

Where **AMBITION** *Meets* **OPPORTUNITY**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2026 - 27

ROWAN COLLEGE OF SOUTH JERSEY


DUKES
10


SOUTH JERSEY




AND
HUMANITIES
& PERFORMING
ARTS

His Story: ***Meet RCSJ's Second President, Brenden B. Rickards***

West Virginia University

As a student at West Virginia University (WVU), Dr. Brenden B. Rickards admits he wasn't initially highly engaged academically. That changed during an Organic Chemistry course, where he discovered a passion for research and excelled beyond expectations. His performance caught the attention of his professor, who invited him to join her research lab. He remained involved in laboratory research for the rest of his undergraduate career, an experience that would ultimately change the trajectory of his life.

> ***"My professors told me, 'People think that students from this area can't make it,'" Rickards recalls. "They believed I could."***

As graduation approached, faculty members asked Rickards about his plans. Content with continuing his research at WVU, he saw little reason to look elsewhere. But two professors saw greater potential. They challenged him to think bigger and encouraged him to apply to graduate programs beyond West Virginia.

"My professors told me, 'People think that students from this area can't make it,'" Rickards recalls. "They believed I could."

Princeton University

Taking their advice, Rickards applied to several prestigious graduate programs and was accepted to Princeton University. He chose Princeton because, unlike the other programs he considered, it required graduate students to teach. He already knew that while he loved research, his true calling was in the classroom, helping students discover their own potential.

With his time at Princeton ending, Rickards applied for a teaching position at RCSJ (formerly Gloucester County College). When he sought advice about the opportunity, he turned to a professor from WVU who had encouraged him to apply to Princeton and with whom he remains in contact today. The professor told him that GCC would be a perfect fit because of Rickards' passion for helping and teaching others, making him well suited for a community college environment.

Rowan College of South Jersey

Rickards has been an employee at the College for the past 19 years beginning as a professor in Biology, to Dean of the STEM Division, to Vice President of Academic Services, to Vice President and Provost of Academic Services, and finally President.

Having graduated with his Ph.D. in Molecular Biology from Princeton University in 2006, he was appointed the 2nd President of Rowan College of South Jersey in 2026.

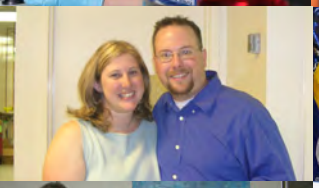










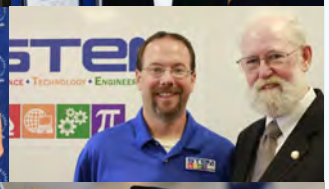














RCSJ Timeline

- *Hired as Assistant Professor of Biology in September 2007*
- *Promoted to Associate Professor of Biology in September 2012*
- *Received the Christian R. & Mary F. Lindback Foundation Award for Distinguished Teaching at Gloucester for the 2012-2013 academic year*
- *Appointed Dean of the STEM Division in July 2013*
- *Advanced to Vice President of Academic Services in July 2018*
- *Promoted to Provost in addition to his duties as Vice President of Academic Services in July 2019*
- *Received the Clio Hall Award from Princeton University for his contributions to graduate student professional development in 2022*
- *Appointed Interim President in July 2025*
- *Named President of Rowan College of South Jersey in January 2026*

Influences & Experiences

His Grandfather - Community and service learning have shaped Rickards' commitment to teaching and leadership. Guided by his grandfather's words at age 15—"it is incumbent upon us to ask, 'How can we help others?' and then do it"—he believes knowledge brings a responsibility to educate and serve others. This principle continues to inspire his vision for RCSJ.

His Professors - Experiential learning has deeply influenced Rickards' approach to teaching and leadership. At WVU, faculty mentors modeled experiential education and shaped his understanding of how students learn through doing. He later carried these lessons to Princeton, where he taught undergraduate students and youth through laboratory research, further defining the professor and leader he would become.

His Lasting Lesson - In November 1995, Rickards reluctantly set up his first WVU email account, convinced he would never use it. The experience taught him a lasting lesson about technological change. Today, he sees Artificial Intelligence (AI) through the same lens: education must embrace, adapt to, and thoughtfully integrate emerging technologies to better serve students. As an important part of his vision, RCSJ will lead the AI technology transformation under his leadership for students, faculty, and community members.

His Vision:
Connecting Community. Leading Learning.

A thriving college begins with meaningful connections. As President of Rowan College of South Jersey, Rickards is committed to engaging with students, employees, alumni, industry partners, and community members through open dialogue, shared experiences, and collaborative opportunities. By listening, learning, and leading together, we strengthen our culture, inspire innovation, and ensure that every voice helps shape the future of our college and the communities we serve.

Connecting Community through Service - RCSJ will foster authentic partnerships in which RCSJ and community organizations collaboratively identify goals and needs. Service learning will strengthen student success, civic engagement, and the College's commitment to building stronger communities.

Learning Beyond the Classroom - RCSJ will expand learning beyond the classroom by creating meaningful, hands-on experiences that connect academic learning to career pathways, community needs, and industry expectations.

Leading in AI Education - RCSJ will position itself as a leader in AI education, workforce preparation, and responsible AI use. RCSJ will prepare students, faculty, staff, and the broader community for a future increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence.





Where Ambition Meets Opportunity

STUDENT BODY

Rowan College of South Jersey (RCSJ) effectively educates and serves students and community members as part of its mission. Whether students are beginning their higher education journey or advancing a career, RCSJ meets students where they are and empowers them to become more.

Who we serve:

- **High school graduates, career changers, and students** planning to transfer to a four-year college.
- **Job seekers, career changers, and working adults** seeking short-term, skills-based training.
- **Working adults, parents, and other busy learners** needing flexible study options.
- **Lifelong learners, community members, hobbyists, and adults** seeking personal or professional enrichment.
- **Aspiring firefighters, police officers, and public safety professionals.**
- **High school graduates and associate-degree students** seeking a seamless transfer to a bachelor program, including 3+1 pathways.

COMMUNITY OF PROFESSIONALS

RCSJ is proud of the community of professionals who contribute to the College's success. The mix of diverse backgrounds in administration, faculty, support staff, business and community partners, and alumni blend to build a unique and positive experience for students. The collective dedication in the classroom, around campus, and continued work in their respective fields provides a rich learning environment. RCSJ employees approach their work as servant-leaders with the daily goal of putting students and their success first.

Building Connections through Opportunity

COLLEGIATE HIGH SCHOOL

Collegiate High School is a partnership program between select high schools and RCSJ, taking education to the next level, providing an affordable, practical way to earn college credits and prepare for the rigors of excelling in a collegiate environment – all before high school graduation. RCSJ's curriculum, experiences, preparation, and opportunities help students transition to their post-secondary education and career goals.

ROWAN COLLEGE PREP

Cape May County Technical School District
Cumberland County Technical Education Center
Gloucester County Institute of Technology

RCSJ COLLEGIATE HIGH SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS

GLOUCESTER COUNTY
Clayton High School
Clearview Regional High School
Cornerstone Christian Academy
Delsea Regional High School
Deptford Township High School
Gateway Regional High School
Glassboro High School
Gloucester County Special Services School District
Kingsway Regional High School
Paulsboro High School
Pitman High School
Washington Township High School
West Deptford High School
Williamstown High School
Woodbury High School

CUMBERLAND COUNTY
Bridgeton High School
Cumberland Christian School
Cumberland Regional High School
Fairton Christian Center Academy
Millville Memorial High School
Vineland High School

ATLANTIC COUNTY
Absegami High School
Cedar Creek High School
Oakcrest High School

BURLINGTON COUNTY
Life Center Academy

CAMDEN COUNTY
Audubon High School
Gloucester City High School
Haddon Heights High School
Highland High School
Timbercreek High School
Triton High School
Sterling High School
Urban Promise
Winslow Township High School

CAMDEN DIOCESE
Bishop Eustace Preparatory School
Camden Catholic High School
Gloucester Catholic High School
Holy Spirit High School
Our Lady of Mercy Academy

SALEM COUNTY
Arthur P. Schalick High School
Woodstown High School

PHILADELPHA COUNTY
Aspira Bilingual Charter



Accredited, Industry-Valued & Community-Focused Education

ASSOCIATE DEGREES

RCSJ offers a wide range of associate degrees, including Associate in Arts (A.A.), Associate in Science (A.S.), Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.), and Associate in Fine Arts (A.F.A.) degrees, preparing students for transfer, careers, and continued education.

CAREER & TECHNICAL TRAINING

RCSJ's diverse program offerings boost careers, advance opportunities, and build new skills with industry-recognized credentials.

ONLINE LEARNING PROGRAMS

RCSJ's online learning programs provide flexible, accessible pathways for students balancing education with work, family, and other responsibilities.

PUBLIC SAFETY ACADEMIES

The Gloucester County Fire Academy provides high-quality training in tactics, techniques, and safety through spacious classrooms and practical facilities like a burn building, aircraft trainer, and more.

The Gloucester County Police Academy provides advanced training and mentorship to enhance the skills of law enforcement officers and police recruits.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

High School Equivalency (HSE)/GED Program provides adults the opportunity to obtain a high school diploma.

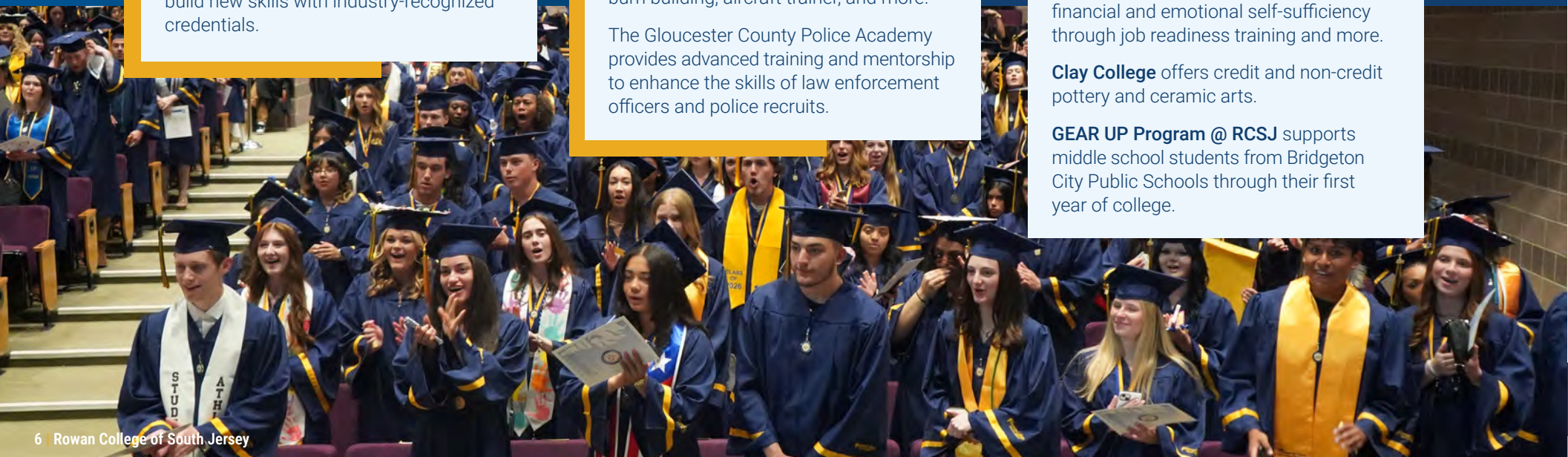
English as a Second Language (ESL) helps adults whose first language is not English to improve their English speaking, reading, and writing skills.

Adult Center for Transition (ACT) post-secondary experience prepares neurodiverse young adults for independent, productive lives.

Center for Displaced Homemakers assists individuals in transitioning to financial and emotional self-sufficiency through job readiness training and more.

Clay College offers credit and non-credit pottery and ceramic arts.

GEAR UP Program @ RCSJ supports middle school students from Bridgeton City Public Schools through their first year of college.



RCSJ + Rowan U = Pathways to Success

ROWAN ADVANTAGE

RCSJ's long-standing relationship with Flagship Partner Rowan University continues to provide transformative opportunities for our students. This partnership guarantees acceptance to Rowan for those who meet academic criteria, creates cost-saving pathways such as 2+2, 3+1 Program, and expands access to on-campus living through Rowan Choice. Together, we are building a seamless pathway from high school, to community college, to university-level success.

- Collegiate High School
- Rowan College Prep
- 2+2 Traditional Transfer
- 3+1 Program
- Rowan Choice
- Advanced Pathways

RCSJ Collegiate High School

Rowan College Prep

2+2 Rowan College South Jersey / Rowan University

3+1 Rowan College South Jersey / Rowan University

Rowan CHOICE

Advanced PATHWAYS



Removing Barriers, Advancing Futures

SUPPORT SERVICES

Rowan College of South Jersey (RCSJ) is committed to meeting students where they are by building a student-ready college that removes barriers to success. From the moment of interest through graduation and beyond, students receive personalized support including enrollment coaching, academic advising, mental health resources, and career counseling.

CAMPUS LIFE

For the full student-centered experience, students are encouraged to participate in college activities. Meaningful relationships between students and mentors are developed, and soft skills that cannot be taught in the classroom continue to grow naturally.

- Two Nationally and Regionally Ranked Athletic Programs: Dukes & Roadrunners
- 30+ Clubs and Two Student Publications
- Six Major-specific Honor Societies
- Two 5-star Ranked Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society Chapters and Tri-Alpha First Generation Honor Society
- Two Leadership Organizations: Student Government Association (SGA) and National Society for Leadership & Success (NSLS)

TRANSFER OPPORTUNITIES

RCSJ's relationship with **Flagship Partner, Rowan University,** provides students with a seamless transfer process to a more affordable bachelor's degree and beyond offering 2+2, 3+1, Advanced Pathways, and Rowan Choice.

RCSJ also strategically partners with several four-year universities, HBCU, and HSI institutions to make earning a bachelor's degree seamless while offering partnership perks that include cost incentives.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Princeton University, through its Program for Community College Engagement, partners with RCSJ to provide special opportunities for students, faculty, and staff:

Teaching Transfer Initiative (TTI): Transfer workshops, advising, events, and four-year college visits.

Transfer Scholars Initiative (TSI): Free Princeton summer course and transfer advising.

Fully-funded summer internship for humanities and social science students.

Community College Faculty Program: Princeton course auditing and high-impact learning opportunities.



Two Campuses, One Winning Tradition

Rowan College of South Jersey (RCSJ) fields two distinct intercollegiate athletics programs —Roadrunners at the Gloucester campus and Dukes at the Cumberland campus. Competing in NJCAA Region XIX and the Garden State Athletic Conference (GSAC), RCSJ supports a comprehensive, nonscholarship Division III athletics program of 28 sports teams across both campuses. The Roadrunners have earned national recognition, including multiple Learfield Sports Directors' Cups as the top junior college athletics program in the nation.

GLOUCESTER ROADRUNNERS

The Roadrunners compete in a full array of men's and women's sports including baseball, basketball, tennis, cross country, track & field, golf, soccer, softball, volleyball, and wrestling. They've captured numerous NJCAA Division III national championships in baseball (including three consecutive titles by 2025), tennis, wrestling, track & field, and more. The program has twice won the Learfield Cup—most recently in 2023–24—as the top nonscholarship two-year college in the nation. RCSJ is notable as the only nonscholarship program to earn that honor.

CUMBERLAND DUKES

The Dukes represent RCSJ–Cumberland in NJCAA Region XIX and the Garden State Athletic Conference (GSCA), fielding competitive teams in men's and women's cross-country, track & field, golf, basketball, soccer, baseball, softball, and volleyball. The program has steadily grown in both participation and success, recently capturing a Region XIX Championship and expanding its reach with inclusive initiatives such as Unified Sports. The Dukes have a strong commitment to athletic excellence and campus engagement—fostering student-athlete development and school spirit through competitive athletics.







Redefining Possibility, Empowering Independence

ACADEMY FOR NEURODIVERSITY

The Academy for Neurodiversity was designed to function as a centralized service provider in Gloucester and Cumberland counties to guide, advocate, and locate resources for adult residents with special needs. It employs a strategic approach to connect post-high school adults with critical services across eight categories.

At the heart of the Academy is the belief that through awareness, access to appropriate resources, as well as educational and/or vocational opportunities, individuals with special needs will come to enjoy the same range of experiences as any member of society.

Academy Partners

- Rowan College of South Jersey (RCSJ)
- Schools for Neurodiversity at the Gloucester County Special Services School District (GCSSSD)
- Rowan University
- Rowan-Virtua School of Osteopathic Medicine (SOM)
- Rowan-Virtua Integrated Special Needs Center of Rowan University (RISN)
- Gloucester County
- Cumberland County

ADULT CENTER FOR TRANSITION (ACT)

The Adult Center for Transition (ACT) is dedicated to affording young adults with disabilities the vocational, educational, and social skills necessary to become independent and contributing members of society. ACT offers two-year, post-secondary programs that nurture academic, vocational, and socialization skills in a supportive environment to help young adults with disabilities thrive in the classroom and the workplace. Programs are supported by an on-site social worker to provide counseling services, facilitate support groups, and to help students and their caregivers identify and navigate available resources.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

The Together Cafe is the product of a unique collaboration between RCSJ, SOM, RISN, and GCSSSD. Its goal is to create job training and employment opportunities for individuals with physical and developmental disabilities and to promote their inclusion in all aspects of community life.

Commitment to Community

RCSJ partners with local, regional, and national non-profit organizations and initiatives to provide opportunities for educational, social, and cultural enrichment to the communities it serves.

Gloucester County Cultural and Heritage Commission believes in the power of the arts to connect, inspire, heal, and engage all individuals – regardless of background or ability – and define the human experience.

Junior Achievement offers middle and high school students in the region access to programs focused on financial literacy, career readiness, and entrepreneurship.

One Book, One College is a college- and community-wide reading program with the goal of fostering a community that encourages reading for pleasure, critical thinking, global awareness, and multicultural understanding.

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP, part of the Corporation for National and Community Service, provides volunteer opportunities for individuals who are at least "55 years young." The organization matches volunteers' interests and talents to a rich array of service options, also addressing the surrounding community's needs.

Community Music at RCSJ provides opportunities for community members to enjoy and participate in music through concerts and performances throughout the year.

Volunteer Centers of South Jersey works to change lives, empower families and improve our community through volunteerism and supporting local nonprofit organizations. We also promote volunteerism in the region and connect individuals and businesses with opportunities to serve.

Leadership Cumberland County challenges a select group of individuals who have the potential to provide the leadership needed to solve problems of significance in Cumberland County.





Powered by Partnership, Driven by Purpose

Rowan College SOUTH JERSEY FOUNDATION

For over 50 years, the Rowan College of South Jersey Foundation has been serving the college community. From providing book scholarships, to offset the cost of college tuition – the Foundation works to provide our students with access to an affordable, quality education.

Impactful fundraising such as the Annual Blue & Gold Gala and the RCSJ President's Golf Classic, combined with individual and corporate donations, endowments, and alumni giving allow the Foundation to increase student scholarships awarded every year.

MISSION

The Foundation's mission aims to enrich the educational experience at Rowan College of South Jersey by preserving and improving the quality of its programs, facilities, and student services. The Foundation achieves its goals by providing holistic support to students, faculty, and staff through scholarships and grants, focusing on areas underserved by public funds. The Foundation raises funds, builds endowments, and fosters private donations which sustain and enhance educational and capital initiatives.

PREMIER PARTNERS

RCSJ's Premier Partners support our students' success with industry expertise and connections; scholarship dollars; and rewarding clinical, internship, and job opportunities. Premier Partners are instrumental in the research and development phase of new programs, giving RCSJ an advantage with regional industry insight and demand.

ACENDA INTEGRATED HEALTH

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Rowan College of South Jersey


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07/08/2026

Rowan College SOUTH JERSEY

Gloucester Campus
1400 Tanyard Road, Sewell NJ

Cumberland Campus
3322 College Drive, Vineland NJ

RCSJ is proud to be an equal opportunity institution. Learn more at RCSJ.edu/APN

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