Brazil is dynamic and colorful, and this was apparent even before setting foot in the country. My classmates and I began studying Brazil in the fall 2019 honors seminar Brazilian Culture: Conquest to Contemporary with Professor Flores. In the class, we were exposed to the many different facets of Brazil, from its indigenous peoples to the music. We also had the opportunity to research and present on subjects, such as soccer and the Amazon Rainforest. Equipped with this knowledge, we then embarked on a ten-day trip to Brazil with prior insight into everything that we were going to experience. This ensured that we maximized experiencing Brazil’s beautiful culture.

We arrived in the country on January 11th, and everyone was ecstatic to leave behind a New Jersey winter for sunny São Paolo, Brazil. Within hours of our plane touching down, we were piling our plates with Brazilian cuisine and filling glasses with fresh fruit juices. The next day we visited Avenida Paulista and stared down at the city from the tops of buildings. The street was filled with life: men flipping on tight ropes, families biking down the road, huge graffiti murals. While there, we walked through a park of palm trees and toured the São Paolo Museum of Art. It was amazing how easily nature, art, and everyday life could fit seamlessly together on this one avenue.

We later attended the Mocidade Alegre samba school, where we learned the basics of samba. Everywhere we looked there was color, movement, music and women in bright, elaborate dresses – the whole place was a feast for our eyes and ears.

After a few days in São Paulo, we took a short flight to Rio de Janeiro. As the plane descended, we caught glimpses of Christ the Redeemer glowing high in the night sky. When we stepped out of the airport, he was still visibly floating above the rest of the city. On our first morning in the city, we took the long walk up flights and flights of stairs to see the statue. At the top of Corcovado Mountain, we stood
next to the Redeemer with a view of the Maracanã stadium, Sugarloaf Mountain, ocean, and greenery. We embarked on a historical tour of Rio the next day, where we had the ability to take in the quainter parts of the city, including a beautifully ornate church. After exploring the Museum of Tomorrow, we walked to the “Ethnicities” mural: an enormous painting of five unique faces that we had learned about in class! Later that day we visited Ipanema Beach, a few minutes from our hotel. We drank from coconuts and stayed in the warm water until the glowing red sun set over the mountain.

The next and final day in Rio, we took a cable car to the top of Sugarloaf Mountain, across from Christ the Redeemer, and took in the beautiful views of the city before spending our last few hours at the beach.

Our last few days in São Paulo included visits to the Museo Afro Brasil and the Museo do Futbol. In the Museo Afro Brasil, our tour guide led us around various artifacts and pieces of art that were important to Afro Brazilian culture. It was great to really focus on the culture of one specific subsect of Brazilians and explore their history in the country. The Museo do Futbol was inside of an old World Cup stadium, and there were many interactive elements that we were able to experience as we learned about the overwhelming impact of soccer in Brazil. Our last day was spent in the Madalena and Pinheiros neighborhoods, where we learned how to graffiti and had the chance to paint our own murals!

The ten days we spent in Brazil were brimming with culture. From the hilly roads of São Paulo to the awe-inspiring Rio views, the country was more bold and vibrant than we could ever have imagined in the classroom.
From Morris Plains, New Jersey, Pranya Gaddipati ’23 reflects on a bittersweet end to her first year at Rutgers.

“My first year at Rutgers University was rewarding. By the start of the spring semester, I was content with my academic progress and felt as if I had just begun to fully immerse in the college experience. However, as a student in the healthcare field, I understood the serious nature of the pandemic that was escalating and was not surprised when the university announced that the remainder of the spring semester would be virtual. Looking back at the abrupt transition from the routine I had established to a brand new virtual platform for instruction and communication, it was definitely bittersweet. While I left behind the communities that I became part of at Rutgers, I found myself becoming more involved in my own community back at home. Whether it was sewing masks and fundraising for underserved health care facilities or serving as an Emergency Medical Technician, I had the opportunity to give back to my own community. The COVID semester provided me with time to not only spend with my family, but to also reflect on the needs of those around me during a challenging year that brought significant changes to daily life, education, and health. Thus, when I look back at how my first year ended, I not only see a journey that I left behind, but also a new, transformative experience.”

As a ‘19-’20 honors student leader, Chandravathi Sayani ‘22 shares how she creatively pivoted to virtual programming.

“The transition to an online platform proved to be difficult for many people; professors had to find an engaging way to shift their curriculum online, while students had to get accustomed to the “school from home” environment. As the Peer Leader in McCormick Suites (PLIM), I
had to expand my creativity. How was I going to keep my residents engaged remotely? I found that by focusing my attention on the goal for each event, I was able to think “outside of the box” and attain the determination to make best use of the available resources. This gave me the confidence needed to perform my duties as the PLIM. As such, I decided to host a virtual relaxation/hangout session in which students had the opportunity to connect with each other and play online games. Despite the challenges we are facing, it is important to take this as a learning opportunity. Rather than dwell on the difficulty of this transition, take this as a chance to learn and get creative with how you can give back to our community! There are many opportunities to assist COVID-19 relief efforts, aid Yemen’s humanitarian crisis, and support the Black Lives Matter Movement. It also gives you the satisfaction of making a difference in society :)

During her final year, Melissa Gotlib ’20 thinks back to how she summoned her voice as an Honors Ambassador and as the SASHP Director of Social Media to help recruit prospective students for the Class of 2024. She is currently at Nielsen as an Analyst on their Innovation Team.

“Through the Honors Program, I found countless opportunities to get involved while holding leadership positions and giving back to my community. I became an Honors Ambassador as a freshman, and eventually became a Senior Ambassador. I always loved to volunteer at Scholars Days, so I was disappointed when our last two spring 2020 Scholars Days were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as the SASHP planned their first ever virtual Scholars Day, I was happy to help to moderate the panel. It was great to see how many prospective students attended the virtual event, and I’m glad that I was able to provide assistance to them during this challenging time. As the Director of Social Media, I also directed these students to our social media pages. Before we had to leave campus, I was planning an Instagram campaign to help to recruit the future honors class. The campaign involved having current honors students take over the Instagram account for a day to share their experiences and answer questions from prospective students. After seeing how many current honors students volunteered and how many questions we received, it’s clear that this campaign was a big success—and it’s clear that the Honors Program fosters such a wonderful community regardless of the circumstances.”

Honors Alumna Grace Chi SAS ’14 has been committed to giving back to our students by volunteering for the Honors Summer Shadowing Experience, which gives honors students an opportunity to shadow honors alumni at their place of work for a day. She offers the following insight to our graduates.

“Rutgers students have found ways to safely celebrate, find jobs and on-board remotely, pivot from expected internships, and build their networks; all in spite of staying home
in a dizzying hiring market. This semester, I’ve had the joy of virtually work-shopping interviews and resumes with half a dozen students - but only because they had the courage to ask (nicely). Some have already followed up with a new job. With the Honors Summer Shadowing Experience, we quickly pivoted from the typical site visit into a video chat. We discussed the new state of learning and job hunting, blending multidisciplinary interests, entrepreneurship, and top characteristics for success. In the same vein, successful companies changed gears quickly to support and sympathize with the community while bracing for their own long-term survival. Professionals found creative ways to volunteer and boost skills (there’s always free learning somewhere!). Embrace the uncertainty and lean into the current situation.”

Former Rutgers President Richard L. McCormick taught his first interdisciplinary honors seminar, “Presidential Elections in United States History,” and describes teaching Rutgers honors students before and during the pandemic.

“Our Rutgers honors students are really smart! In spring 2020, I led a terrific group of seventeen sitting around a seminar table discussing presidential elections in American history. We gave about equal attention to a half-dozen historical elections and to the 2020 election then (and now) in progress—and to comparing elections and presidents. After spring break, COVID-19 forced us out of the classroom and onto the internet. Because we had developed a strong rapport before going online and because the students were so smart and loyal, the final twelve classes, were terrific. In fact, I had perfect student attendance at every one.”
SASHP CLASS OF 2020
FOUR YEARS IN REVIEW

LEADERSHIP
HONORS AMBASSADORS 36
TUTORS 28
PEER MENTORS 42

PEER MENTOR SUMMER GATHERINGS

WINTER FORMALS

TOP 3 MAJORS
- CELL BIOLOGY AND NEUROSCIENCE
- BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
- POLITICAL SCIENCE
- PSYCHOLOGY
- COMPUTER SCIENCE

TOP 3 HOMETOWNS
- EAST BRUNSWICK
- EDISON
- PISCATAWAY

TOP 3 NEWSLETTERS
by Julianna Rossano '20
Student Director of Honors Media

"YOU REALLY AUTUMN KNOW" (SEP. 2019)
"THE TWILIGHT ZONE" (OCT. 2019)
"HOME SWEET RUTGERS" (DEC. 2019)

SASHP GLOBAL EXPERIENCES

Summer Reading & Induction Ceremony 2016

HONORS SCHOLARS 147
GRADUATED W/ A 4.0 CUM GPA 10
HENRY RUTGERS SCHOLAR AWARDS 11

2016 2017 2018 2019

Rutgers 250 Honors Colloquium - Fall 2016

SASHP Alumni Newsletter Summer 2020
Andy Rears
“I have to thank the Honors Program for my Brett Hall dorming experience, study abroad China trip, and all of the chances to meet fellow honors students at events like the Artists Collective and Winter Formal! College wouldn’t be the same without this awesome program, and I can’t wait to visit as a proud alumnus!”

Wenxuan (Cecilia) Huang
“What I will miss the most about Rutgers: the super stressful senior year and thesis writing process; it was a wonderful academic journey learning to become a researcher. I will also miss the time I spent with my cohort, especially how we kept supporting each other throughout the time and rejoiced at the rewarding outcomes of our hard work.”

Genesis Perez
“My favorite memory at Rutgers and the SASHP was getting to meet so many amazing students and professors. It was so much fun living with and taking classes with my closest friends. I will cherish the memories from these past four years for a long time!”

Hemisha Sangani
“I am going to miss the people and the community (family) that I found at Rutgers and within the SASHP. My favorite memories at Rutgers have been the countless programs that I have attended where I had the chance to meet such amazing and genuine people as well as the honors interdisciplinary seminar with an embedded trip to Brazil.”

Esha Rao
“To all those graduating in the years to come, remember that time is irreversible, so make the most of each and every moment because it truly flies by. There will be fun times and tough times, but if you surround yourself with people who support you and appreciate the opportunities that you do have then I promise you at the end of it all your time at Rutgers will be unforgettable! Try something new. Don’t be afraid of failure. And always be grateful.”

Omar Ani
“What will I miss most about Rutgers? The people! My friends, mentors, advisors and everyone I was lucky enough to run into during my four years at Rutgers. My college experience would not have been the same without them.”

Olivia Di Trolio
“SASHP has given me so many great memories, but my favorite has to be going to France for two weeks! I got to study a medieval monastery and explore French history while creating amazing memories that I will never forget!”

Thomas Wood
“I will miss many things about Rutgers. Academically, I will miss my research lab and the mentorship of Dr. Nakamura as well as all of the other world-class professors here. Socially, I will miss the great friends that I made through the Rutgers University Filipino Martial Arts club, their support and camaraderie created a wonderful undergraduate experience.”
“The U.S. significantly changed between 2016 and 2020, and now the whole world is changing. The current pandemic raises real fears and anxieties for everyone, and of course for us as graduating seniors. However, the passing of a particular time or experience can’t erase the fact that it was once present. Our current situation does not negate our experience thus far in college, our shared years in New Brunswick and our personal growth.”

“For every one of us, at some point, Rutgers has become a home. And this is important to understand because, as many of us have returned home to our parents it also meant that we are leaving our home—our Rutgers home.”

“We are seemingly the generation that will need to fix a lot of problems in our society, but given everything we’ve been through these four years, I trust all of us are capable. We are resilient, we are class of 2020!”

***Select graduate’s name to view their Rutgers graduation video clip.***

**Class of 2020 SAS Honors Scholars**

- Kinza Abbas
- Ashley Abrams
- Mona Ahmed
- Natasha Almanzar-Sanchez
- Richa Amin
- Mohamad Omar Ani
- Antoinette Armocida
- Joseph Ariola
- Sandra Ashamalla
- Devin Barzallo
- Isaac Bazian
- Lior Ben-Zvi
- Lorik Berisha
- Nico Blasucci
- Natalia Blaustein
- Olivia Boss
- Kieran Brenneman
- Alya Bukhari
- Joel Cabrera
- Melissa Cecchini
- Emily Chan
- Gabriela Chandrika
- Rebecca Chanin
- Ankita Chatterjee
- Aditya Chauhan
- Min Sung Cho
- Amarachi Chukwuma
- Ryan Cirincione
- Rebecca Claffey
- Amelia Cruz
- Anna Czykier
- Zully Delgado
- Olivia Di Trollo
- Myrhiam Diarra
- Rosemary Diaz
- Yuma Do
- Andrey Efremchev
- Ashley Eger
- Salma Emara
- Veronia Fahmy
- John Fastenau
- Angela Febres
- Sonya Gande
- Nicolette Garthe
- Ryan Goldstein
- Jennifer Gololobov
- Gloria Gomez
- Stephania Gonzalez
- Mena
- Taylor Good
- Melissa Gottlib
- Jessica Graham
- Sandra Guirguis
- Ayesha Gumani
- Dilara Guvercin
- Saleh Houshmand
- Wenxuan (Cecilia) Huang
- Minh Huynh
- Zarghona Imtiaz
- Dante Intindola
- Saloni Jain
- Urmia Jain
- Mohita Jariwala
- Marisa Joel
- Sarah John
- Jay Joshi
- Amanpreet Kaur
- Diljeet Kaur
- Nora Kiledjian
- Dokyum Kim
- Bradley Kizar
- Nicole Koc
- Kaveesha Kodituwakku
- Shanmukh Koka
- Jessica Krass
- Aleknya Kunaparaju
- Jonathan Kunkel-Jure
- Kabir Kuriyan
- Talia Lang
- Claudia Lee
- Jordan Lee
- Jordan Levy
- Erica Liao
- Eric Mao
- Noah Martz
- Therese McCusker
- Shannon Meledathu
- Nandini Mishra
- Mahinaz Mohsen
- Celine Molfetta
- Ayushi Naik
- Teresa Ngo
- Sophia Nitkin
- Mitali Parikh
- Roshni Parikh
- Adash Pathe
- Aisha Patel
- Devanshi Patel
- Mayuri Patel
- Naavik Patel
- Nishita Patel
- Ashina Patla
- Genesis Perez
- Neida Perez
- Akashra Premanand
- Ritika Rahavan
- Shivani Raizada
- Vivek Rajan
- Swati Rajput
- Pranav Ramesh
- Esha Rao
- Pooja Rao
- Tricia Mae Raquepo
- Andrew Rears
- Joseph Redling-Pace
- Julianna Rossano
- Dylan Ruskanen
- Samantha Salem
- Hemisha Sangani
- Shreeya Sawant
- Shreya Sethi
- Yonatan Shargian
- Isaac Shielower
- Sophia Sheldon
- Daniel Shirley
- Tara Shrier
- Erin Smith
- Katie Franklin
- Marina Soliman
- Taslim Soomar
- Megan Stanton
- Leigh Stone
- Katelyn Sudak
- Aashka Suvarnakar
- Cailin Swantek
- Francisco Tengey
- Saumyaa Thomthundiyil
- Usman Toor
- Austin Tsai
- Nina Wang
- Michelle Wong
- Thomas Wood
- Zhigang Wu
- Sarah Zanzoul
- Kenneth Zheng
- Theresa Zieser
- Ingrid Zimmerman
2020 Summer Reading Program

This summer, all new Honors Program students read *Tell Me Who You Are*, by Winona Guo and Priya Vulchi. The summer reading committee selected this book in February, but it was an especially prescient choice in light of the events of the summer of 2020. The book was written by two recent New Jersey high school graduates who took a gap year before college and traveled the country interviewing people about their experiences of race, culture, and identity. Students discussed these critical issues, while building community as they learned from each other.

Meet Our New Advising Dean

Cynthia N. Sánchez Gómez joined the SASHP team in September 2019 as the assistant dean for student engagement where she coordinates honors global experiences, supports honors admissions, and advises the Artists Collective. Cynthia earned a B.A. in Mathematics and Spanish from Rutgers-Newark and her Ed.M. in College Student Affairs through the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers–New Brunswick. She enjoys traveling, watching soccer, and spending time with her family. She is thrilled to be working with the honors student community!

Life in the Age of Algorithms

The Spring 2020 Honors Colloquium examined “life in the age of algorithms: promise and peril in big data” through Cathy O’Neil’s book *Weapons of Math Destruction*. Students heard faculty guest lectures about topics ranging from algorithms in the criminal justice system to K-12 teacher evaluations. According to course evaluations by students, the course expanded “our knowledge on data mining and how it’s used maliciously everywhere in our world, from job applications to simply walking down your street.” It encouraged students to “probe deeper into several problems that we encounter on a daily basis and find the root cause of it, as well as potential solutions.” One student professed, “I LOVED THE BOOK. THE READING IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL AND I RECOMMEND THAT EVERYONE READS THE BOOK.”