

## **Research at Rowan: a Five-Year Strategic Plan (2025)**

### **Introduction**

The Division of University Research (DUR) at Rowan University is responsible for promoting, supporting, and administering research, scholarly, and creative activity. Along with this comes the responsibility for fostering creation, facilitating project management, translating innovation, and ensuring compliance with federal guidelines during the pursuit of these endeavors.

DUR is launching a five-year Research at Rowan Strategic Plan. The Research at Rowan Strategic Plan was created with the goal of improving quality, productivity, and connectivity for research, scholarship, and creative activity. The plan features three goals that represent how DUR will operationalize Rowan University's four Strategic Pillars—Access, Affordability, Quality, and Economic Engine:

- I. Expanding Research Support Services**
- II. Building Upon Unique Strengths and Capabilities of Faculty, Staff, and Students**
- III. Stimulating Economic Development**

### **Background**

Research at Rowan has gained visibility over the past seven years under the leadership of President Ali Houshmand. During this time, Rowan constructed an MD-granting medical school, acquired a DO-granting medical school, added new Ph.D. programs, and reorganized its schools and colleges to better leverage research strengths and collaborations. The growth in Carnegie Classification from a primarily undergraduate institution to an R2 (higher research activity) has shifted Rowan's culture from a teaching-based university to a research institution that prioritizes undergraduate education.

The President set an ambitious research goal: Rowan would aspire to reach \$45M in research awards by 2022, climbing from \$13.7M when his leadership began. In 2019, Rowan surpassed that goal, reaching \$59.3M in awards. A new aspiration—to reach \$100M in sponsored projects—is coming into view. The role of DUR is to provide services that support this aspiration, and this strategic plan provides a roadmap for doing so.

### **Mission**

The mission of the Division of University Research is to support and promote research, scholarship, and creative activity by leveraging external and internal resources, cultivating collaborative opportunities, conforming to compliant and ethical behavior, and supporting technology commercialization.

### **Vision 2025**

The Division of University Research strives to be a comprehensive resource during all stages of the research lifecycle from idea conception to finding funding through publishing data and commercializing intellectual products. We are committed to supporting Rowan University's four Strategic Pillars—Access, Affordability, Quality, and Economic Engine—through research that has local, national, and international impacts, scholarship that improves the educational

experiences of students, and creative outputs that shape society and the world around us. Our work drives the economic development of the region by utilizing new technologies and data analytics to connect people, resulting in the creation of knowledge, jobs, and entrepreneurs.

### **Core Values**

All activities in the five-year Research at Rowan Strategic Plan are guided by our commitment to the university's four pillars. Within the context of DUR, these pillars impact the lives of faculty, staff, students, and collaborators (internally and externally) in the following ways:

- ***Access:** increasing access to research and scholarship opportunities for faculty, staff, and students*
- ***Affordability:** capitalizing upon research opportunities and initiatives in ways that provide financial incentives to students*
- ***Quality:** enabling high-quality research and scholarship opportunities that supplement students' educational experiences and develop their personal and workforce skills*
- ***Economic Engine:** partnering with local, state, industrial, and governmental collaborators to drive economic growth*

### **Goals of the Research at Rowan Strategic Plan:**

The goals described in this section benefited from faculty and staff input and feedback.

#### **I. Expanding Research Support Services**

We will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of DUR departments in identifying sources of funding, competing for funding, conducting research and scholarship, and managing grants and outputs. Goal I has three objectives:

##### ***1. Support research, scholarship, and creative development activities***

- a. Invest in internal funding opportunities and services that position faculty to compete for external funding.
- b. Strengthen existing proposal development services to provide maximum impact to all campuses by forming interdisciplinary teams to apply for and manage large and complex funding opportunities.
- c. Support research on diversity, inclusion, and equity and promote efforts to broaden participation in research, scholarship, and creative activity by providing internal funding opportunities as well as serving as a resource for finding and applying for external funding opportunities.
- d. Support research and theory-to-practice activities that align with Rowan Thrive's six wellness dimensions: physical, social, emotional, community, purpose, and financial.

##### ***2. Provide information and services needed to conduct effective research, scholarship, and creative activity while complying with fiscal and regulatory requirements***

- a. Streamline pre- and post-award processes to reduce faculty burden and provide timely and accurate information for the effective management of grants.
- b. Implement new or upgraded research administration systems that will reduce administrative burden and provide efficient backend management.

- c. Affirm the university's commitment to the protection, rights, and welfare of research subjects through conformance with all applicable federal, state and local regulations, as well as university policies and procedures.
  - d. Utilize research councils and advisory boards to identify policies and procedures that hinder research, scholarship, and creative activities and identify potential solutions or improvements via discussions with appropriate decision-making bodies.
3. ***Work with other departments to streamline processes and procedures based on best practices***
- a. Work with Human Resources and Finance on efforts that streamline the hiring process.
  - b. Engage with the Provost and Finance to determine how to incentivize faculty to conduct research.
  - c. Partner with Library Services and Information Resources & Technology to help meet researchers' unique needs and compliance requirements while ensuring data security.
  - d. Support Accounting Services, Contracting & Procurement, and Accounts Payable on initiatives that improve accounting and purchasing processes.

## **II. Building Upon Unique Strengths and Capabilities of Faculty, Staff, and Students**

We will regularly evaluate Rowan's existing research, scholarship, and creative strengths and support emerging areas. Goal II has four objectives:

1. ***Capitalize on existing research, scholarship, and creative strengths***
- a. Connect faculty in key areas to expand the breadth and scope of impact.
  - b. Seek funding opportunities for interdisciplinary teams in Rowan's areas of research strengths including medical research, materials science, cell and gene therapy, transportation and pavement materials, medical devices, STEM talent pipelines, inclusive education, and healthcare delivery.
  - c. Encourage and support nominations of Rowan employees for awards, memberships, fellowships, Young Investigator opportunities, career awards, and scholarly/creative prizes and recognition.
2. ***Support emerging topics and faculty engagement***
- a. Continue expansion of the Rowan University Seed Funding Program.
  - b. Develop and implement proposal development workshops to increase faculty competitiveness.
  - c. Seek funding opportunities for interdisciplinary teams in Rowan's emerging research areas of neurodiversity, behavioral/mental health and addiction studies, and big data analytics.
  - e. Develop new training programs and raise awareness for open scholarship, research data management, new research metrics, and other emerging topics and best practices.
  - d. Identify relevant national organizations and associations and explore which memberships would most greatly benefit research at Rowan.

- e. Monitor faculty outputs to identify emerging areas of strength.

**3. *Link the value of research, scholarship, and creative activity to the University's mission, vision, and strategic pillars by promoting visibility***

- a. Work closely with the Office of Media & Public Relations to publicize research, scholarship, and creative activity both on-campus and to outside audiences.
- b. Develop and disseminate promotional materials that highlight Rowan's achievements to legislators, faculty, donors, alumni, potential collaborators, industry partners, and funding agencies.
- c. Support the inclusion of undergraduates and graduates in research and highlight the value to both faculty and students.
- d. Enhance internal and external recognition of research at Rowan and celebrate faculty achievements in research, scholarship, creative activity, and innovation.
- e. Develop print and online materials that effectively market Rowan's capabilities and emerging strengths.
- f. Position Faculty Research Day to be a primary vehicle for publicizing research, scholarship, and creative activity to audiences both on- and off-campus.

**4. *Enhance core facilities, university facilities, and research infrastructure***

- a. Develop a strategy for investing in core laboratories that builds Rowan's research capacity and impact.
- a. Create, promote, and maintain university-wide research facilities and services across campuses.
- b. Work with departments and centers to grow their portfolios in ways that complement Rowan's mission and vision.
- c. Aid in the development of mission-focused, interdisciplinary, university-level research centers comprised of innovative partnerships that leverage expertise across fields to pursue larger funding initiatives. Where appropriate, provide feedback to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs on strategic hiring needs as they pertain to the research mission.
- d. Foster a culture of compliance through shared responsibility among research facilities.

**III. Stimulating Economic Development**

We will commit time and resources to leverage internal and external partnerships and collaborations that further DUR's mission and vision. Goal III has three objectives:

**1. *Enhance research innovation and commercialization***

- a. Improve, streamline, and clarify processes to accelerate the pace at which innovations move from discovery to commercialization.
- b. Expand awareness and education of Rowan's technology transfer capabilities and Intellectual Property management and policies.
- c. Develop and instill among Rowan employees an innovation culture that values commercialization, entrepreneurship, and economic development.

- d. Publicize and publicly recognize Rowan faculty who have transformed research findings into innovations.
- e. Actively participate in developing statewide policies and best practices related to research and innovation.

**2. *Cultivate strategic partnerships***

- a. Develop and enhance effective marketing materials to communicate Rowan's research capabilities, innovations, and licensing opportunities to external audiences.
- b. Identify appropriate conferences and events to showcase Rowan innovations and generate interest from industry and the investor community.
- c. Engage with industry and strengthen corporate relationships to increase the number of sponsored projects, generate translational research opportunities, and create a workforce pipeline for Rowan graduates.
- d. Strengthen relationships across the State of New Jersey, particularly with research-intensive universities, funding agencies, and other government agencies.
- e. Actively connect Rowan innovators to the broader New Jersey/Regional/National innovation ecosystem.
- f. Encourage funding agencies to hold interdisciplinary topical workshops at Rowan that are relevant to Rowan's strengths.

**3. *Foster entrepreneurial growth***

- a. Promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship through policies, education, and outreach.
- b. Develop a knowledge portal of training tools and resources for Intellectual Property protection, technology development/commercialization, and entrepreneurship including NSF I-Corps, Science Center programs, and the South Jersey Technology Park's (SJTP) "The Bridge" entrepreneurial program.
- c. Leverage the SJTP's facilities, programs, industry connections, and opportunities to access pathways to funding.
- d. Facilitate the development and commercialization of marketable products/processes from research discoveries into successful business ventures to contribute to the economic development of the State of New Jersey.