

Rowan University College of Education



CELEBRATION BREAKFAST

SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2026 | 9 AM

EYNON BALLROOM, CHAMBERLAIN STUDENT CENTER

Welcome

Good morning, and welcome to the Rowan University College of Education Celebration Breakfast.

It is a pleasure to gather with our proud alumni, dedicated faculty and staff, valued community and district partners, and the outstanding individuals we are honoring today. Your presence reflects our shared commitment to the power and purpose of education.

At Rowan, we hold a fundamental belief: Education is the workforce behind every workforce.

Every profession begins with an educator. The strength of our schools, our communities, and our economy depends on the educators who prepare, inspire, and guide the next generation.

While the demands on our profession continue to grow, so does the importance of our collective work. Through partnership, innovation, and a deep commitment to students, we are strengthening the educator workforce and expanding opportunity across our region and beyond.

This morning, we proudly recognize alumni whose leadership and service exemplify excellence and impact:

Kayla Bowe '22, M'23

Diane Mazzei '69, M'80

Thomas Santo M'92

Josh Schneider M'18

These honorees represent the very best of the Rowan College of Education. Their work reflects the lasting influence of educators and the vital role our alumni play in strengthening the many fields and communities that depend on a strong educational foundation.

We also extend our sincere appreciation to the faculty, staff, and planning team whose dedication made this celebration possible.

Together, through the work of our alumni and partners, the mission of the Rowan University College of Education moves forward, preparing those who shape every profession and creating a more hopeful future for the communities we serve.



Gaëtane Jean-Marie, Ph.D.

Dean, Rowan University College of Education

Agenda

CHECK-IN & NETWORKING | 9 AM

WELCOME | 9:15 AM

REMARKS | 9:45 AM

Dr. Gaëtane Jean-Marie
Dean, College of Education

Chris D'Angelo
*Director, Alumni Engagement
University Advancement*

PH.D. IN EDUCATION: CELEBRATING TEN YEARS | 10:15 AM

Dr. Brent Elder
Associate Professor & Program Coordinator

AWARDS PRESENTATION | 10:30 AM

Community Service Award
*Awarded to: Josh Schneider
Presented by: Abby Losch*

University Engagement Award
*Awarded to: Diane Mazzei
Presented by: Kaylee Johnson*

Outstanding Achievement Award
*Awarded to: Thomas Santo
Presented by: Justin Hawkins*

Emerging Educator Award
*Awarded to: Kayla Bowe
Presented by: Faith Anderson*

CLOSING & RAFFLE | 11 AM

Dr. Gaëtane Jean-Marie

Meet the Alumni Award Recipients

We are proud to recognize these four extraordinary individuals who made a lasting impact on the field of education and their communities. Please join us in congratulating this year's College of Education Alumni Award recipients.

Kayla Bowe '22, M'23

Emerging Educator Award



Kayla has quickly distinguished herself as an innovative and inspiring early-career educator. A graduate of Rowan's theatre and education programs, she now serves as Theatre and Public Speaking Teacher at Overbrook High School, where she has revitalized performing arts through interdisciplinary collaboration and meaningful community outreach. Her productions extend beyond the stage, incorporating literacy initiatives, charitable partnerships, and inclusive engagement opportunities for students. Recognized for her educational impact and leadership, Kayla exemplifies the promise of a rising educator whose creativity, compassion, and dedication are already shaping lives and strengthening her school community.

Diane Mazzei '69, M'80

University Engagement Award



Diane's lifelong commitment to education and Rowan University spans more than five decades. After earning her bachelor's and master's degrees from Glassboro State College, she dedicated 34 years to the Vineland School District as a classroom teacher and supervisor of instruction, earning numerous honors including the Governor's Teacher Recognition Award. Beyond her professional accomplishments, Diane has served more than 30 years on the Rowan University Alumni Association Board, including as President, and remains a loyal supporter and mentor to future educators. Her enduring leadership, generosity, and service exemplify the very best of Rowan pride and engagement.

Thomas Santo M'92

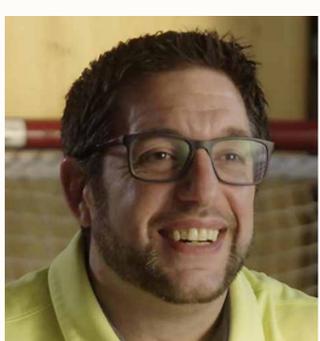
Outstanding Achievement Award



Thomas has devoted over four decades to educational leadership, advocacy, and global service. After beginning his career as a special education teacher, he went on to serve 21 years as Principal of Zane North Elementary School, where his leadership helped the school earn distinction as a National School of Character. A champion of inclusive practices and social-emotional learning, Thomas has extended his impact internationally through mentorship and professional development initiatives in multiple countries. As founder of Heal A School, he continues to advance educational opportunity abroad. His visionary leadership and lasting influence reflect extraordinary professional achievement.

Josh Schneider M'18

Community Service Award



Josh is a dynamic advocate for inclusion and access in athletics and education. After earning his master's degree in special education from Rowan University, he transformed personal adversity into purpose, founding the Dented Puck Foundation to expand awareness and participation in blind hockey. A member of the USA Blind Hockey Team, Josh works nationally to create opportunities for individuals with visual impairments to engage in sport and physical activity. Through volunteerism, advocacy, and mentorship, he continues to empower youth and communities while championing equity, resilience, and lifelong learning.

Alumni Awards

Community Service Award

This award celebrates the impactful contributions of a Rowan alumnus(a) who has made a substantial difference and positive change within their community. They have shown outstanding commitment to community service in one or more of the following areas: community volunteerism, philanthropy, or public office.

University Engagement Award

This award honors an alumnus(a) who demonstrates loyalty and commitment to Rowan University through exceptional service aimed at advancing the mission of the College of Education. This individual sets an example for others through their dedicated volunteer efforts, serves as an ambassador of the College's initiatives, and/or embodies what it means to be an education champion.

Outstanding Achievement Award

This award is given to a Rowan alumnus(a) who achieved remarkable success in the field of education. This individual has not only excelled in their professional pursuits but has also brought notable recognition to Rowan University, extending their impact to the region and beyond. This award acknowledges their outstanding accomplishments and contributions.

Emerging Educator Award

This award celebrates a recent graduate from one of the College of Education's undergraduate programs – within the past five years – who is already making an extraordinary impact in their school or community. The award recognizes a rising educator who embodies the College's values, demonstrating leadership and innovation early in their career, and shows great promise for a future of continued educational excellence.

Ph.D. in Education

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

This year, Rowan University and the College of Education proudly celebrate an extraordinary milestone: ten years of the Ph.D. in Education program. For a decade, doctoral graduates have shaped the educational landscape as scholars, innovators, leaders, and change agents across schools, universities, organizations, and communities. Their work has advanced impactful research, championed bold ideas, and driven meaningful, lasting transformation.

As this milestone is recognized, the College honors the remarkable legacy built through powerful scholarship, courageous leadership, and a steadfast commitment to progress. The dynamic Ph.D. community continues to inspire and strengthen education, demonstrating how research and practice together can transform learning and opportunity for generations to come.



Celebrate Excellence

NOMINATE A ROWAN ALUMNUS(A) FOR THE 2027 COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AWARDS

The College of Education is proud to honor alumni whose achievements, leadership, and dedication continue to shape schools, communities, and the field of education. Each year, the College recognizes graduates who bring distinction and honor to Rowan University through their professional accomplishments, community service, and ongoing engagement with the University.

Do you know a Rowan alum whose work inspires others, transforms classrooms, or strengthens communities? **Nominations are now open for the 2027 College of Education Alumni Awards, to be presented at the Celebration Breakfast on Saturday, March 6, 2027.**

Learn more about the award categories, guidelines, and criteria, and submit your nomination here:

alumni.rowan.edu/educationawards2027

Special Thanks

This celebration would not have been possible without the support, creativity, and collaboration of many individuals and departments across Rowan University. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who contributed their time, talent, and energy to bring this event to life. Your partnership reflects the spirit of unity and shared purpose that drives our College forward. Thank you for helping us honor and celebrate the people, stories, and impact of the College of Education.

Planning Committee:

Joanne Connor, Chris D'Angelo, Christina Davidson-Tucci, Cara Forline, Michael Fromm, Joseph Lizza, Carly Marsella, Karen Rosa, Drew Tinnin, Crystal Toomer

Selection Committee:

Cara Forline, Michael Fromm, Rochelle Hendricks, Zeynep Isik-Ercan, Rebecca Linares, Natasha Murray-Everett, Karen Rosa, Crystal Toomer

University Partners:

College of Education Advisory Board
Division of Marketing & Communication
Gourmet Dining
Office of Alumni Engagement
Office of the President
Office of the Chancellor
Office of the Provost
Office of Government & External Relations
Rowan University Police Department
Student Centers & Campus Activities
University Advancement
University Events

About the Rowan University College of Education

OUR MISSION

The Rowan University College of Education (CED) will be a leading force in preparing and supporting reflective practitioners who use education to transform our global society.

OUR IMPACT

Innovating through teaching, research, and community engagement to address challenges and opportunities in the P-20 educational system.

Engaging with stakeholders to increase the number of College of Education graduates in schools throughout the State.

Transforming lives by preparing a debt-free, diverse educator workforce.

A Legacy of Learning, A Future of Innovation

More than 100 years after Rowan was first founded to prepare educators, the College of Education remains true to its original mission—while continuing to evolve to meet the needs of today’s—and tomorrow’s—educational landscape.

Since its founding in 1923, Rowan has transformed from a teacher-training school into a nationally recognized research institution. Similarly, the College of Education has grown from a single department into a dynamic college with a wide range of programs that serve students from undergraduate through doctoral levels.

Originally established to address New Jersey’s critical shortage of trained elementary school teachers, the institution began as Glassboro Normal School. On September 24, 1923, the school welcomed 236 young women. Under the leadership of Dr. Jerohn Savitz, its first president, the curriculum expanded to four years, and in 1937, the institution was renamed the New Jersey State Teachers College at Glassboro.

Today, the college’s work extends far beyond the classroom, shaping education policy, advancing research, and creating community partnerships that impact learners across the state and beyond. As it looks to the future, the College of Education remains a powerful force in transforming education and the lives it touches.



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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