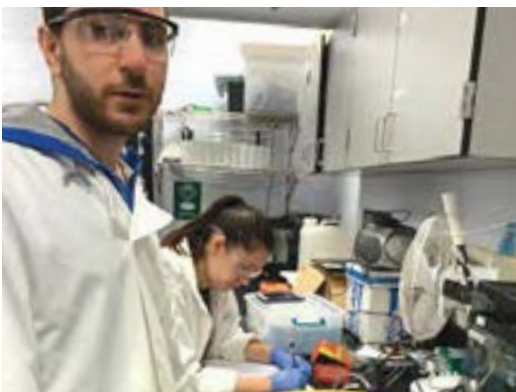
In terms of neuromuscular control, she is interested in what we can learn from fish fins, their muscles and their nerves that can be applied to improve better prosthetics. "I think, as scientists, we want to be able to inform policy and make an impact in our society," she says.

As for her impact on students, Maia has watched as some have gone on to pursue degrees in higher education or become successful in the workforce. Former students of hers have been accepted to Duke University and the University of Washington to pursue graduate degrees in marine affairs. Others are now physician assistants, optometrists, research assistants and occupational therapists.

She's not only devoted to her research but to her students. And she still lights up when talking about either. She loves the interaction with her students. It's incredible, she says, to see "the aha moment reflected on their faces when they get an experiment to work for the first time or when they make a significant discovery." 📌



Students conduct research in Asst. Prof. Anabela Maia's lab in Fogarty Life Science before it was shuttered due to the COVID-19 crisis.





BY JHON CARDONA

# THE ERA OF VIRTUAL LABS IS HERE

From Sea to Screen  
with Professor Maia

"The virtual lab is not very glamorous," says Anabela Maia, assistant professor of biology at Rhode Island College. "We meet over Blackboard Collaborate, share our screens to explain the analysis, check on weekly progress and discuss papers."

Research in Maia's lab, located in Fogarty Life Science, has focused on fish biomechanics since the summer of 2018. Maia's team uses functional morphology to learn about fish movement as well as the impact of habitat changes. The team's lab studies are complemented with fieldwork to bridge the gap between biomechanics and ecology.

Before RIC migrated to remote classes, Maia worked in her lab with seven undergraduate students (one pre-nursing and six biology students) and 16 specimens (14 bass, one scup and one bluegill).

After March 23, the specimens were released back to Narraganset Bay and Lincoln Woods. "We had to release them because it would be very hard to take care of them when everyone is staying at home," she says.

Although the shift to teaching remotely was abrupt, Maia strives to keep her classes as close to normal as possible with the same routine. She synchronizes with students during lecture time, uses an open lab "room" (a virtual option that allows students to meet and talk more

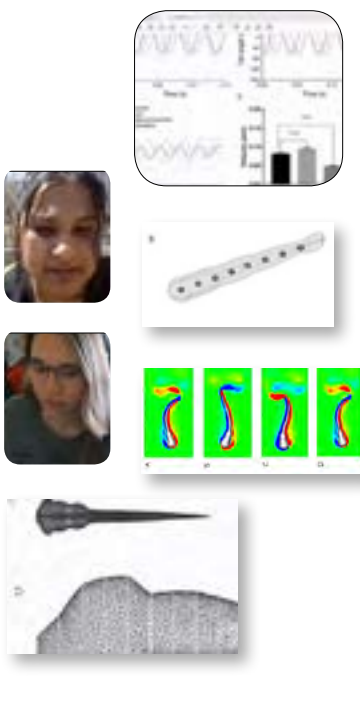
privately online) and enables students to access the actual lab's data to conduct analyses.

When the decision to close Maia's lab in Fogarty was made, she had enough time to grab data and set up computers that the students could access remotely.

"We have asynchronous labs that I prepare for the whole week so they are available for the students," Maia explains. "Student work in these labs is recorded at Blackboard Collaborate as evidence of student participation. One of the students studies the fins and how the fish moves; so now the student is using video previously captured at the lab and analyzing it."

Now that everyone has settled into working remotely, Maia is using her lab time to explain new analyses and talk to students about their manuscripts, helping them to organize their data.

"So far, the students feel excited about their research and think that this is a good opportunity to get the data analyzed and submit their papers by the summer to actually have a chance to get into graduate school."



Screenshots from Professor Maia's virtual lab class, late March 2020

Since the work in Maia's lab is focused on understanding fish movement and habitat, she notes how the isolation brought about by COVID-19 has a great impact on the water in places like Narraganset Bay, changing pollution levels. "Pollution has a strong impact on fish populations, female fish reproduction and water quality, even for human consumption," she explains.

The situation we are living in now "is a great opportunity for us to understand what we could do with better regulations of pollution," she says.

Maia believes that although the pandemic has created difficulties for us, this moment in history may actually be good for the environment. "I hope it's eye opening for people to realize that there are measures we can take to help our planet that wouldn't involve too much effort if we commit to it."

"If we can reverse climate change, especially in Narraganset Bay, we can bring back the species that were here before, which could be more economically profitable for fishermen and the fishing economy," she concludes.

# NEW SCHOOL

BY JOHN TARABORELLI

With a retooled curriculum and new leadership, the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development is reinventing itself

Typically we think of spring as the season of new beginnings, but this past fall semester marked the start of something big at the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development (FSEHD). After more than two years of development, the school deployed a new curriculum informed by best practices and innovations from around the country, putting it at the cutting edge of teacher preparation. At the same time, Jeannine Dingus-Eason arrived from St. John Fisher College in Rochester, New York to become FSEHD's new dean, after an extensive nationwide search.

Of course, when Dingus-Eason accepted the job she had no way of knowing that her arrival would happen concurrently with the release of the devastating Johns Hopkins report on Providence Schools and the subsequent state takeover of that district, which thrust the issue of teacher education to the forefront of local news and conversation. Suddenly, it felt like the changes at FSEHD were a big moment not just for Rhode Island College, but for the entire state.

"The creation and implementation of Feinstein's conceptual framework was one of my goals in deciding to come to RIC," Dingus-Eason says. Having served as chair of the Executive Leadership Ed.D. program at Fisher, she is no stranger to the kinds of big ideas needed to move education forward. "I came from an institution where the conceptual framework served as a guiding force across the school's various programs. I also ran my own consulting firm and took myself through similar exercises. Now, I am able to extend those skills to a larger organization."











"Genius is not  
limited  
by zip code."

— Jeannine Dingus-Eason,  
Dean of the Feinstein School  
of Education and Human  
Development

The innovations afoot at FSEHD are big, structural and forward-thinking. One is an emphasis on getting teacher candidates out into the field more frequently and earlier – as early as their first semester, in fact. Another is an emphasis on developing a talent pipeline for educators of color, something that was specifically cited as an urgent need for Providence Schools in the Johns Hopkins report. Also aligned with the state's needs, the curriculum is designed so that graduates come out certified for either special education or English language learners, two specializations that are in short supply statewide.

Brianna Pagano is one of last fall's incoming freshmen, the first class to experience the new curriculum and to benefit from the new approach to field experience, which encompasses four types of placements: observation, participation, practicum and student teaching. In her first semester, Pagano had the opportunity to do observation at two elementary schools, a middle school and high school. She credits the experience with changing her direction early in her education. "It really opened my eyes to what grade level I want to teach," she explains. "I thought I wanted to teach high school, but I realized that I don't. I want to teach younger kids because they absorb so much more information."

Summer Brito also found her first semester eye-opening, particularly the curriculum's focus on issues of social justice and diversity. Brito came to FSEHD through the Teacher Academy at Mt. Pleasant High School, an existing program that Dingus-Eason is leaning on as part of the pipeline for recruiting teachers of color. Brito cites FNED 246: Schooling for Social Justice course as an important early experience for her. "This class enables you to go beyond what and who you want to be as a teacher and actually allows you to reflect upon deeper issues in society," she says. "By focusing on issues like privilege and prejudice, race, ableism, multiculturalism and other more profound topics you are able to get out of your comfort zone. This course really emphasizes that not all students are given the same amount of resources."

Dingus-Eason is equally bullish on the importance of these issues. For example, all incoming students will receive a special diversity reader to guide them for all four years of the program. She believes it will "make them more aware and socially conscious and adept at teaching a variety of kids."

This is especially important as the program that educates more teachers than any institution in the state prepares to meet the needs of Rhode Island's increasingly diverse classrooms.





Proposed architectural rendering of redesigned, renovated Horace Mann Hall.

"Genius is not limited by zip code," Dingus-Eason is fond of saying in response to the vast geographic disparities in achievement across the state's school districts and even across schools within the same district.

It's a message that has clearly been imparted to new students like Brito. "If we aspire to be educators, we should strive to be all the more understanding that our future students are more than just their social status, more than just their skin color, more than just their disability," she declares. "They are significant in every way and that they, too, deserve a better education."

With one academic year under her belt, Dingus-Eason can look towards a bright future for FSEHD. The long overdue redesign and renovation of Horace Mann Hall, which voters funded in November 2018, is on the horizon and, as this goes to press, students and teachers alike are adapting to the new opportunities and challenges of distance learning made necessary by the COVID-19 crisis. But she is ready to do the work.

"I am excited about all of these initiatives," she says. "I am good about identifying needs, using data to do so, gathering the right people to achieve the goal and working towards accomplishing the goal. There is much work to be done internally within the Feinstein School and, most certainly, externally, but 2020 is a transformational time." 📍

"If we aspire to be educators, we should strive to be all the more understanding that our future students are more than just their social status, more than just their skin color, more than just their disability. They are significant in every way and that they, too, deserve a better education"

— Summer Brito, freshman, secondary education major, Feinstein School of Education and Human Development





# IMMERSED IN LANGUAGE

Teacher education programs and alumni respond to the bilingual needs in schools

BY JHON CARDONA AND JEFF THEODORE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHAD MINNICH

“Every child deserves the opportunity to live up to their full potential,” said Congressman James Langevin ‘90 in 2018. “It is clear, however, that Rhode Island’s English language learners are facing significant barriers exacerbated by the fact that our schools lack the resources, particularly teachers, needed to keep pace with this growing population.”

According to Langevin, who in 2019 introduced federal legislation that would forgive more than \$17,000 worth of student loans for ELL certified teachers, nearly 10 percent of all students statewide and roughly 30 percent of students in the Providence Public School Department (PPSD), the state’s largest and most diverse district, require ELL instruction. In short, the need for more teachers to instruct English language learners (ELLs) has never been greater and will continue to increase.

At the same time, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) posited in its 2020 strategic plan that expanding student access to dual language and world language instruction creates more cultural, educational, economic, cognitive and sociocultural advantages. “The diversity of Rhode Island is an asset that will help us prepare our graduates for success in a local and global society,” the plan said.

Rhode Island College, both through its current educational programs and expansive alumni network throughout the state, is helping the state address both types of language learning needs. The new curriculum launched at the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development (FSEHD) in fall 2019 will send every graduate out into the

Michelle Carvajal '18 in her classroom at Nathanael Greene Elementary School, the only school in Pawtucket currently implementing a dual language program.



Carvajal instructs in two languages, English and Spanish, creating more cultural, educational, economic, cognitive and socio-cultural advantages.

world endorsed for either special education or ELL, and RIC signed onto a partnership with RIDE and PPSD to ramp up ELL certifications among current teachers in Providence schools.

Yet, even as FSEHD works to prepare more teacher candidates for multi-lingual classrooms, its alumni are already out in the field demonstrating the value ELL-certified teachers bring to their students.

"We're ESL students but highly successful in full immersion science classes, thanks to Ms. Hernandez," says Albert Rojas, a Woonsocket High School senior who has taken ELL-integrated science courses taught by Brigette Hernandez '12, M.Ed '18. "When she taught us in our second language, she helped in multiple ways, simplifying words for us, using photos to explain. She took the extra time."

Hernandez, who earned her master's degree in teaching English as a second language (TESL), is a Providence native and the daughter of Dominican immigrants. Although she was raised bicultural and bilingual (speaking both Spanish and English), she identifies with the needs of English language learners.

"I know what it's like for students from immigrant families who have to learn to navigate the school system and pursue a college degree with little support from home because of their language

barrier and socioeconomic status," Hernandez says. "I understand what is important right now for students' overall education and social-emotional state, and I remind them that the more difficult path is not an impossible one. My goal is to motivate all my students to live up to their full potential."

Meanwhile in Pawtucket, FSEHD grads Yury Cardona '18 and Michelle Carvajal '18 shape their students' early educational experiences through two languages at Nathanael Greene Elementary School - the only school in Pawtucket currently implementing a dual language program. The dual language English teacher is ELL-certified and the dual language Spanish teacher has a bilingual certification.

The difference between ELL and dual language instruction is nuanced, but important. ELL programs use a bilingual approach to help students who are not English speakers learn the language. Dual language programs provide instruction in both English and a partner language - most commonly Spanish - to a classroom that may contain a mix of both ELL students and native English-speaking students who are trying to learn a second language.

"[Our] program is implemented in such a way that students are able to make meaning of the world they live in, creating cross-cultural competence





TOP: Woonsocket High School science teacher Brigette Hernandez '12, M.Ed '18.

MIDDLE: Nathanael Greene Elementary School fourth grade teacher Yury Cardona '18.

BOTTOM: (left) students in Cardona's fourth-grade class; (right) students in Hernandez's anatomy class.

and awareness," says Carvajal. "By having an ESL-certified teacher and a bilingual-certified Spanish teacher, students receive grade-level content that helps them make real-life connections... We see our students developing proficiency in both languages through relevant material while improving communication skills, gaining confidence in their speaking abilities and fostering relationships with their classroom peers and educators."

The value of both ELL and dual language programs in Rhode Island schools will only continue to increase alongside the state's diversity. "Dual language programs help students learn all content areas in two languages to develop bilingualism and bi-literacy in all students," according to Sarah Hesson, director of FSEHD's Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) program. "Research consistently shows that students learning in dual language programs outperform even their monolingual English-speaking peers on English language standardized tests... Dual language/bilingual programs are successful and critically important for bilingual students and communities."

Back in Woonsocket, Rojas, who aspires to be an anesthesiologist, is more succinct: "Watching Ms. Hernandez has motivated me," he says. "Because she is successful, I want to be successful, too." 📌

# DELIVERING 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SKILLS

With the future of job training in mind, RIC opens its Workforce Development Hub in Central Falls



BY JHON CARDONA

Eight years ago, when James Diosa, mayor of Central Falls, ran for office to lead the city with the largest percentage of Latinos in Rhode Island, he couldn't have imagined partnering with Rhode Island College to develop the city's, and state's, human resources.

However, on January 29, Mayor Diosa and Rhode Island College President Frank D. Sánchez stood side by side at the opening ceremony of the college's Workforce Development Hub, located on Dexter Street in Central Falls.

The Hub will serve as a job training and continuing education institute for the residents of Central Falls and the Blackstone Valley. Courses offered include certificates in accounting, medical assistance training, certificate of undergraduate studies in social and humanitarian services assistance, three levels of intensive English as a second language (ESL) programs and certified behavioral health training programs, such as training for community health workers, leadership development for health professionals and Microsoft Office. Staff at the Hub also assist in

résumé development, motivating students to become bilingual, and job search/workforce navigation for individuals recently arrived in the country.

"It is necessary to reinvent the workforce, and for the community to have the opportunity to educate themselves in other types of work settings, thus giving them the opportunity to become middle-class residents, gain more money and contribute better to their families," said Diosa.

In fact, one of the most important reasons why Diosa advocated for partnering on the project with Rhode Island College was because "higher education institutions help create confidence in the community, which engages them to have more participation. Luckily, I found a great partner in President Sánchez," he said.

From the college's perspective, the Hub "is an opportunity to expand access and really reach out, very intentionally, to a multilingual community throughout the state," remarked Sánchez. "Once the Pawtucket/Central Falls rail station is in place,



Students in one of the classrooms at the RIC Workforce Development Hub, which turned a former Dexter Credit Union branch in Central Falls into a center of learning.



it will provide tremendous access to training and education for more Rhode Islanders."

Diossa is very proud of the support Central Falls received to make this project real. "The most beautiful thing about this project is that it incorporates many of the organizations that are already working to help people with lower income or who do not speak the language," Diossa said. "The agreement with RIC will help raise the stratum of citizens."

Committed to expanding college partnerships and access to opportunity through education, Sánchez similarly echoed gratitude toward the community. "Rarely do we see this kind of cross-sector collaboration around a common vision to deliver such a compelling result," he said. "It is with deep gratitude that I thank all our government, business, health care, education and community leaders that made the Hub possible."

"Let's make sure that every Rhode Islander has a shot at participating in the prosperity that our state is now experiencing," said Secretary of Commerce Stephan Pryor. "It is impossible to understate the importance of this center." 📍

LEFT: Reception area at the Hub.

RIGHT: Central Falls Mayor James Diossa with RIC President Frank D. Sánchez at the Hub's ribbon-cutting ceremony.

PHOTOS BY  
GENE ST. PIERRE



The Hub enables Rhode Island College to expand its successful workforce development and continuing education programs in an underserved urban setting.



“

Rather than just assume that all my future goals will simply fall into place, I want to plan for what is in my control. Outside interference is real, and it comes out of nowhere.

– Zacary Abreu '20





# CLASS OF 2020, QUARANTINED

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BY JENNA CIPRIANO '20 // PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL CONNORS

Rapidly running through the country, the COVID-19 pandemic uprooted students from their college careers, plunging them into remote learning. For some, the transition to remote education was easy. It was school from home. What's the harm in that? But for some Rhode Island College seniors, the experience was an abrupt ending to their final year. I have interviewed some who chose to share their experiences with the rest of the Rhode Island College community.

For Zacary Abreu, the transition to remote learning was a smooth one. "I really just went to school for classes and then came right back home," he says. "Every day was a 'get in, get out' scenario, and I didn't really want to stick around any longer than I needed to." He experienced the same course load, but "some professors kept the same syllabus under a now shorter time frame." Though he found the workload was ultimately maintainable, Zac experienced some frustration while attempting to complete his assignments for the remainder of the semester. In a way, it was a good thing he has insomnia.

However Abigail Silva experienced a sense of confusion during the time of transition from in-person lectures to online Zoom meetings. "We just left for spring break and never returned back to campus," she explains.

"My professors have all handled the situation differently," she continues. "It creates a bit of mixture, which is interesting to see, but at the same time, everyone has different expectations, so it can become confusing."



“

I'm telling my future self  
to get more involved.

– Abigail Silva '20

My experience with the transition was similar to Silva's. My time at RIC was spent with the same professors each semester. They made the transition manageable, but my only wish was that I could have given them a proper “thank you” or “goodbye” and walked the halls of Gaige one last time.

Due to the transition to remote learning, the topic of graduation became a worry as the weeks of quarantine turned into months. With RIC President Sánchez's announcement that there would be no in-person commencement, many seniors felt frustrated, devastated and anxious.

While saddened by the cancellation of graduation, Silva, Emily Corio and Caylen Williams agree that because of the circumstances that we as a country are facing, they would rather stay safe and healthy than walk across a stage that could potentially risk the lives of others. Others, such as Abreu and Derek Sherlock, didn't plan to attend graduation but still empathize with fellow seniors who had been looking forward to the event. “My heart goes out to everyone who worked hard for so many years, especially those who are first-generation graduates. I wish they could have had a chance to shine properly,” says Sherlock.

Corio enjoyed her time at RIC and she says she will specifically miss Professor Schmeling of the Political Science Department along with all of the friends she did not get the opportunity to say goodbye to.

Corio will be applying to law schools. Ready for the next chapter in his life, Williams is applying for jobs, though he admits it might be a struggle at first. Taking this time to rest mentally and physically, Sherlock has picked up some hobbies, such as playing guitar and their journey after graduation will also include accessing remote jobs.





– Derek Sherlock '20

“

Learn to adapt because everything is not going to go according to your plan. It's good to plan and have goals, but learn to adjust the path you will take to reach your goals.

– Caylen Williams '20



A young woman with curly hair and glasses is looking out of a red window frame. The window frame is made of wood and has a red paint finish. The woman is wearing a grey sweater and a necklace. The background outside the window is blurred, showing some greenery and a building.

“

I'm telling my future self that the path she is on is okay even though it's not the path she expected. Everything happens for a reason, even if we're not quite sure what that reason is.

—Jenna Cipriano '20





I am an adult learner. When I came to RIC as a transfer student I was already in my late 20s. Now that I am 32 I have mellowed a bit more than when I first walked into college eight years ago. But what I would tell myself back then is do not give up, keep fighting the good fight and never compromise on your values. I guess that would be the same thing I would say to my future self.

– Derek Sherlock '20

Like Sherlock, Abreu has taken this time to relax mentally from school. His original plan was to journey onward to graduate school, but since the pandemic he has decided to join the world of employment, though he understands he is competing with a much bigger audience.

"It's actually pretty funny – being stuck at home has made me question my choices and career path and caused me to reanalyze why I pursued my degree in the first place," he said. "So as of right now, my goal is to figure out what my real goal is."

Reflecting on their experiences at Rhode Island College, Silva says she'll miss working in her favorite study spot: the second floor lounge of Gaige Hall overlooking the campus from the giant window.

Caylen will miss his professors and those he was not able to say goodbye to before spring break.

Abreu misses getting out of the house to come to campus, while Sherlock reminisces about the late professor of English Daniel Scott and all of the faculty who helped them succeed throughout their eight years at RIC. They created a personal, family-like bond with their professors, and over the course of their time here at RIC they believe their professors helped shape them into the person they are today.

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*I want to thank all the RIC seniors who participated in this interview process. We will get through this tough time together. You are not alone. – Jenna Cipriano '20*





FEMA Administrator Peter Gaynor '86 engages with employees before the COVID-19 crisis forced the agency to adopt strict social distancing measures.





# LEARNING ON THE JOB

Peter Gaynor '86 is no stranger to crisis, but his first months as FEMA administrator are like nothing anyone's ever experienced

BY JOHN TARABORELLI

We've all experienced that overwhelming moment in the early days of a new job: You're still familiarizing yourself with all your new responsibilities, trying to catch up on the flood of emails you've already received, memorizing the names and roles of your new coworkers, balancing competing priorities – and, wait, where are the bathrooms again? It's a lot for anyone to handle.

Now imagine that your new job is overseeing the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the principal emergency responder for the entire nation. And your first official day on the job was five days before the first confirmed case of the novel coronavirus on U.S. soil. And you look up at the calendar and realize that the start of hurricane season is just around the corner.

That is the position in which Peter Gaynor '86 found himself after being confirmed FEMA administrator, the nation's top disaster response official, in January 2020.

Of course, no one in the emergency response business goes into the job unprepared, and Gaynor was probably more ready than most. He had been serving as the acting administrator of FEMA for 11 months, ascending to that position from his prior post as deputy administrator. Before that, he was head of the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency and prior to that the Providence Emergency Management Agency. He also brought with him 26 years of military experience, both as an enlisted Marine and as a commissioned officer, including deployment in Iraq. In the early 2000s he even served as executive officer responsible for security of the President at Camp David.



Gaynor in the field with a response team after the pandemic changed the way the agency works to protect its employees.

"I was fortunate enough to have some key personal and professional growth opportunities that are helping me now as I lead FEMA during these unprecedented times," Gaynor says, in typically understated fashion. "This 'business' of disasters and emergency management is all about your ability to embrace chaos and uncertainty. If you can be comfortable operating under those conditions, then you likely can see through the fog and provide unique solutions for a number of interconnected problems."

These are indeed unprecedented times. For Gaynor and his staff of 20,000, it's not just that the scope and severity of the COVID-19 crisis are like nothing anyone has ever experienced. It's also the fact that health crises are typically not even within FEMA's purview.

"Leading the operational coordination for the nation's battle against COVID-19 is not something many of us here had planned for," he explains. "Statutorily, FEMA is responsible to lead and coordinate the whole-of-government response for natural disasters, such as hurricanes and earthquakes, not public health emergencies such as pandemics."

Nonetheless, in the early days of his job Gaynor finds himself overseeing a response that goes far beyond whole-of-government. "Although many may see the FEMA name in the news, it's really a whole-of-nation response," he says. "I have nearly 40 government departments and agencies working with us here at FEMA headquarters, as well as several public-private partners, and nongovernmental organizations working tirelessly each day to reduce the impact of COVID-19. It's just not FEMA responding. There are tens of thousands federal employees and partners from

all levels of government and the private sector working to save lives, protect property and support communities impacted by disasters."

On top of all this, FEMA, like every workplace right now, is having to adapt its operations to maintain proper social distancing and the safety of its employees. Two of the agency's primary modes of working – putting a lot of people in one room and face-to-face interactions with the public – are not compatible with Gaynor's top priority as administrator: keeping his workforce safe. That has meant shifting more employees to telework, imposing more social distancing guidelines and stepping up cleaning and sanitizing facilities.

"During a usual response, you would see our National Response Coordination Center with about 200 FEMA and interagency partners working together in person," he explains. "Now, we've had to adapt our physical space to make it safe, while still accomplishing what is usually a very face-to-face part of the job."

For Gaynor, responding quickly and adapting on the fly is not so much an occupational hazard as it is exactly what he signed up for when he accepted the job.

"I believe a sense of urgency is part of any emergency manager's DNA. We are always running against the clock, making sure we are prepared and organized for several different hazards and threats," he says, noting that the calendar is already not in the agency's favor. "We are quickly heading into hurricane season. We are also in tornado season. Every day is earthquake season at FEMA. One of the



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Through my liberal arts education I learned to think critically, write clearly, communicate precisely and embrace other points of view. It really provided the foundation for my success.

— Peter Gaynor, '86  
FEMA administrator

best ways to be proactive and set myself and the agency up for success is to be a strategic thinker and always keep an eye on the bigger picture, even during a crisis”

While us civilians are still playing catch-up to our new reality, learning how to socially distance and adjusting to wearing masks at the grocery store, Gaynor is already looking far enough ahead to have FEMA's Office of Response and Recovery develop the “COVID-19 Pandemic Operational Guidance for the 2020 Hurricane Season.”

Gaynor sees this type of total immersion into a crisis situation as the essence of leadership training. “There is no substitute for on-the-job learning, whether it be during training, an exercise or real-world experience. But learning through reading or observation alone does not cut it – you must spend time as the one making the calls to really learn about yourself and how you will respond,” he summarizes. He also draws lessons from the past. “I find the study of historical successes and failures during crisis to be invaluable teachings.”

That’s no surprise coming from a former history major. It’s exactly that sort of interest in learning from the past that inspired Gaynor to pursue his undergraduate degree in history at Rhode Island College, aided by the G.I. Bill.

“Through my liberal arts education I learned to think critically, write clearly, communicate precisely and embrace other points of view,” he says. “It really provided the foundation for my success. As I look back on my path to FEMA administrator, the solid education I received from Rhode Island College was critically important.” 📌



During normal operations, FEMA's National Response Coordination Center would host roughly 200 people working together in-person; post-COVID, social distancing measures required changes to the way the agency works.

PHOTOS BY  
PAUL CONNORS

# CAMPUS DURING COVID-19

Jonathan Rosa, technical director of college events and conference services, plays the piano in Sapinsley Hall. While most faculty and staff pivoted to teleworking arrangements during the pandemic, some employees with more hands-on, facility-specific roles continued to report to work on campus, with new health and safety protocols in place.











The Quad, always a hub of foot traffic on campus, sits empty during quarantine. Next to the anchor, a message of hope on a blue painted rock was left in the days after campus emptied out.



The Rhode Island National Guard set up a testing site on campus as part of a statewide testing regime that enabled Rhode Island to test thousands of people per day. A subsequent partnership with the cities of Central Falls and Pawtucket established another testing site at the RIC Workforce Development Hub.



A lone show of #RICSpirit at Pontarelli Field during a time when all athletics were put on hold.

Essential employees kept the basic functions of campus working during the shutdown, including facilities and maintenance, housekeeping, library services and dining services, which fed a small contingent of students who were allowed to remain in the residence halls due to extenuating circumstances. Clockwise from this page: David Rosa, electrician; Olga Agoura, housekeeping; Mo Lazib, Donovan Dining; Carl Medeiros, Donovan Dining.









Class of 2020  
President Jeni  
Melo plants  
seedlings in  
campus garden  
behind Fogarty  
Life Science.





Portrait of a campus seemingly frozen in time: An empty room in Gaige Hall looks out onto the Quad and Student Union.



Although Adams Library was closed to in-person visits during the shutdown, the hardworking library staff continued to provide vital services to students, including online resources, research assistance and books available for pick-up at the front door.





Visiting Nurse Home & Hospice receives a batch of face shields made at Rhode Island College.  
FROM LEFT: Colleen Rose, rehabilitation supervisor for Visiting Nurse Home & Hospice, and Mike Mullane, field representative for the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals





# RIC PROFESSOR MOVES FAST TO HELP SLOW THE SPREAD

When nurses in the field needed face shields, Prof. Charlie McLaughlin '78, '84 began making them right here at Rhode Island College

BY GITA BROWN

Personal protective equipment for frontline health-care workers, like face shields, masks, gowns and gloves, has been in short supply around the country amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Recognizing the need, RIC Professor of Technology Education Charlie McLaughlin, who heads the Langevin Center for Design, Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing at RIC, began researching methods of making face shields.

"I had heard that people were using 3D printers to make face shields and I couldn't understand why since they would take hours to produce. I researched and found a design by a maker in the United Kingdom - Domenic Morrow of Smoke and Mirrors - who uses a laser cutter to cut out the plastic frame that holds the face shield in place," he says.

Working out of the Langevin Center, McLaughlin programmed the laser cutter to cut the pattern for the frame out of 24" x 12" sheets of polystyrene plastic. Four frames can be cut from one sheet.



These face shields are going to provide a significant measure of protection against virus transmission and fill the unmet need of providers on the frontline of care.

—Mike Mullane, field representative, Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals

"I made 24 frames in the time it would take to make one on a 3D printer," he says. "I made 24 in an hour."

Assembly is completed when McLaughlin clips on face shields made of PETG plastic – the same material used for overhead transparencies – to the frames.

"It was also important that the parts be reusable," he says. "You can wipe down the frames [made of polystyrene plastic] with alcohol, but if you apply alcohol in concentrations of 70 percent or higher to the face shield it becomes foggy. That means they would need to be replaced after each use."

McLaughlin solved the problem by sanitizing the PETG plastic with eyeglass lens wipes, which has just enough alcohol to disinfect it without hazing. Health care personnel will be able to do the same.

Donations of PETG plastic were provided by RIC's Department of Educational Studies; RIC's Department of Counseling, Educational Leadership, and School Psychology; and the Henry Barnard School at RIC.

Mike Mullane, field representative for the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals, heard through his wife, RIC employee Celeste Comeau-Mullane, director of the Office of Partnerships and Placements, that McLaughlin was making face shields and immediately contacted him.

"I told him my nurses and CNAs at Visiting Nurse Home & Hospice are very frightened about not having the proper protective gear, which could cause them to transmit the virus to their patients and expose their family members," Mullane says.

Mullane requested 22 face shields and donated two boxes of PETG plastic so that McLaughlin could make 60 more.

"These face shields are going to provide a significant measure of protection against virus transmission and fill the unmet need of providers on the frontline of care," says Mullane.

"I'm happy to help," McLaughlin says. "If it saves people from getting sick, then I've done my job." 📌



The frames are cut out of polystyrene. Each frame consists of three pieces.



Slots in the frame pieces are precision laser cut and the frame strap is adjustable to accommodate various head sizes.



Once assembled, the face shield is clipped to notches in the frame.



Using a laser cutter, McLaughlin (shown here) is able to produce 24 of these frames in the hour it would take to make one with a 3D printer.





LEFT TO RIGHT: Lisa Connelly, D.N.P. '21 and her team at Rhode Island Hospital, including RIC alumni Katie Judge B.S.N. '19, Jenna Auclair, B.S.N. '18, Travis Rich, B.S.N. '18, and Haley Fortier, B.S.N. '16.

# NURSING FACULTY ON THE FRONTLINES

Assistant Professor Lisa Connelly and her team at Rhode Island Hospital are giving their all for those affected by COVID-19

BY JHON CARDONA

"I entered nursing to be able to make a difference for those in need. Nurses care for people when they are most vulnerable and if we can make their experience just a little brighter, then we have made a difference," says Lisa Connelly, assistant professor at Rhode Island College's School of Nursing.

For almost 30 years, Connelly has been working at Rhode Island Hospital. Now, she is on the frontline to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Overseeing staff for the entire hospital, she regularly responds to emergencies, provides staff support and addresses patient issues as they arise.

In this time of crisis, Connelly believes that the nurses caring for the COVID positive patients need to feel supported and know that they are making a difference in the lives of so many. "I have seen them give tirelessly of themselves with minimal complaint. I have seen the incredible teamwork they have displayed as they work to cross-train. I feel grateful to live and work in an area where those on the frontlines are supported," she remarks.

However, working on the frontline means taking the necessary precautions to keep herself and others healthy. Since she is working in a "warm unit," a section of the hospital with all COVID positive patients where staff wear personal protective equipment one-hundred percent of the time to do rounds, Connelly and her team have become a family who take care of each other and their patients.

The units do create a distance from their patients, though—one of the many perceptible differences that the onslaught of the virus has precipitated in many areas of life. Another such protective distancing measure at the hospital is that COVID positive patients and their families face visitation restrictions.

Connelly feels compassion for those families and patients because she believes that loved ones are an integral part in the care of patients. "I have always considered it to be a gift for a family member to be with a loved one when they pass," she notes. 🕯️



PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL CONNORS

# FOUNDATION LAUNCHES NEW PATH FOR SUPPORT

Campus remains empty during the pandemic, but the campus community still needs support and the RIC Foundation is responding

Rhode Island College Foundation launches initiative for students facing unforeseen circumstances during a time of unprecedented challenge

To honor our frontline heroes, 2020 graduates and students in need, Rhode Island College and the Rhode Island College Foundation launched the RIC Cares campaign in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

RIC community members were invited to submit stories of hope that detail their experiences of serving on the frontline during this crisis. They were encouraged to send well wishes to the Class of 2020 graduates, whose commencement exercises were converted to a virtual model. (The college is still developing a way to honor them in person later this year.)

Of course, the most important way that community members chose to show they care is through direct support of our college and its students. The RIC Cares Emergency Response Fund was launched to meet the immediate needs of students, such as food and

housing insecurities related to the pandemic. The foundation contributed \$5,000 to seed the fund and, as of press time, more than \$31,885 was raised.

The Class of 2020 also chose to make a contribution to the Emergency Response Fund, as their senior class gift, raising \$1,731.

"RIC Cares provides our community a chance to give back," said Chris Schuler '06, RIC Foundation assistant director of annual giving. "For those who are able, we're offering highly targeted ways to support critical needs at the college, including emergency response funding, remote teaching and learning, health and wellness and student scholarships."

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*Go to [ricfoundation.org](http://ricfoundation.org) to show your support or consider making a contribution of any size. For more information, call Chris Schuler at 401-456-8984.*



# PAYING IT FORWARD

As one graduate attests, the spirit of giving takes a page from the past



FROM THE ARCHIVES  
Barbara Loomis, in 1970, the year she graduated from RIC.

I graduated from RIC in 1970, so this year marks my 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

A 50-year milestone in any context is a dramatic reminder of how fleeting life is. And it has given me pause to reflect on what is important and where I should direct my resources, both during my lifetime and beyond.

Such weighty decisions usually require a great deal of thought. But for me, it is very simple.

For the last several years, I have been engaged with Rhode Island College as a member of the Alumni Association and RIC Foundation boards and have had the privilege of meeting numerous administrators, faculty and students. I have been amazed by the quality of education RIC continues to provide and the caliber of its students, despite the economic challenges many of them face.

I believe a bequest to RIC will provide opportunities for some of Rhode Island's most deserving students for generations to come. I can't think of a better investment in the future! – **Barbara Loomis Smith '70**

## TOP 3 CHALLENGES RIC STUDENTS ARE FACING RIGHT NOW



## WHAT IS RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE DOING TO HELP?



Here are four crucial areas in which your support can help the college respond to this crisis

### EMERGENCY RESPONSE

We're distributing gift cards to offset food insecurity and help with basic needs, like gas and toiletries, as well as emergency rent for housing.



### HEALTH & WELLNESS

We're helping students connect in new ways to find community, including support and individual therapy, video events and virtual commencement.



### REMOTE TEACHING & LEARNING

We're supporting online learning for students suddenly without access to computers or resources, providing laptops and building curriculum.



### STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

We're awarding scholarships to those who want to attend college and currently receive financial aid.



# THE STRUGGLE WAS WORTH IT

BY JHON CARDONA

Throughout the years, people from across the world have set foot on Rhode Island College's campus to build their professional lives. It is here that Leidy found help in pursuing a career in the United States, having fled violence in her native Colombia as a refugee.

In 2014 Leidy, her husband, two children, along with her two sisters and two nieces arrived at T.F. Green airport. (Her name has been changed to protect her identity.)

"The agency in charge of receiving us was Dorcas International Institute," said Leidy. That's where it all began. They gave us a furnished house, and then the self-reliance process began, which was to find a job and school for our children."

Adapting was difficult. "For us it was a strong cultural shock," Leidy said. "We arrived to a country where we did not know the language, we did not know how everything worked."





Leidy is currently a full-time student in the School of Social Work

Even the food was different. Everything was totally different."

Ultimately, she managed to get a job at a tractor factory, but that, too, was challenging. "It was scary being among so many men," she recalls. "It was totally difficult. Right there I understood that I couldn't stay still, I had to learn English."

Looking to improve her language skills, Leidy came to Rhode Island College's Outreach Programs. Since 1990 it has helped resettled refugees find work through different training programs, such as bookkeeping and accounting, medical assistance, and social and human service assistance. There, she enrolled in the individualized English for Speakers of Other Languages program, an English and computer class offered free of charge.

Later that year, she transitioned into regular evening ESL classes offered by RIC's Professional Studies and Continuing Education program with the intention of continuing her bachelor's degree. "I looked for the ESL intensive course\* taught by ESL coordinator Laura Faria-Tancinco because I heard some students talking about how people really learned to speak English in her courses. Then I started attending classes in the evenings," Leidy says. "The classes at Outreach and in the evenings really helped me lose my fear of talking and also taught me how to make presentations."

But Leidy wanted more than just to perfect her English; she wanted to move up the career ladder. After hearing about RIC Outreach's technical certificate program for preparation as a social and human services assistant, she inquired. "To my surprise, the front desk lady tells me: 'Your English is enough for you to start. Do you want to do it?'" Leidy recalls.

Fast forward to May 2018, when Leidy received her social and human service assistant certificate. And with the 21 credits she earned from that program, she applied to RIC's School of Social

Work as a transfer student. Since August of this year, Leidy is a full-time social work student.

Coming full circle, Leidy is back at Dorcas International Institute working as an intern in the "Unaccompanied Minors" program, supporting children who have arrived in the country without family and documentation. In true Rhode Island fashion, she works alongside the social worker who originally helped her when she arrived in the state.

Leidy credits Rhode Island College for providing services, support and opportunities for her to become a successful professional.

"Here at Rhode Island College, the Learning for Life (L4L) office has navigators, people who are in charge of helping and counseling students. My navigator has been directing and guiding me since I started at RIC," she says. Leidy also credits the Writing Center for improving her confidence in English. "They correct me, they teach me, they explain what I did wrong and why I got a low score."

She feels that although on several occasions she wanted to give up, the support she received from everyone, her classmates, her teachers and the people around her at RIC kept her going.

Leidy believes that it is worth struggling, that one derives strength from adversity. "Don't give up," she reflects. "Good things come after suffering. If there is a challenge, I know that sometimes it scares me, but I accept it and go on."

After she began moving forward in her life, Leidy noticed her sisters and friends started following her steps. "It is beautiful to see how you can motivate others with the strength you put into what you are doing." 📌

*\*The ESL Intensive Program offers English language classes for professional and academic purposes and to help students transition to a bachelor's degree.*



"Rhode Island College is a gem and its graduates make the Ocean State shine! I am excited to see what opportunities our alumni will continue to create for a more beautiful Rhode Island."  
-Raymonde Charles '10

# FROM DREAMER TO BIG DREAMS

INTERVIEW BY JOHN TARABORELLI

Q&A with  
Raymonde  
Charles '10,  
Director of  
Communications  
at the for  
Education  
at the Chan  
Zuckerberg  
Initiative

**You've had quite a career since leaving Rhode Island. What's been the key to your upward trajectory? How do you keep finding that next - and bigger - opportunity?**

My career has been dedicated to pursuing equity and social justice, which has guided me from my work at the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative (CZI), the Obama Administration and the Children's Defense Fund to the Obama for America re-election campaign, the U.S. House of Representatives and Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. I always knew the impact that I wanted to have on children and families, but I couldn't have dreamt of this career

**You left Rhode Island to work on the Obama 2012 campaign. What was that rollercoaster ride like? What did you learn about America on the campaign trail?**

That transition was one of the hardest decisions I ever made. I loved the work and was proud that it was in service to my home state. But the campaign was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work on and have an even greater impact. America is beautiful and dynamic, made strong by everyday people working to improve their communities. There are striking similarities between communities on the East Coast and in the Midwest. Both Rhode Islanders and Ohioans want access to affordable housing, economic opportunity, good schools and quality health care.



**How has your education at RIC served you professionally? Beyond the actual curriculum in your field of study, what experiences did you have here that have stayed with you throughout your career?**

I had a long career that would not have been possible without the education I received from Rhode Island College. My approach to communications is anchored in Professor Emeritus of English Richard Feldstein's teachings.

He taught me about the significance of the words we use and how they shape our worldviews. He helped me understand how language can reinforce binary thinking and make it easy to reject people who don't fit into our categories. It has made me very attentive to how people may see themselves in my work. RIC also prepared me for work in the real world. Its diverse community reflects the environments I worked in, from Silicon Valley to Smith Hill. I have collaborated with students from all walks of life at RIC. This helped me develop the necessary interpersonal, collaborative and communications skills.

**What challenges did you need to overcome to get where you are today? How did you approach them? How did you manage to launch yourself into such prominent positions from our little state?**

I was a Dreamer. My parents and I are Haitian immigrants. We applied for green cards soon after entering the country. We also received working permits while we waited for our application to be processed, but it took decades before they were approved. I graduated from Classical High School in 2001 and was accepted to more than half a dozen colleges. Since my family's application for green cards was still pending, nearly all the schools rescinded my acceptance and I did not qualify for financial aid. RIC was a pioneer in serving Dreamers, and accepted me. I was authorized to work fulltime at Rhode Island KIDS COUNT while attending school parttime. A philanthropist devoted to youth development, who will remain anonymous and who has my eternal gratitude, paid half of my tuition each semester.

It took me nine years to graduate but I wouldn't change a thing. The experience taught me so much about being bold and persevering. Also, I completed my undergraduate degree with nearly a decade of experience thanks to Elizabeth Burke Bryant, executive director of Rhode KIDS COUNT. That allowed me to step into an opportunity on the Hill.

I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to several Rhode Islanders – a veritable village – who came together to ensure that I realized my potential. I'm committed to paying it forward by helping to expand access to opportunity for disadvantaged populations.

**You've worked around education in a lot of places and organizations, but pretty much always in a communications capacity. What role do you see for strategic communications in advancing and improving education? How can the messaging affect the outcomes?**

Communications alone cannot win a campaign or movement, but it is imperative to advancing social justice in education. Lifting the voices of teachers, students and parents to show the challenges they face helps people to understand and act.

**What do you do in your role at the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative? What are the specific initiatives you supporting through communications and messaging?**

As communications director for education at the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, I'm focused on ensuring every young person enters adulthood with the knowledge, skills, habits and agency to thrive in an ever-changing world. My work included announcing supports for teacher well-being, launching Harvard and MIT's Reach Every Reader Initiative, as well as the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative and Gates Foundation's joint request for information on breakthroughs in education.

My time there has been amazing. I've learned a lot from our diverse team of educators, school leaders, researchers and engineers. Our organization is giving itself time to reach its goals in its areas of science, education, justice and opportunity. My goal is to make contributions that help build a foundation for our future success.

**How does the work of CZI fit into the overall picture of education in this country?**

Our work in education builds on the work that great teachers have previously practiced to form strong relationships with students and meet their needs. We're focused on building and supporting tools and programs that make it easier for them to do their work. We're partnering with students, educators, parents, researchers, engineers and scientists through grantmaking, impact investments and research and engineering. With these tools at our disposal, we can take a holistic approach to achieving our vision of a future where everyone thrives.

**Will CZI be working on anything that will directly impact Rhode Island? If so, what?**

We are proud to support the work of educators in the state to personalize learning for students. In May 2017, Mark (Zuckerberg) and Priscilla (Chan) visited DelSesto Middle School, which is participating in the Summit Learning Program, a personalized approach to teaching and learning developed by our partner Summit Public Schools. 📖

A man with short brown hair, wearing a blue suit jacket over a white shirt, is sitting on a dark stool. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. His hands are clasped in his lap. The background is dark and out of focus.

BUSINESS

# GO WHERE THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE

With Rhode Island as his launch pad, Gregory Kittelson '97 built an international life of business and entrepreneurship

BY GITA BROWN

Gregory Kittelson has never been one to wait for opportunities. Since earning his undergraduate degree at Rhode Island College in 1997, he has crisscrossed the country in search of the right opportunity on which to build his fortune.

In 2002 Kittelson pulled up roots and transplanted to the Philippines. Considered a newly industrialized country, the Philippines has been transitioning from an economy based on agriculture to one based on services and manufacturing for decades. It was there that Kittelson co-founded not one but four businesses one year after the other beginning in 2007.

His first company, Kittelson & Carpo Consulting, is a firm that assists local and foreign companies with government regulations, registration and other legalities involved in setting up business in the Philippines. The second, KMC Savills, offers commercial real estate to local and foreign companies. The third, KMC Solutions, offers individual and communal office spaces and staff leasing. The fourth, Zennya, is a tech start-up for health and wellness. "Fifty percent of my clients are Americans and the other half are Europeans, Australians and Asians," says Kittelson.



Gregory Kittelson  
(left) and his business  
partners Michael  
McCullough and  
Amanda Carpo



Most are engaged in business process outsourcing, one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Outsourcing basically means that a company hires an outside company to handle operations or to provide services that are usually performed in-house by the company's own employees.

"Many American companies have call centers and back office operations in the Philippines," Kittelson says. "Say you have a company in the United States and you're in need of 20 call center agents in the Philippines. You can call KMC Solutions and we'll hire 20 Filipino call center agents, and set them up in our office while you manage them remotely from the United States." The Philippines is now the world leader in business process outsourcing, largely due to the influx of foreign company call centers. "If you call American Express customer services today, you'll most likely be speaking to someone in the Philippines," Kittelson says. The reason the Philippines is such a great outsourcing and offshoring location, he explained, is because it offers less expensive labor costs and a highly educated labor pool who have a high proficiency in spoken English.

Though business is booming in the Philippines, Kittelson is now in the process of selling his first three companies in order to move on to new entrepreneurial ventures. "We've sold 75 percent of Kittelson & Carpo Consulting and a stake in KMC Solutions," he says.

His fourth company, Zennya, functions somewhat like Uber except instead of using your mobile app to call for a driver you use an app to call for a masseuse. Zennya will eventually include physical therapy and nurse-assisted medical and elder care services. Currently Zennya is only available in the Philippines.

Kittelson credits the success of his three businesses to "the ability to see a problem and solve it and significantly improve on existing business models." He also points to great business partners. "It's important to select partners who have high IQs, high EQs, a strong work ethic, integrity and the ability to execute," he says.

By his own admission, Kittelson has always exhibited an innovative, entrepreneurial spirit, even as a child. "I was always looking for a creative way to make money," he says. "In elementary school I would sell my dad's used car magazines, I cut lawns and shoveled snow."

Travel was also always in his plans. In high school he washed dishes to earn enough money to spend two summers in Mexico to learn the Spanish language. After high school, while studying at CCRI, he spent a semester abroad in Mexico to continue to improve his Spanish. At RIC he graduated with a B.A. degree in Spanish and soon after moved to Mexico where he lived for a year and taught English.

Because he couldn't find the business opportunities he was looking for in Rhode Island, Rhode Island became a launching pad for ventures elsewhere. There are certain benefits to opportunity deprivation, he says: "It made me scrappy, a go-getter, aggressive, competitive, determined."

His advice to young entrepreneurs: "Go where the opportunities are." Certainly, when Kittelson moved to the Philippines, he only intended to stay for a few months to create a travel website. It didn't materialize, but four businesses did. ↴

# SCHOOL OF BUSINESS GAINS ACCREDITATION

BY JEFF THEODORE

The International Accreditation Council for Business Education recognizes the school's commitment to excellence

The International Accreditation Council for Business Education (IACBE) awarded Rhode Island College's School of Business full accreditation, noting that the school has "demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement, excellence in business education and advancing academic quality in its business programs and operations."

"The benefit of accreditation to all stakeholders, including students, is that our academic programs and all aspects of operations have been subjected to intense external scrutiny relative to their overall quality and alignment with the expected standards of business education," explains Dean of the School of Business Jeffrey Mello.

"Through accreditation, students, their families and employers can be assured of both the quality and value of our academic programs. In addition, many employers seek to recruit students for internships and permanent positions only from institutions which have been accredited."

Accreditation was granted for seven years through April 2027 for the School of Business, which currently enrolls 1,100 students.

For more than two years, the School of Business collected data and prepared evidence that it met IACBE's nine accreditation principles: commitment to integrity, responsibility and ethical behavior; quality assessment of student outcomes; strategic planning; curriculum and learning opportunities; faculty qualifications; admission and academic policies and processes; re-sources supporting business programs; external relationships and innovation and continuous improvement in curriculum and management processes.

The IACBE site team that visited the campus praised the school's Bloomberg Lab and its in-corporation into the curriculum, job placement success and career preparation work for students and the high percentage of scholarship, academic qualifications and ongoing professional development among faculty.

"IACBE is very much aligned with the mission and focus of Rhode Island College and provides an exceptional 'fit' for us, as evidenced by the presence of similar, peer institutions among its membership ranks," such as Framingham State University and Fitchburg State University in Massachusetts and Franklin Pierce University in New Hampshire, Mello notes. [↓](#)



Students in the School of Business





Affectionately known as the Yellow Cottage, Cottage C now features space for a large classroom, two conference rooms and office space

# LOCAL HISTORY, NATIONAL RECOGNITION

## East Campus added to the National Register of Historic Places

The Rhode Island State Home and School for Dependent and Neglected Children, built on what is now the east side of Rhode Island College's campus, has been added to the National Register of Historic Places. The process of gaining the recognition was shepherded by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission (RIHPHC), and the nomination was prepared by the RIHPHC Principal Architectural Historian and Rhode Island College alumna Elizabeth Warburton Rochefort '10.

The State Home and School cared for 10,000 children between 1885 and 1979. In 1885 the State of Rhode Island purchased the Walnut Grove Farm and converted its stone farmhouse to a superintendent's house and administrative building. The State Home then built a circle of cottage dormitories, a school and a hospital, and continued farm operations to support the institution's mission.

The State Home and School continued to expand into the twentieth century and was renamed the Dr. Patrick I. O'Rourke Children's Center in 1946. The Children's Center constructed 10 modern brick dormitories. It eventually closed in 1979. By the time Rhode Island College acquired

the property in 2002, the brick dormitories were vacant and the only surviving 19th-Century wooden dormitory ("Cottage C," sometimes called the Yellow Cottage) was slated for demolition.

Recognizing the historical significance of the site, the late Richard Hillman '83, M.S.W. '96, a social worker and RIC alumnus, urged then-RIC President John Nazarian to renovate rather than raze Cottage C and to research and preserve records of the institution. Thus began the

State Home and School Project, a research, documentation and preservation project that ran from 2002 to 2010. Project members collected oral histories of former residents and employees of the State Home. Transcripts of these interviews are archived in Rhode Island College's Special Collections, along with newspaper clippings and other historical documents. Digitized photos can be found in the State Archives, while physical artifacts await housing in a state facility.

Cottage C survived alongside buildings from each period of the State Home and School's history from 1885-1979. In total, eight buildings, all of which are still in use by the college, met the National Park Service criteria for listing on the National Register.

Joining Rhode Island's historic places listed on the National Register is a fitting culmination of a project that began almost two decades ago, says Rhode Island College President Frank D. Sánchez. "This is a well-deserved recognition of the history that existed at this site even before it became a college campus," he said. "The many years of hard work and research have put a spotlight on an important chapter in our state's history and opened up new possibilities for preservation that come with this federally recognized designation." ↓

# 2★0★2★0 Alumni Awards

## Alumni Award Honorees

Congratulations to our accomplished Rhode Island College alumni and college community members!



RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE  
**ALUMNI**  
ASSOCIATION

**John Nazarian '54**  
Alumnus/Alumna  
of the Year Award



**Frederick Harrison '07**  
Retired, Mathematics  
Teacher and Director  
of Manufacturing  
Chromatography  
Consumables

**Charles B. Willard**  
Achievement Award



**Dr. Brenda Dann-Messier '73,**  
**M.Ed. '74**  
Senior Advisor  
Education Strategy Group

**Alumni Service**  
Award



**Dayna Gladstein '83,**  
**M.S.W. '87**  
Clinic Director  
Gifford Street  
Wellness Center  
Acadia Healthcare

**Young Alumni**  
Award



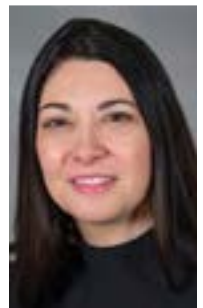
**Brittany Richer Ahnrud '13,**  
**M.Ed. '16**  
Sixth Grade English Language  
Arts Teacher  
Lawn School

**Alumni Faculty**  
Award



**Dr. Charles McLaughlin '78,**  
**M.Ed. '84**  
Professor  
Educational Studies  
Department  
Rhode Island College

**Alumni Staff**  
Award



**Jessica Silva Cimorelli '00**  
Director  
Purchasing Office  
Rhode Island College

**Honor Roll**  
Faculty of Arts  
and Science



**Marcela Betancur '12**  
Executive Director  
Latino Policy Institute

**Honor Roll**  
Faculty of Arts  
and Science



**Kim Clark '95**  
Owner  
Rhody Craft

**Honor Roll**  
Faculty of Arts  
and Science



**Yvette Mendez '99**  
Deputy Director  
Rhode Island  
Department of Human  
Services

**Honor Roll**  
Feinstein School  
of Education



**Ronald Beaupre '96**  
Fourth Grade Teacher,  
Agnes Little Elementary  
& President of  
Pawtucket Teachers  
Alliance

**Honor Roll**  
School of  
Business



**Olalekan Adeduji '08**  
Vice President, Senior  
Compliance Analyst,  
The Washington Trust  
Company

**Honor Roll**  
School of  
Social Work



**Maria Cimini '02,**  
**M.S.W. '05**  
Associate Director  
of Policy Analysis,  
Research and  
Development for  
the Rhode Island  
Department of  
Human Services

**Honor Roll**  
School of  
Nursing



**Valerie Almeida-Monroe '11**  
Clinical Nursing Manager,  
Clinica Esperanza/Hope Clinic

Visit [ric.edu/AlumniAwards](http://ric.edu/AlumniAwards) for more on each of this year's honorees!



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RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE



Rhode Island  
College  
gave me the  
opportunity  
to not only  
change my life  
but the life of  
my children.



## WHY I GIVE

As a social worker I've always paid attention to mission-driven work. Giving RIC students access to the workforce, internships and leadership opportunities are some of the key responsibilities of alumni.

You can have a college degree, but if you don't have someone who can open the door for you, it doesn't matter. By providing opportunities, mentorship and treasure, you open those doors.

Please consider making a gift to the Rhode Island College Foundation, and help our students make it to the other side.

— Ann Marie DaSilva  
B.S.W. '87, M.S.W. '89

*The daughter of Portuguese immigrant factory workers, Ann Marie was born in Central Falls and raised in Pawtucket. She is president and CEO of Chronomatic Inc. and president of the Rhode Island College Foundation Board of Directors and Trustees.*

RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE  
FOUNDATION