

The Inauguration of
BRENDEN B. RICKARDS, PH.D.

THE SECOND PRESIDENT OF
Rowan College of South Jersey

Tuesday, September 29, 2026 at 2 p.m.
Gloucester Campus
Physical Education Center



Where
AMBITION
Meets
OPPORTUNITY



HIS VISION

President Rickards envisions an RCSJ where connection, innovation, and opportunity drive student success and community impact. By strengthening partnerships, expanding learning beyond the classroom, and leading in ethical AI education, RCSJ will prepare students to thrive in a changing world while creating meaningful opportunities that benefit the college, workforce, and communities it serves.



Rowan College of South Jersey's Second President

Brenden B. Rickards, Ph.D., officially assumed the role of President of Rowan College of South Jersey (RCSJ) on January 1, 2026, following 19 years of dedicated service to the College. Since joining RCSJ in 2007 as a biology professor after earning his Ph.D. in Molecular Biology from Princeton University, Dr. Rickards has held several key leadership roles, including Dean of the STEM Division, Vice President of Academic Services, and Vice President and Provost of Academic Services. A driving force behind major institutional initiatives, he played a pivotal role in the 2019 merger of Cumberland County College and Rowan College at Gloucester County, the College's transition to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the expansion of workforce-aligned academic programs. His leadership has also strengthened RCSJ's partnership with Rowan University, advancing affordable, high-quality educational pathways for students. Recognized for his excellence in teaching and service, Dr. Rickards received the Lindback Foundation Award for Distinguished Teaching (2012–2013) and Princeton University's Clio Hall Award (2022). His strategic vision, collaborative leadership, and commitment to student and community success continue to guide RCSJ's mission and growth.

EDUCATION

- Princeton University, Molecular Biology, Ph.D.
- Princeton University, Molecular Biology, M.A.
- West Virginia University, Biology, B.S.

The College Mace

The academic ceremonial mace is a descendant of the club-shaped medieval battle mace. By the late 16th century, the mace had become obsolete as a weapon, but it survived as an ornamental symbol of authority or command, often embellished with precious metals and jewels. Maces today still signify protection for governmental, ecclesiastical or academic authority. The mace is carried each year at commencement by a member of the faculty.

The College Medallion

Created especially for the inauguration of the second president, the Rowan College of South Jersey medallion is a symbol of the Office of the President. The gold medallion incorporates the college seal and is worn by the president during ceremonial occasions.

Program

PROCESSIONAL	RCSJ-Cumberland Wind Symphony
Grand Marshal	Anna Patricia Roth, Associate Professor, Mathematics
Assistant Marshal	Shelly Dean, Associate Professor, Computer Science
American Flag	Jenny Espana Mendez, Health Science Major, Army National Guard
State Flag	Maryann Agah, Health Science Major, Army National Guard
Gloucester County Flag	Christopher Horvath, Social Service Major, Marine Corps
Cumberland County Flag	Mallory Tong, Agricultural Science Major, Army
Master of Ceremonies	Susan Nardelli, Vice President, Communications, Marketing, and Enrollment Management
National Anthem	Cody Miller, Executive Director, Advancement and Foundation
Pledge of Allegiance	Meg Resue, Chief of Staff to the President and the Board of Trustees
WELCOME	Gene Concordia, RCSJ Board of Trustees, Chair
Recognition of Platform Guests	Dr. Warren S. Wallace, RCSJ Board of Trustees
Recognition of Distinguished Guests	Gregory Lopercolo, RCSJ Board of Trustees, Treasurer
GREETINGS	
From the County of Gloucester	Commissioner Director Frank DiMarco
From the County of Cumberland	Commissioner Director Sandra Taylor
From our Flagship Partner	Dr. Ali Houshmand, President, Rowan University
From the Faculty Senate	Mary Malinconico, Gloucester Faculty Senate Vice Chair, Associate Professor, Computer Graphic Arts Dr. Jennifer Riggio, Cumberland Faculty Senate Secretary, Assistant Professor I, Computer Graphic Arts
From the College Assembly	Joseph Spencer, Gloucester College Assembly Chair, Academy of Adult Literacy, Director Brandon Pugh, Cumberland College Assembly Chair, Institutional Research, Analyst
From the Students and Alumni	Thaddeus Palmer, Assistant Professor II, Biology and Chemistry, Gloucester Class of 2018
CEREMONY OF INVESTITURE	
Presentation of Presidential Medallion	Gene J. Concordia, RCSJ Board of Trustees, Chair Dr. Frederick Keating, President Emeritus
Response from the President	Dr. Brenden B. Rickards, Second President, Rowan College of South Jersey
RECESSIONAL	RCSJ-Cumberland Wind Symphony

Please join us in the College Center Mezzanine for a reception.



**Gloucester County
Board of County Commissioners**

Frank J. DiMarco, *Director*
Jim Jefferson, *Deputy Director*
Tom Bianco
Nicholas DeSilvio
Joann Gattinelli, *Education Liaison*
Christopher Konawel, Jr.
Matthew Weng

**Cumberland County
Board of County Commissioners**

Sandra Taylor, *Director*
Art Marchand, *Deputy Director*
Robert Austino
John P. Capizola
Yolanda Garcia Balicki,
College Co-Liaison
Antonio Romero
James Sauro,
College Co-Liaison

**Rowan College of South Jersey
Board of Trustees**

Gene J. Concordia, *Chair*
Douglas J. Wills, Esq., *Vice Chair*
Greg Loperuolo, *Treasurer*
Lita M. Abele, *Secretary*
M. Christine Allen-Jackson, JSC
Jennica L. Bileci
Danielle Carroll
Dr. Edward Geletka
Jodi Trivellini
Dr. Warren S. Wallace
Brenden Rickards, Ph.D., *ex officio*

**Rowan College of South Jersey
Administration**

Brenden B. Rickards, Ph.D.
President, Chief Academic Officer
Dominick J. Burzichelli
*Executive Vice President, Chief Operating
Officer/Chief Financial Officer*
Judith Atkinson
Vice President, Chief Student Affairs Officer
Almarie Jones
*Vice President, Chief Compliance Officer/
Senior Title IX Officer*
Susan Nardelli
*Vice President, Communications,
Marketing and Enrollment Management*
James Piccone, Ed.D.
*Vice President, Chief Administrative
Officer, Cumberland Campus*
Michael Plagianakos, Ed.D.
Vice President, University Affiliation
Heather Simmons
*Vice President, Career & Technical
Education and Workforce Development*

07/08/2026

Rowan College of South Jersey is an
Equal Opportunity Institution
RCSJ.edu/APN



COLLEGE HISTORY

Established July 1, 2019, through the merger of Rowan College at Gloucester County and Cumberland County College, Rowan College of South Jersey (RCSJ) brings more than 100 years of combined higher education experience and a legacy of excellence to serve a diverse community of learners through more than 100 innovative programs and services.

RCSJ is a comprehensive, two-year, dual-campus regional institution in part by the residents of Cumberland and Gloucester Counties through their respective Boards of County Commissioners. The College is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

RCSJ seeks to assist each person in the development of a career, while at the same time developing humanistic values and encouraging personal enrichment. The College is dedicated to its community and accepts the responsibility of providing post-secondary educational opportunities to all who seek them. It provides four-year transfer programs, career training, community programming, and special assistance programs.



COLLEGE MISSION

RCSJ is a student success-oriented, accessible, and affordable learning center dedicated to enhancing its community's economic development and quality of life by striving for academic excellence in offering innovative programs and services to a diverse community of learners in a safe and caring environment.