

2026

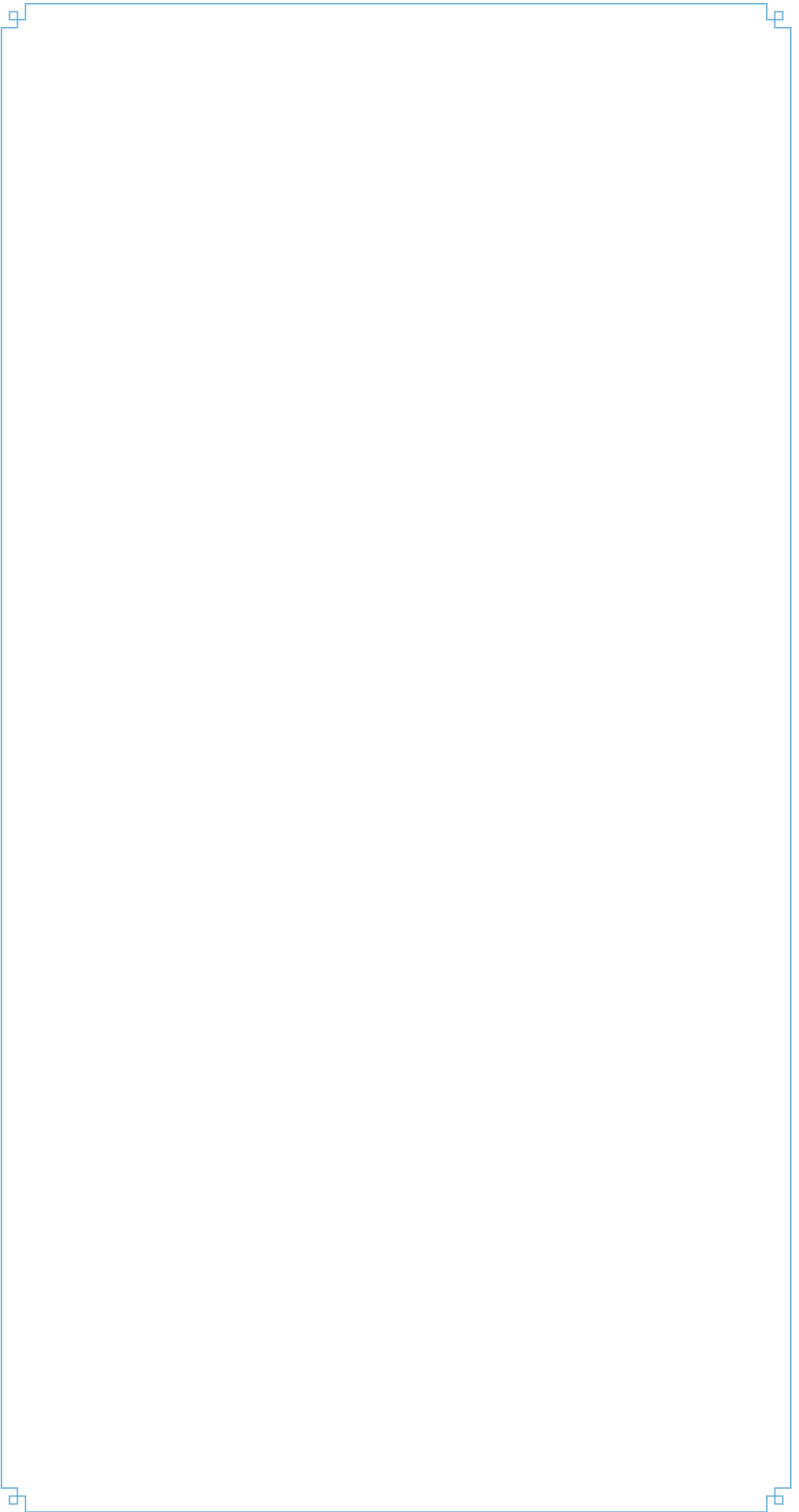


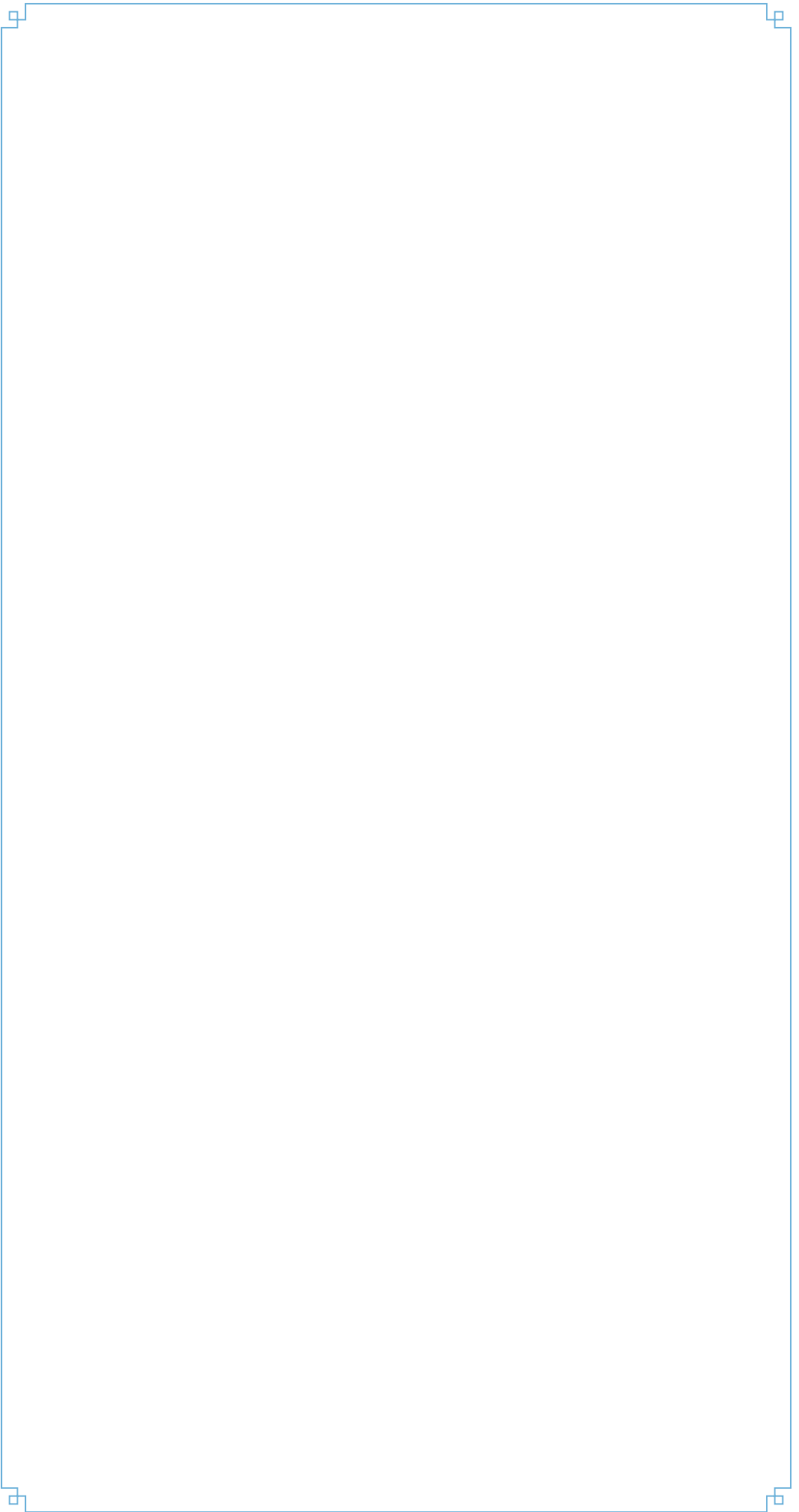
College of Staten Island

DEPARTMENT CEREMONY

**A Celebration of
English Graduates**

May 28, 2026





A Celebration of English Graduates

Class of 2026

College of Staten Island
City University of New York

May 28, 2026

Recital Hall
Center for the Arts

Welcome Letter from the English Department

Dear English Graduates, Family, and Friends,

The faculty and staff of the English department are very pleased to welcome you to the 2026 English Commencement Ceremony.

This year, we host eighty-one English majors and seven MA students graduating across CSI's three graduation dates (January, June, and August). The names listed in this booklet represent years of hard work in several different disciplines: Creative Writing, Linguistics, Literature, Speech Language Pathology, and Composition & Rhetoric. The English department faculty in all of these areas are extremely proud to have taught and mentored these graduates over the past several years, but we owe this occasion to our students themselves: to their desire to learn and to their perseverance in reaching this goal.

We are so happy that you have joined us for this celebration, in which we take a moment to acknowledge and honor this achievement. May our graduates' sense of satisfaction in what they have accomplished have a lasting effect which can energize them for their future endeavors!

On behalf of all of English, warmest congratulations to all.

Christina Tortora, Chair

Special thanks to **Fredi Grasso and **Kathleen Passantino**, our dedicated office staff, who make our students' success possible through their unwavering commitment to the department.*

Program

Opening Remarks

Christina Tortora, Chair of English

A Celebration of English Graduates

Simon Reader, Associate Professor

Undergraduate Address

Jillian Handley

(Introduction by *Simon Reader*)

Graduate Address

Andrea Maldonado

(Introduction by *Sohomjit Ray*, Associate Professor)

Conferral of Certificates

Closing Remarks

Melanie McNulty

Lecturer and Writing Center Director

Recessional

Graduates

MA:

Salena Lezama Rodriguez (Rhetoric)
Andrea Maldonado (Literature)
Eman Odeh (Rhetoric)
Cynthia Rodriguez (Rhetoric)
Amina Selimaj (Rhetoric)
Audrey Valenti (Rhetoric)
Husein Vejselovski (Rhetoric)

§

BA (Honors):

Erin Benedetto (Writing)
Lauren Ferguson (Writing)
Jillian Handley (Literature)
Iva Ivasiuk (Linguistics, SLP)
Deanna Mujaj (Writing)

BA:

Bushra Alrawhani (Literature)
Ariana Amellio (Literature)
Vincent Barillo (Writing)
Giana Biondolillo (Writing)
Alyssa Bischoff (Linguistics, SLP)
Victoria Blunnie (Linguistics, SLP)
Zaida Bonifacio (Writing)
Nicholas Bye (Linguistics, SLP)
Tiffany Campoverde (Literature)
Emily Canzoneri (Linguistics, SLP)
Brianna Carroll (Writing)
Isabella Carrubba (Writing)
Robert Ceci (Writing)
Isabel Cen Wu (Linguistics)

BA (continued):

Aya Chafik (Linguistics, SLP)
Tiffany Chen (Writing)
Jaclyn Cina (Literature)
Layla Cohen (Linguistics, SLP)
Chris Contreras (Literature)
Gianna Crescenzo (Writing)
Danielle Delgorio (Writing)
Aissatou Diallo (Writing)
Tanasha Dickens (Literature)
Fiona Donovan (Writing)
Steven Elcock (Writing)
Laura Fabrizio (Literature)
Natalie Fava (Literature)
Ulises Fernandez (Literature, Writing)
Jillian Gardner (Linguistics, SLP)
Anika Gjeshbitraj (Linguistics, SLP)
Helen Gonzalez (Writing)
Nicole Gonzalez (Linguistics)
Mustafa Hamad (Writing, Literature)
Jessica Hammel (Writing)
Elizabeth Karnbach (Writing)
Leanne Kelly (Writing)
Michael Kitchens (Writing)
Liza Michelle Kotlyarevskiy (Writing)
Jayneese Locicero (Linguistics, SLP)
Joseph Lonardo (Writing)
Taylor Marrero (Linguistics, SLP)
Justin Marson (Linguistics, Writing, SLP)
Alyssa Mascarelli (Writing)
Patricia Materman (Linguistics, SLP)
Brianna McBratney (Writing)

BA (continued):

Michael Meagher (Literature)
Matthew Minichiello (Writing)
Justina Muniz (Writing)
Amanda Musto (Writing)
Glory Palafox-Neri (Writing)
Travon Peters (Linguistics)
Dana Phelan (Writing)
Claudia Plonski (Writing)
Sarafina Pontecorvo (Literature)
Christopher Reilly (Literature)
Madison Rivera (Linguistics, SLP)
Tiffany Rodriguez (Linguistics)
Jamila Rodriguez (Writing)
Luis Rojas Mejia (Writing)
Toby Rubin (Literature)
Gianna Saitta (Linguistics, SLP)
Gian Anthony Saturini (Literature)
Hebah Sayedahmed (Linguistics, SLP)
Lisa Sedita (Literature)
Alexandra Spina (Writing)
John Squires (Writing)
Joseph Tafuri (Writing)
Jada Taggart (Writing)
Caitlyn Thompson (Literature)
Steven Tindall (Writing)
Ariana Usubov (Linguistics, SLP)
Kenny Velez (Writing)
Fatjeta Velovic (Literature)
Sara Villarreal (Linguistics)
Ashley Villegas (Linguistics, SLP)
Ashley Yanis (Literature)

AWARDS:

Graduate Award in English

Amina Selimaj

Williamson Award

Deanna Mujaj

CSI Auxiliary Services Award

Alyssa Bischoff

Creative Writing Award

*Erin Benedetto
Alexandra Spina*

Linguistics Award

Iva Ivasiuk

Literature Award

*Tiffany Campoverde
Ulises Fernandez*

Earl Jacobs Memorial Award

Sarafina Pontecorvo

Ely Stock Memorial Award

Bushra Alrawhani

Grace S. and Thomas Feola Award

Joseph Lonardo

John Conway Memorial Award

Patricia Materman

Rehberg Memorial Award for Poetry

Lauren Ferguson

Speech Science Research Award

Hebah Sayedahmed

Awards Guide

Carla and Arleigh B. Williamson Award: *Awarded to an outstanding student in a Baccalaureate program in the Humanities. The award is given through an endowment established by Professor Arleigh B. Williamson (1888-1986), founder of the College of Staten Island, in memory of his wife, Carla Williamson (1894-1982). The award recognizes the student's scholarly achievement and potential.*

CSI Auxiliary Services Corporation Award for Academic Excellence in English: *Awarded by faculty to an outstanding graduating major.*

English Department Creative Writing Award: *Awarded by the faculty of the English department to an outstanding English major.*

English Department Linguistics Award: *Awarded by the faculty of the English department to an outstanding English major.*

English Department Literature Award: *Awarded by the faculty of the English department to an outstanding English major.*

Earl Jacobs Memorial Award: *Awarded by the faculty of the English department to outstanding English majors, in memory of Earl Jacobs, a member of the English department from 1969 to 1997.*

Ely Stock Memorial Award: *Awarded by the faculty of the English department to outstanding English majors, in memory of Ely Stock, a member of the English department from 1971-1993.*

Grace S. and Thomas Feola Commencement Award in English: *Awarded by the faculty of the English Department to an outstanding English major. The award honors the memory of Grace S. Feola, mother, and Thomas Feola, father, of Maryann Feola, Professor Emerita of English.*

Graduate Award in English: *Awarded by faculty of the English department to an outstanding MA graduate in English.*

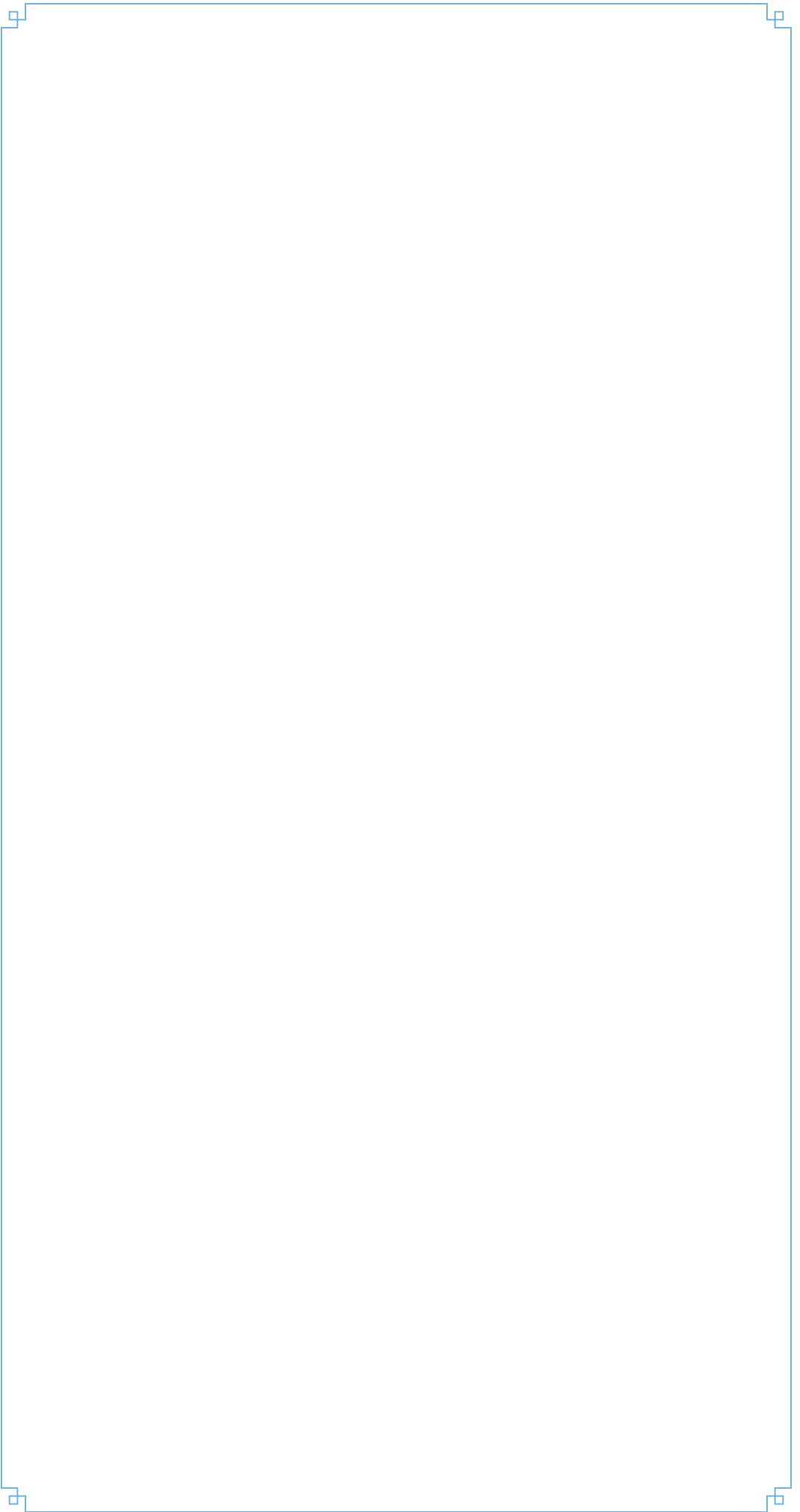
John Conway Memorial Award: *Awarded by the student government.*

Rehberg Memorial Award for Academic Excellence in Poetry: *Awarded and named in honor of Edward J. Rehberg Jr. (1964-1986), passionate student of life, poet extraordinaire.*

Speech Science Research Award: *Awarded by the Linguistics faculty to an outstanding student exhibiting excellence in Speech Science Research.*

Department Faculty

Olalekan Adepoju, Lecturer
Alyson Bardsley, Associate Professor
Maria Bellamy, Associate Professor
Jason Bishop, Professor
Mary Boland, Professor
Matt Brim, Professor
Yuliya Cammarano, Substitute Lecturer
Rosanne Carlo, Associate Professor
Ava Chin, Professor
Lorenza Colonna, Lecturer
Ashley Dawson, Distinguished Professor
Julián Delgado Lopera, Assistant Professor
Lewis Dimmick, Lecturer
Gloria Gianoulis, Lecturer
Katharine Goodland, Professor
Timothy Gray, Professor
Stephen Greeley, Lecturer
Christina Hagedorn, Associate Professor
Tyehimba Jess, Distinguished Professor
Dalia Kandiyoti, Professor
Frederick Kaufman, Professor
Lei Liu, Assistant Professor
Cate Marvin, Professor
Melanie McNulty, Lecturer
Christopher Miller, Professor
Steven Monte, Professor
Janet Dudley, Professor
Lee Papa, Associate Professor
Sohomjit Ray, Associate Professor
Simon Reader, Associate Professor
Harry Thorne, Lecturer
Christina Tortora, Professor
Kiara Walker, Lecturer





THE CITY UNIVERSITY
OF NEW YORK

College of Staten Island

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