

## **Increasing diversity in the teaching ranks: With support from mentors and Rowan students, 9 new students prepare to make an IMPACT in classrooms**

Nine education majors in Rowan University's Class of 2021 were officially welcomed into the brotherhood of the Project Increasing Male Practitioners and Classroom Teachers (IMPACT) program in the University's College of Education.

As their family members, Rowan administrators and their mentors cheered them, the students all male education majors of color— joined the IMPACT program during a special induction and tie-tying ceremony held at the Eynon Ballroom in the Chamberlain Student Center on Saturday, September 9.

Instituted last year by the College of Education (COE), Rowan's oldest college, IMPACT (<https://academics.rowan.edu/education/impact/>) is a recruitment and retention program for diverse male students wishing to pursue education as a career. The program is working to address the lack of diversity in the teaching ranks at the preschool, elementary, secondary school and educational leadership levels.

Led by Dean Monika Williams Shealey and Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students Richard Jones, Project IMPACT is a collaborative partnership between the College of Education and the Divisions of Student Life and Student Success.

Dr. Stacey Leftwich, Executive Director for Educator Support and Partnerships, greeted the group with the following words, "Today is a celebration! We celebrate the induction of a new group of men being inducted into Project IMPACT."

"Project IMPACT is not just a COE program. It is a Rowan University Program," explained Dean Shealey. "Rowan University is doing something about a national problem- solving it locally."

Provost James Newell shared his thoughts on the teaching profession, "I can't think of a more noble calling, a more impactful calling." He went on explain to the inductees that their decision to pursue careers in the field of education will change the lives of generations of students.

During the ceremony, the students received "Letters to My IMPACT Brothers"—personal messages written by 12 students who were in the inaugural IMPACT group last year. Among their messages to the new cohort: "The people surrounding you will be a big help, especially your IMPACT brothers and mentors"; "Welcome to an environment that will turn challenges into accomplishments through brotherhood, financial assistance and a mentor network that has guided me more than words can describe"; and "Project IMPACT is a very special opportunity for us as men of color to change the climate of the everyday classroom."

During a symbolic tie-tying ceremony, mentors from Rowan's Men of Color Network presented gold and brown ties to each new student. Mentors in the IMPACT program are all teachers and administrators from area school districts. Dean of Student Richard Jones explained the

symbolism of the tie-tying ceremony. “A tie is not just a piece of material...these ties symbolize a community, a brotherhood, something we have in common.”

The new IMPACT inductees (listed below) are aspiring history, mathematics, physical education and elementary school teachers from New Jersey high schools and community colleges.

2017 Project IMPACT Inductees:

Noah Austin- Rowan College at Gloucester County  
Jacob Brown- Triton Regional High School  
Cameron Freeman- Atlantic Cape Community College  
Amiel Holliday- Rowan College at Burlington County  
Taviaus Wilson- Bridgeton High School  
Kavon Johnson- Upper Freehold Regional High School  
Samir Jones- Riverside High School  
Bryant Kevelier- Collingswood High School  
Deric Luciano- Deptford High School