

THE HONORS RHAPSODY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2019



From the Editors:

Given that this June marks the 100-Year Anniversary of the passage of 19th Amendment, we felt it would be appropriate to dedicate this issue to celebrating this historic achievement. In doing so we must first acknowledge several factors of concern. In no way can we, or anyone else for that matter, claim that the 19th Amendment was the definitive moment which brought all Americans into the voting process. As evidence to this fact, the following decades would see the enactment of several laws which further expanded voting rights to various minority groups; chief among them being the Snyder Act of 1924, the Magnuson Act of 1943, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. As we will discuss later in this issue, many also contend that the battle for a fully inclusive democracy continues to this day.

Despite these many caveats involved, the 19th Amendment marked a major milestone in American history that granted women equal standing with men in the eyes of the law. The right to vote is arguably the most imperative of any—being tantamount to democracy itself—and is therefore deserving of commemoration. It is for this reason that we invite you to turn the page and join us as we explore the issues surrounding voting rights and women's rights in both the modern and historical context.



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Letter from the Honors Coordinator

What's New in Honors?

Greetings Honors students and friends of the Honors Program! As we close out the 2018-2019 academic year, I'm excited to share the wonderful things we've accomplished over the course of the Spring 2019 semester.

The spring semester saw tremendous growth in Honors enrollment with 90 students taking at least one Honors course. We kicked off the semester with our Honors Orientation in February, which was well-attended with many new faces who enjoyed a visit from representatives of the Rutgers Honors Living Learning Community. This great opportunity for students transferring to Rutgers offers a Humanities Scholars Program, which will build seamless pathways for students to earn undergraduate degrees in humanities disciplines. The enthusiasm in the room was felt during a fruitful Q & A session.

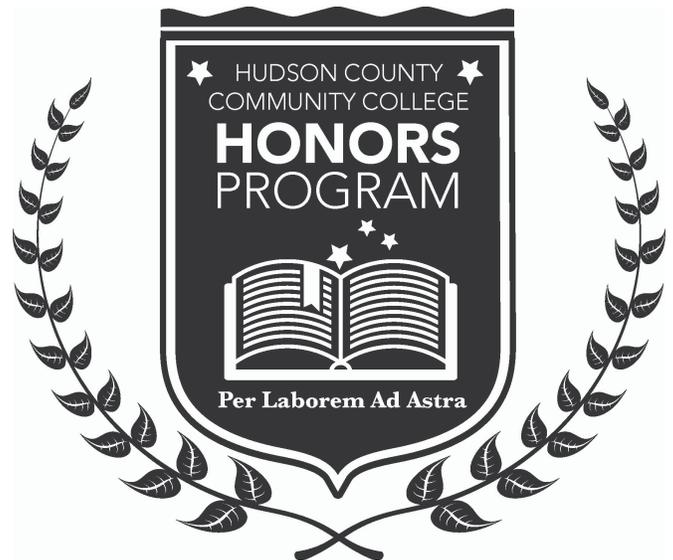
Columbia University also visited the campus and spoke to Honors students at our March Transfer Talk. The program hopes to host more universities this coming Fall.

Speaking of Fall, I'm happy to announce the possibility of the Honors by Contract option that will be available to eligible Honors students in September. This initiative will allow students who have exhausted the number of Honors courses they can take to enroll in non-Honors courses and complete a capstone Honors project within the course for Honors credit. More details will be available in the Honors Portal soon.

I'd like to acknowledge the many supporters that our program counts on to keep its initiatives going strong. From volunteers for the Honors Salons, to our dedicated faculty and administrators who offer valuable feedback and approve funds to keep events running semester after semester. In particular, I'd like to thank the HCCC Foundation for its support in providing NCHC student membership for students who have achieved the milestone of completing at least three Honors courses with a B or better.

We are doing some great things, and I'm sure we will do even greater ones. Have a happy and restful summer break!

Jenny E. Bobea
Honors Lecturer & Program Coordinator



Five Rosies Through the Decades *by Racco Maristela*

Have you seen Captain Marvel yet? Well, you should! Captain Marvel is the first of Marvel's Cinematic films to cast a female lead. Don't worry this is a spoiler free article... Captain Marvel is a female superhero representing the great strengths that woman can achieve. The movie views Carol Danvers (Captain Marvel) as a woman whom no matter how many times she gets knocked down, she always finds the strength to get back up and overcome the challenges in front of her. Her strength is not limited to her physical abilities. It is consistent in her mental fortitude and intelligence as well. Danver's strength is a characteristic that is rarely, if at all, portrayed in women on the big screen. This high sense of fighting spirit shows that she is capable of withstanding just as much as men can.

Captain Marvel screams as the modern-day Rosie the Riveter preaching strength through feminism. Rosie the Riveter was the cultural icon back in the World War II days and represented the fighting spirit of women during the 40's. Rosie the Riveter's biceps are getting bigger everyday as women gain more opportunities and come closer to being in equal standing with men. It is a sharp contrast to the days when women could be barred from entering specific fields of work. Today we see women taking on larger roles in a male dominated society. Maybe someday a woman will become the first female president. Heroes are not limited to movies and comic books. They exist in real life and there are several women in history who have embodied these very principles.



Marvel Studios



J. Howard Miller

1. Margaret Fuller (1810-1850) an American writer whose writings had a high impact on soon would be women suffrage progressors.
2. Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962) an American political figure who has been involved in a lot of humanitarian causes such as working with the Red Cross during World War I.
3. Rosa Parks (1913-2005) an American civil rights activist. She refused to give up her seat on a bus at Montgomery, Alabama to white passenger. This would later lead to the Montgomery bus boycott and later would start a nationwide effort seeking an ending to racial segregation.
4. Marie Curie (1867-1934) the first woman to receive a Nobel Prize and the first person to receive a Nobel Prize twice for her major contributions in Physics and Chemistry. She discovered radioactive elements polonium and radium.
5. Helen Keller (1880-1968) an American author and lecturer that overcame the difficulties of being blind and deaf. She is one of the leading humanitarians of the 20th century for being an advocate for the disabled and for women's suffrage.

Standing Strong *by Mario Perales*

I'm going to level with you all. Art has never been my cup of tea. It's always seemed to require a level of pretentiousness that even a self-diagnosed narcissist such as myself wasn't capable of. I thought art was for egregiously rich millionaires; the ones we see in movies, blind tasting wine while discussing the significance of W.S. Gilbert's 1885 operetta, *The Mikado*. But when I first took a trip into the city to see Kristen Visbal's, *Fearless Girl*, all of that changed. The 4-foot girl, standing heroically as she stared down the ferocious *Charging Bull* before her, resonated with me.

This wasn't for the rich and wealthy, it was for the everyday woman struggling to overcome the barriers that exist in a male-dominated workforce. I thought of my mother; the sisters I grew up with; the friend who was harassed by a college classmate when applying for a job he held seniority at; the friend assaulted by her coworker; the owner reluctant to respond to the overwhelming evidence; the many grievances committed against women on Wall Street.

It would seem this was the artist's intent. Visbal was reportedly commissioned by State Street Global Advisors to "draw attention to the power of women in leadership" or the lack there of. It's been reported by Maria Lamagna of *Market Watch*, that "women in 2017 made up just 16% of board seats in 3,000 of major U.S. companies tracked in the 'Russel 3000' index." And many reporters, such as, *CNN's* Sara Ashley O'Brien, have broken down various surveys and data showing that women make on average 78 cents for every dollar a man makes.

Women have long been under-represented, underpaid and mistreated in the work force. Which is exactly why the *Fearless Girl* has become a champion for many who feel victimized by this system and also why the City's movement of the statue is all that more heart-breaking..



Timothy A. Clary / AFP - Getty Images



Mark Lennihan/AP

On December 10, 2018 the statue was unveiled at its new home, in front of the New York Stock Exchange. The *Fearless Girl* now stares down the pillared building at 11 Wall Street. The move came after the City decided not to renew the permit that had already been extended once to allow the statue to remain on Broadway. Additional complaints from the bull's artist, Arturo Di Modica, may have influenced this move as well.

Di Modica has told the *NY Post* that the *Fearless Girl*, is nothing more than an advertising stunt by State Street Global and threatened a lawsuit, claiming the statue violates his right, under the Visual Artist's Rights Act of 1990, to not have the meaning of his work distorted.

But Shannon Price of Yale Law School's *Media Freedom and Information Access Clinic*, has weighed in on this issue arguing that Visbal's, *Fearless Girl* and First Amendment rights would likely be given priority due to the overwhelming amount of legal precedent in similar cases.

Despite this, the city still elected to move the statue to the New York Stock Exchange. And though the *Fearless Girl* seems to have lost the political battle against Wall Street's Bull, there is an ironic victory in her new placement. Di Modica originally dropped his sculpture at the New York Stock Exchange in December of 1989 only to have the city remove it and ultimately place it on Broadway, where it can be found today.

The reality is, though Di Modica originally made the bull to symbolize Wall Street's "prosperity and strength," that strength and prosperity has come at the expense of equality for women. And there is no better place for the *Fearless Girl* than directly opposite this rampant bull, ready to halt its charge.

I Am You *by Anonymous*

Before my assault I was known as the girl who knew what she wanted and had a plan for herself. A girl with outstanding grades, was involved, had a strong work ethic, and had support from her loved ones. But I was also, a girl who was extremely quiet, who was still on the search for her individuality. Like any other romance story begins, my story began the same way. There was this guy. A free spirit. A guy who came into my life miraculously, but eventually became the small factor of my glorious downfall.

So, obviously we were polar opposites. I was uptight. He was laid back. I liked order. He liked being spontaneous. So one day, I disguised myself and became the girl I wasn't. I changed. I transformed from the studious girl to the girl who partied every weekend with a girlfriend. Who began talking to other people, like this guy and I made "friends." I felt like I was missing out on this life and I kept exploring and becoming more open. However, I was blindly affecting the relationship with my family back at home. So everything seemed to be going amazingly until that night.

The night of the incident I ran away from home in the middle of the night to hang out with the guy I really liked and with friends and friends of friends. However, what I thought to be a party turned out to be me and 3 drunk guys.

The next morning, I woke up still in their bed. Paralyzed. Unable to move. I know I should've left and gone home but I was too traumatized to move, and I was too ashamed to go home. I couldn't help but stare at the ceiling and ask myself: why did this happen? How did this happen? Why am I so stupid to not have seen it coming? After continually asking myself these meaningless questions and coming to the realization that what happened was real, I stormed out.

Walking to my friend's house, I felt naked. Alone. Humiliated. And I didn't want to show my face at home so I never went back. I disappeared from the map. No one was able to find me, hear from me, nothing. I had never told a soul because I was afraid. Afraid of having something so embarrassing and revolting to be out in the open. As a result, it manifested and I had felt cheap. Every time I went to school it caused a tremendous outburst. What seemed so little a task as doing a presentation, became those dreaded moments in which I felt eyes burning through my clothes and I felt naked. I had lost my confidence. I lost track of my schooling and I had to keep asking myself Why me? And What now?

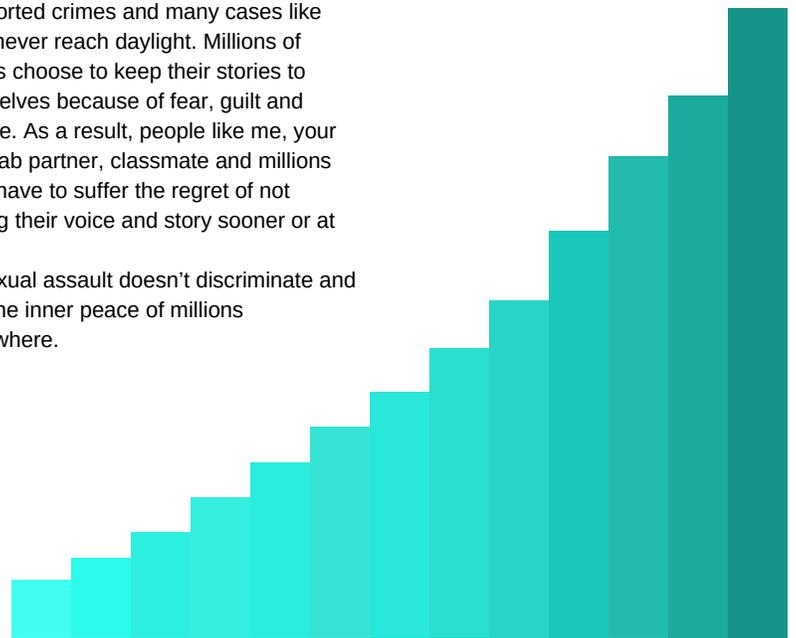
I was 19 when I sexually assaulted. which in short robbed me of peaceful days and restful nights. Although time has passed, I have not recovered from it. I am far from ever having a full recovery. However, it has begun to close and I am more eager to take on the recovery. It takes time and demands support from loved ones. It becomes emotionally and physically draining. There will be good days, and days where you just don't want to get up and wish you were a different person. But that's OK. That is the essence of healing.

Many of you may be wondering who I am. Could you be my friend from History? Or my partner for our Speech presentation? Or are you just the guy that sits quietly in my Algebra class? Well, here it is. I am among you. I stroll the halls just like you and try my best to have the energy to make it to a burdening 8 am class. However, there is no need to put my name to this paper because this is my story, and my story is one out of millions that go untold. Possibly it's your friend, or your lab partner, or just the person sitting next to you who is facing the same trauma and you just don't know.

Sexual assault is one of the most unreported crimes and many cases like mine never reach daylight. Millions of victims choose to keep their stories to themselves because of fear, guilt and shame. As a result, people like me, your BFF, lab partner, classmate and millions more have to suffer the regret of not owning their voice and story sooner or at all.

Sexual assault doesn't discriminate and robs the inner peace of millions everywhere.

Word of advice? Don't sell yourself low so easily. I know it's easier to blame oneself, to forget that person who did something stupid, to be hateful towards yourself. I should've been nicer to her because I know she was broken and needed someone. It's easier said than done and it takes time. Secondly, be vocal when something happens to you. You might be thinking, "This will never happen to me." You never believe that anything that dreadful can happen to you until it happens. God forbid, but if it does happen, say something. You may be flooded with embarrassment, guilt, or shame, but you'll be thanking yourself when you do. I gave those boys power over me when I decided to keep silent and it will remain the biggest regret I will ever make. I wish I can go back in time and undo things, but that is a waste of time and effort to fantasize about. It happens. But every time we fall into darkness, we survive and we conquer.



THE 13TH HONORS POSTER SHOWCASE MAY 1-2, 2019

Honors students present their semester projects for each Honors course taken in the Spring 2019 semester.



Honors students in Hudson County Community College present their projects for each Honors course taken in the Spring 2019 semester. The annual Honors Poster/Project Showcase was hosted by the Honors program on May 2nd at the Culinary Conference Center. Honors students celebrate the culture of research, scholarship, and creative endeavors by completing a final project in the form of a poster to present to their peers, faculty, and administrative staff in a collegial setting, which closely resembles an academic conference.

This Spring, honors speeches and the poster displays happened simultaneously. A broad and inclusive range of academic majors were represented during these events, since students were manning their poster showcasing and presented speeches to certain panelists. The variety of topics for each honors course was a projection of how diverse and creative honors students think. In fact, in the STEM division, a project entitled "Profit Maximization" was featured, the English division highlighted a project on the role of wealth in school funding, while the Humanities and Social Sciences division shed a light on a project that focused on Cambodian Shadow Theater.



President Chris Reber, Dr. Eric Friedman, Dr. John Marlin, and instructors committed to their honors classes were seen actively interacting with the students, which proved how there is great value in being part of such an intellectual community.

Capping the event was the Honors Dinner and the award ceremony, which recognized the best posters among the 21 nominees during the showcase. Angie Chiroque, Mellina Sihombing, and Lyndsey Lara were each honored for their outstanding posters. James Spinella was also recognized as the evening's best speech. And additional certificates of recognition were given to Dexter Santos, Abderahim Salhi, Angie Chiroque, Safa Maheen Aboobakker, and Mario Perales for their paper presentations and exceptional research.

"...there is great value in being part of such an intellectual community."

Participating in the Honors program means having a platform where there is not only a continuous flow of learning, but also a community of excellent and innovative students and faculty, who work towards promoting academic and professional growth. As a whole, the primary goal of this annual event is to allow students to have an outlet to present research that interests them and to cultivate a community where students are both recognized and are able to recognize the excellence of their peers.



Felony Disenfranchisement

by Mary Claire Decina

The liberty that Americans possess has given our country its beauty and corresponding responsibilities. Government officials are elected by the people and for the people. It is every individual's right to be able to vote for the person who, they believe, can best serve the country. The right to vote was declared by the Supreme Court as a fundamental right of every individual. However, there are states that continue to place qualifications on voting rights. One of the factors that greatly affect this standard would be a person's criminal record. But politicians and Americans of all sorts seem to have conflicting views on the issue of felony disenfranchisement; which, according to the US Legal website, is "the prohibition of one person from voting on the reason that [they have] been convicted of a felony". There are two different perspectives on this issue: one is the point-of-view that felons still have the right to voice their opinions and take a political stance, and the other is that felons no longer have forfeited the right to vote.

Felony disenfranchisement occurs when individuals who have committed serious crimes, such as a felony, lose their right to vote. It is believed that this is one of the corresponding consequences that convicts have to face as they return to their life after prison. The disenfranchisement varies as to whether the punishment is permanent, or if suffrage is restored after the individual has served a sentence or completed parole. And of course, felony disenfranchisement varies by state. While Vermont and Maine allow convicted felons to vote from prison, states like Kentucky require felons to seek restoration from the governor.

Opponents of felony disenfranchisement argue that felons should not lose their voting rights because it violates the Voting Rights of 1965, which prohibits states from imposing racially discriminatory voting practices. Felony disenfranchisement policies are believed to have a disproportionate impact by race. The disproportionate incarceration rates among African-Americans leads opponents of the consequence, to believe these laws are simply suppressing African-American voters and should therefore be repealed. The argument is based on statistics that show one in every 13 African-Americans lost their voting rights due to incarceration, and that African-Americans who meet the voting age are four times more likely to lose their voting right than all other adults in other racial groups combined. The 2018 US Census showed African-Americans only compose 13% of the entire U.S. population. Statistics also show that out of the entire population of prison inmates, 37.8% are African-Americans.



(AP/Rob Carr)

On the other hand, proponents believe that felons should not be given the right to vote. In Felony Disenfranchisement, proponents argue that the people who have committed felonies have broken the social contract that the members of the society follow subconsciously. They also claim that since these individuals have committed crimes against society, they have poor judgment and should no longer have the right to express their voices in political decision making. The proponents stand by the thought which comes from The Sentencing Project and states, "if one is unable to abide by the law, then one should not be able to play a role in the making of laws for everyone else, whether it is directly or indirectly."

Former Washington Secretary of State, Sam Reed, has additionally weighed in on the issue explaining the basis of his states' laws. Reed has stated, "We absolutely believe in civil rights and will continue to work toward equality in the criminal justice system, but at the same time, we firmly believe that it is appropriate and reasonable for society to deny voting rights to people who commit serious crimes."

In regards to the claim that felony disenfranchisement is racially discriminatory, proponents argue that the reason felony disenfranchisement greatly affects the African-American population is because of the higher crime rate among this demographic. It is believed that it is not because of racism, but because of "black criminality." It has been pointed out that felons of other races still face the exact same restrictions and it is not only applicable to African-Americans. The argument holds that, Justice has nothing to do with race as disenfranchisement also affects six million Americans.

As both sides present their arguments and garner support, it is unclear whether felony disenfranchisement will remain. But we can be certain that regardless of the outcome, we are taking part in one of the major questions to voting rights of our generation. Americans will have to decide whether this is the next step towards an inclusive democracy or if felony disenfranchisement will continue to divide the American public.



Spotlights

Get to know inspiring HCCC current Honors students, alumni, and faculty.

Student Spotlight: Michelle Vintimilla

by Rebecca Richardson

When in Rome...or when in Hangzhou! Last summer, Michelle Vintimilla experienced an educational abroad adventure of a lifetime. Through LoPair, a Chinese foreign language program, Vintimilla was matched with a family who lived in the center of Hangzhou's buzzing urban culture. In essence, LoPair is an exchange language program for foreigners. Vintimilla's mission was to tutor her host family's nine-year-old daughter, Iris, English for three months, while taking Mandarin classes two times a week for three hours. Iris was already fluent in English when matched with Vintimilla. Most of their work together consisted of creative writing prompts to help Iris express herself more through her writing. While tutoring Iris, Vintimilla was introduced to the educational standards put on children in Chinese culture.

"It seemed that in certain things, quantity mattered more than quality," said Vintimilla looking back on the times she had to remind Iris of the importance of quality over quantity. "I remember she had to perform sixty sit-ups in one minute for her P.E. class, but her form wasn't correct while doing them. I tried to correct her form, but she insisted, 'it doesn't matter, as long as I do them fast enough in under five-minutes.'"

The two came to have a sibling relationship, as they spent a lot of time together on day trips to museums, different cities, and landmarks, such as the China Knives, Scissors and Swords Museum in Hangzhou and the Shanghai Science and Technology Museum. The China Knives, Scissors and Swords Museum contained the evolution of weapons and utensils in Chinese history, which was more interesting than one would think just by reading the name. The Shanghai Science and Technology Museum was among Vintimilla's favorite experiences in Shanghai, where art met science in interactive atmospheres all throughout the museum, with MRI displays of the human body, and mechanical flying bulls.



Hangzhou had a lot of lessons to offer Vintimilla, such as her observations of Chinese social-norms and cues. She noticed foreigners were more than welcomed by residents and was even asked by locals to take pictures with her. Women's fashion in China, particularly in Shanghai, was modest even in the high humid temperatures that the season had to offer. Vintimilla also noticed the clear distinction between foreigner and citizen, despite one's knowledge of the language.

"One of the friends I made was originally from South Africa and fluent in Mandarin. Knowing the language and being a resident can only take you so far in China, as a foreigner. My friend lived in a part of the city where other foreigners lived amongst each other. It's not like Jersey City where there is a mix in cultures and ethnicities all throughout the city."

Overall, Michelle's cultural exchange experience is hopefully only one of many in her future. Time abroad is encouraged not only for the adventure, but to see ourselves in different perspectives.



It Takes Time *by Mario Perales*

In July of 1848, a group of 68 women and 32 men signed their name to the Declaration of Sentiments and 12 additional resolutions. These documents drew influence from the Declaration of Independence but sought to correct the lack of representation for women under the law. The group recognized that this feat would require women be granted the right to vote and thus, founded the Women's Suffrage movement. But their movement was slow moving in the face of opposition and internal contention; as a result, it would be decades before women's suffrage was accomplished.

As time continued, so did the nation's reluctance toward women's suffrage. In 1868, as many Americans rallied in support of the 14th Amendment, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who had written the Declaration of Sentiments, were keen to point out that the amendment failed women. Not only was there no mentioning of women, but the amendment specifically outlined protections for "male" citizens. It was the first reference to gender in the constitution and would become a major hurdle on the road to Women's Suffrage. Women could no longer press their legal claim to voting rights as citizens because these rights were solely reserved for men.

But despite these obstacles, suffragettes refused to stop advocating for their innate rights. Susan B. Anthony would go on to form the National Woman Suffrage Association and draft an initial version of what would eventually become the 19th Amendment. First introduced in Congress, in 1878, the 19th Amendment would not be passed in both houses until June 4th, 1919—after 12 states had already granted voting rights to women.

This is perhaps one of the single most misunderstood aspects of change in the modern era—it takes time! Not everyone can be converted overnight. Women like Lucretia Mott, Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton understood this fact, but that does not mean they ever stopped advocating for their rights to be recognized.

If you feel you have waited far too long to see women in prominent fields of work, or more importantly, justice for victims of sexual assault, you are not wrong. Many of the issues women face today existed in some form or another in the 19th and 20th centuries as well. Sadly, it may be some time until the rest of the world fully recognizes these issues. Despite this, it is up to each of us to persist in the fight for equality.

In the last election we saw just that, as record numbers of women were elected to serve in congress. Women turned out in record numbers at the polls as well and made up 52 percent of the electorate. Similarly so, today we see record numbers of women running for president. The #MeToo movement has even helped women across the nation see justice brought to predatory men. Progress is here.

The best thing we can do today is exercise our rights. Get involved, and speak out against those who would perpetuate inequality, while voting for those who would transform our nation for the better. After all, voting is the most powerful tool in a democracy.



Photo of "Your Vote Has Power" by Yolanda Lopez

Meet the 2018-2019 Staff



Ysabelle Calara- Ysabelle is a chemistry major. She plans to graduate in Fall 2019. She is inspired to do research not only in STEM, but across different disciplines to create change in the larger community.

Mary Claire Elizabeth Decina- Mary is a nursing major. She aims to attend a medical school to earn a Doctorate of Medicine degree.

Racco Angelo Maristela- Racco is a chemistry major. Maristela looks forward to becoming an orthopedic surgeon and helping those in need.

Mario Perales- Mario is a history major who plans to transfer and study political science at a four-year university and then attend law school.

Rebecca Richardson- Rebecca is an English major. Richardson is a member of Sigma Kappa Delta honors society and is an Editor on the Crossroads Magazine and Honors Rhapsody Newsletter. She plans on continuing her education at a four-year university and to become a high school English teacher.

Kailyn Segovia- Kailyn is a theatre major. Besides writing and editing for the Rhapsody Newsletter, she is President of the Theatre Club and Treasurer of PTK. Segovia plans to transfer to a four-year university to study marine biology and marine mammal training.

Michelle Vintimilla- Michelle is a psychology major. She is the president of the Psychology Club and Psi Beta. Vintimilla plans to transfer to Boston University where she will study psychology with a concentration in neuroscience.



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