

COVID-19 Update

Remember to wear a face covering indoors in university buildings, follow health and safety guidelines, and check the COVID-19 website for up-to-date information.

More Information —(<https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu/>)



([/news](#)).

Rutgers University-Newark Students and Alumna Recognized for Community Activism

By Ferlanda Fox Nixon

Date July 31, 2015

Share



(Left to right: Kareem Willis, Danielle Cooper, Julianna Gonska, and Victoria Lloyd; not shown: Ramon Perez)

Photo credit: Ferlanda Fox Nixon

Newark Pride Week 2015 has come and gone, and four Rutgers University-Newark (RU-N) students and one newly minted RU-N alumna closed the occasion with honors and accolades attributable to their activism in the LGBTQA community. Celebrating its 10th anniversary on July 18, 2015, Circle of Friends (COF), a nonprofit organization that provides financial support to college students committed to promoting

diversity in Greater Newark, New Brunswick, and Camden, New Jersey, bestowed \$1,000 individual awards upon **Ramon Perez, Victoria Lloyd, Danielle Cooper, and Julianna Gonska.**

Perez received COF's Angel Claudio Award, which is presented to individuals who educate the community about HIV/AIDS and its prevention. Perez is a member of the RU-N OUTfront Mentor program, a peer mentorship initiative that provides students opportunities to become involved in creating a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for LGBTQA students on campus. He also is a member of the RU-N OUTspoken Speakers Bureau, an organization of trained peer educators who share their personal stories and experiences as LGBTQA people to help humanize a community that is often stigmatized. The Elizabeth, New Jersey, resident is a junior who majors in marketing with a concentration in fashion and a minor in theater. He dreams of one day becoming a world-renowned fashion designer after obtaining a master of business administration from Rutgers Business School. "I see myself sitting next to Ralph Lauren or Vivienne Westwood," Perez predicts, "as I continue to display my love and compassion for the LGBTQA community."

Lloyd accepted COF's Dean James Credle Award, the namesake of James Credle, a former RU-N assistant dean of student activities. The award is granted to a student designated by the RU-N Women's and Gender Studies Program for his or her provision of outstanding service to veterans and their dependents and students with disabilities, as well as exemplary advocacy of health care, social justice, human dignity, and diversity issues. Lloyd is the former president of RU Pride, the RU-N undergraduate student organization for LGBTQA interests. She received her bachelor's degree in May 2015 in psychology with a minor in LGBTQ studies and now lives and works in Egg Harbor, New Jersey. "As I map out my plans for the future, I know I'm going to miss the time and energy spent organizing and executing the many activities of Pride Week," reminisces Lloyd, "particularly the spring Drag Show."

Gonska and Cooper each earned COF's JanHerman Veenker Award, given to domestic and international students who promote diverse communities in all parts of the world, especially Africa. Gonska is a senior pursuing two majors -- English and psychology. She interns in the RU-N LGBTQ and Diversity Resource Center, where, among other responsibilities, she serves as coordinator of the literature festival. A member of RU Pride and engaged in on-campus events that address LGBTQA issues since her freshman year, she is an active participant in the OUTfront Mentor program and the OUTspoken Speakers Bureau. Upon graduation, Gonska hopes to further her studies in the area of social psychology. "I'm interested in transracial identity issues, particularly as they relate to Korean adoptees like me," she asserts. Raised in Kinnelon, New Jersey, Gonska lives in RU-N residential housing during the academic year.

Cooper is a junior who majors in theater and minors in video production. She aspires to produce films that are LGBTQA-specific but embrace diversity in its broadest sense. "I want to make movies that show respect for the human journey and the rights of everyone to live, thrive, and survive," notes Cooper. Cooper hails from Maplewood, New Jersey, but currently resides on campus. Her love of Newark will keep her in the city for as long as possible either to house her film company or to pursue a master's degree in fine arts or filmmaking at RU-N.

Also on July 18, Cooper joined **Kareem Willis** as recipients of a 2015 B. Chambers Fund Scholarship in the amount of \$1,000 each. In addition to their significant contributions in their communities as LGBTQA students, Cooper and Willis earned this award based on the merits of a 500-word essay in which each offered solutions to the problem of bullying in the United States.

Willis is a senior whose major is public and nonprofit administration. He also is a candidate in the accelerated master of public administration program at the Rutgers School of Public Affairs and Administration. Willis is involved in many LGBTQA-related activities occurring on campus. In addition to his participation in the OUTfront Mentor program and the OUTspoken Speakers Bureau, he has served as the event coordinator for RU Pride, helping to organize successful affairs such as Phresh Out the Runway, Ally Coming Out Day, Open Mic Nights, Queer Sushi and Karaoke, National Day of Silence, the Drag Show, and the Youth Ball. Consequently and unsurprisingly, this year Willis also received a Human Dignity Award from the Committee to Advance Our Common Purpose and last year accepted a COF award. "I believe my education and experiences at Rutgers University-Newark are preparing me for a rewarding career in youth development or LGBTQA community development," remarks Willis. Born in Jamaica, Willis now resides in Irvington, New Jersey.

All awardees greatly appreciate the recognition they have received from Circle of Friends and the B. Chambers Fund and plan to use their gifts to help defray the cost of their education, further their career goals, or continue their community activism.

(.)

New Brunswick (http://newbrunswick.rutgers.edu/?utm_source=rutgers.edu&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=uwide_sliver_new) |

Newark (http://newark.rutgers.edu/?utm_source=rutgers.edu&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=uwide_sliver_new) |

Camden (http://camden.rutgers.edu/?utm_source=rutgers.edu&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=uwide_sliver_new) |

RBHS/Health (http://academichealth.rutgers.edu/?utm_source=rutgers.edu&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=uwide_sliver_new)

Connect

[Campus Safety \(/about/campus-safety\)](#)

[Contact Us \(/contact-us\)](#)

[Continuing Education \(http://lifelonglearning.rutgers.edu?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer\)](http://lifelonglearning.rutgers.edu?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer)

[Giving to Rutgers \(https://support.rutgers.edu/?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer\)](https://support.rutgers.edu/?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer)

[Graduate Admissions \(http://gradstudy.rutgers.edu?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer\)](http://gradstudy.rutgers.edu?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer)

[Undergraduate Admissions \(https://admissions.rutgers.edu/?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer\)](https://admissions.rutgers.edu/?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer)

[University Maps \(http://rumaps.rutgers.edu?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer\)](http://rumaps.rutgers.edu?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer)

[Universitywide Offices \(/contact-us\)](#)

[Work at Rutgers \(/info/employment\)](#)

[Find a Health Care Provider \(https://rutgershealth.org/\)](https://rutgershealth.org/)

[Rutgers Magazine \(/magazine\)](#)

[University Events \(/events\)](#)

Academic

[Academic Calendars \(https://academicaffairs.rutgers.edu/academic-calendar-directory?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer\)](https://academicaffairs.rutgers.edu/academic-calendar-directory?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer)

[Course Catalogs \(/academics/catalogs\)](#)

[University Libraries \(http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer\)](http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer)

[myRutgers Portal \(https://my.rutgers.edu/?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer\)](https://my.rutgers.edu/?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer)

Notices

[University Operating Status \(/status\)](#)

[Accessibility Resources \(https://radr.rutgers.edu?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer\)](https://radr.rutgers.edu?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer)

[Budget Facts \(/about/budget-facts\)](#)

[Consumer Information \(https://oirap.rutgers.edu/Consumer-Info.html?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer\)](https://oirap.rutgers.edu/Consumer-Info.html?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer)

[Disclosures \(http://oirap.rutgers.edu/Disclosures.html?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer\)](http://oirap.rutgers.edu/Disclosures.html?utm_source=uwide_links&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=footer)

(<https://www.facebook.com/RutgersU>) (<https://www.twitter.com/RutgersU>) (<https://www.instagram.com/RutgersU>)

Subscribe to Rutgers News(https://cloud.comms.rutgers.edu/rt_subscribe)

Rutgers is an equal access/equal opportunity institution. Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to direct suggestions, comments, or complaints concerning any accessibility issues with Rutgers websites to accessibility@rutgers.edu (<mailto:accessibility@rutgers.edu>) or complete the [Report Accessibility Barrier / Provide Feedback \(https://it.rutgers.edu/it-accessibility-initiative/barrierform/\)](https://it.rutgers.edu/it-accessibility-initiative/barrierform/) form.

Copyright ©2021 (<https://dmca.copyright.gov/osp/publish/history.html?search=rutgers&id=940ad7160beceddad62f8fdcfab24002>), Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. All rights reserved. [Contact webmaster \(https://rutgers.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9HtHk5YbcMaZlhb\)](https://rutgers.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9HtHk5YbcMaZlhb) | [Sitemap \(/sitemap\)](#)

```
<script src="https://js.adsrvr.org/up_loader.1.1.0.js" type="text/javascript"></script> <script type="text/javascript"> ttd_dom_ready( function() { if (typeof TTDUniversalPixelApi === 'function') { var universalPixelApi = new TTDUniversalPixelApi(); universalPixelApi.init("u0gwb08", ["xzqg60g"], "https://insight.adsrvr.org/track/up"); } }); </script>
```