

Report to the  
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, and Students  
of

*Rowan College at Burlington County  
Mount Laurel, NJ*

by  
A Team Representing the  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared After a  
Virtual Follow-Up Visit to the Institution on:  
*March 19, 2020*

The Visitor(s):  
*Dr. Dustin Swanger (Chair)  
President Emeritus  
Fulton-Montgomery Community College*

*Mr. John R. Garfoot  
Vice President for Finance and Administration (retired)  
Jamestown Community College*

Working with the Visitor(s):  
*Dr. Idna M. Corbett  
Vice President Institutional Field Relations  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education*

At the Time of the Visit:  
President/Chief Executive Officer:  
*Dr. Michael Cioce, President*

Chief Academic Officer:  
*Dr. David Spang, Senior Vice President and Provost*

Chair of the Governing Board:  
*Mr. George Nyikita  
Chair  
Rowan College at Burlington County  
Board of Trustees  
900 College Circle  
Mount Laurel, NJ 08054  
(856) 222-9311, ext. 2524*

## I. Institutional Overview

Founded as Burlington County College in 1966, the college opened its doors to 1,051 students in 1969 at Lenape High School. The Pemberton Campus opened a few years later in 1971. In 1972, the college received accreditation by the Commission on Higher Education, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

Throughout the next several years, the college underwent a series of changes, including increased enrollment, the opening of new campuses, the addition of more degree programs and several leadership changes.

In 2015, Burlington County College was renamed to Rowan College at Burlington County, in recognition of its historic partnership with Rowan University.

**Type of institution:** Public, suburban-serving, large two-year

**Degree levels offered:** Associate's degree

**Branch campuses:** None

**Additional locations:** The college's Mt. Holly location is home to the following degree programs: Culinary Arts, Pastry Arts, Fine Arts, Fashion Design, Graphic Design and Photography. Six team members were provided an on-site tour of the facilities at Mount Holly by faculty, and the team had the opportunity to learn about the programs from the faculty.

### Student Profile for Fall 2018

#### Credit Courses/Programs

- Credit Course Enrollment: 8,891
- 4,418 full-time students
- 4,473 part-time students

#### Credit course enrollment is primarily comprised of two groups of students:

- Full-time students aged 17-24 years old and
- Adult learners aged 25 or older, many of whom attend part-time, in both degree and non-degree seeking programs.

**Total Student Credit Hours: 89,966**

#### Fall 2018 Student Demographics:

- **Attendance Status**
  - Full-time = 49.7%
  - Part-time = 50.3%

#### Gender

- Male = 41.4%
- Female = 58.6%

#### Ages

- Overall, the average age of RCBC's student population is about 26 years (average age of full-time students is 22; average age of part-time students is 29)

#### Ethnicity/Races

- Caucasian = 52.6%
- African American = 20.5%
- Hispanic = 11.4%
- Asian = 4.9%
- Hawaiian Pacific = 0.6%
- Alaskan Native/American Indian = 1.3%
- Mixed Race = 4.9%
- Unknown = 3.8%

82.3% are Burlington County residents, but the college regularly enrolls students from multiple countries, thus offering the opportunity for intercultural exchanges and growth  
14.9% of 2018 Burlington County high school graduates attended RCBC in the fall 2018 term.

#### Graduates

- **1,388 degrees and certificates were awarded in the 2017-2018 academic year**
  - **59.1%** in transfer programs
  - **42.7%** in career programs
  - **0.4%** in certificate programs

Please note that 58% of RCBC student population is enrolled in transfer programs and many of these students transfer from RCBC to senior institutions prior to graduating from RCBC.

**Distance programs:** The College offers the following online degrees and certificates:

#### *Associate of Arts (A.A.)*

Liberal Arts  
Political Science  
Psychology  
Education  
Sociology  
English  
History

#### *Associate of Science (A.S.)*

Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Accounting  
Business Administration  
Criminal Justice

#### *Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.)*

Business Management Technology  
Health Information Technology  
Cancer Registry Management  
Certificates  
Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Cancer Registry  
Accounting  
Business Technology

## II. Nature and Conduct of the Visit

The Team visit is a follow-up action to a visit conducted on March 24 - 27, 2019 in which the, then, Visiting Team noted issues with Standard II and Standard VI in their report. The Commission subsequently rendered the following action with Rowan College at Burlington County:

*“To acknowledge receipt of the self-study report. To note the visit by the Commission’s representatives. To warn the institution that its accreditation may be in jeopardy because of insufficient evidence that the institution is currently in compliance with Standard II (Ethics and Integrity), Standard VI (Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement), and Requirement of Affiliation 5. To note that the institution remains accredited while on warning. To note further that federal regulations limit the period during which an institution may be in non-compliance to two years. To request a monitoring report due, March 1, 2020, demonstrating evidence that the institution has achieved and can sustain ongoing compliance, including but not limited to (1) compliance with all applicable federal, state, and Commission policies and regulations, (Standard II and Requirement of Affiliation 5); (2) clearly stated unit-level objectives that are linked to mission and reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results (Standard VI); (3)*

*financial planning and budget processes that are aligned with mission, goals and objectives and are evidence-based (Standard VI); and (4) adequate fiscal and human resources, including physical and technical infrastructure, to support operations (Standard VI). To direct a follow-up team visit following submission of the monitoring report. To direct a prompt Commission liaison guidance visit to discuss the Commission's expectations. Upon reaffirmation of accreditation, the next evaluation visit is scheduled for 2027-2028.”*

During the virtual Team Visit, the Team met with the following individuals, departments and committees:

Board of Trustees: George Nyikita, Board Chair and Finance Committee Chair; Dr. James Kerfoot; Renee Liciaga; Dorion Morgan

Monitoring Report Steering Committee: Dr. Anita Rudman, Associate Provost and Steering Committee Chair; Dr. Catherine Briggs, Dean of Student Success; Andrew Eaton, Director of Public Safety; Harry Metzinger, Executive Director of Finance and Human Resources; Dr. Erica Osmond, Associate Professor and Faculty Excellence Coordinator; Julie Ritter, Acting Director of Accounting; Michelle Russell, Assistant Director of Human Resources; Nicole Salamatin, Institutional Research Manager; Kathryn Strang, Director of Compliance, Assessment and Research; and Alaina Walton, Compliance and Research Specialist

Title IX Procedure Review Team: Dr. Catherine Briggs, Dean of Student Success and Title IX Coordinator; Andrew Eaton, Director of Public Safety; Donna Kaklamanos, Director of Student Support; Harry Metzinger, Executive Director of Finance and Human Resources; and Michelle Russell, Assistant Director of Human Resources

President’s Cabinet: Dr. David Spang, Senior VP and Provost; Thomas Czerniecki, Senior VP of Administration and Operations; Dr. Karen Archambault, VP of Enrollment Management and Student Success; Anna Payanzo Cotton, VP of Workforce Development

Enrollment Management Leadership: Dr. Karen Archambault, VP of Enrollment Management and Student Success, Michael Yakubov, Dean of Enrollment Management; and Danielle Epps, Director of Outreach and Admissions.

### **III. Affirmation of Compliance with Requirements of Affiliation Under Review**

Based on a review of the follow-up report and appendices, interviews, and other institutional documents, the team affirms that the institution continues to meet the Requirements of Affiliation under review.

In the team’s judgment, the institution now appears to meet the Requirements of Affiliation number 5.

### **IV. Commendations and Summary of Institutional Strengths**

NA

## **V. Compliance with Accreditation Standard(s) Under Review**

### **Standard II: Ethics and Integrity**

**Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and are defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.**

The visitors' judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be in compliance with this standard.

#### **Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:**

Based on a review of the Monitoring Report, other institutional documents, and interviews with staff, faculty, and Board members, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard.

The College has addressed the issues with Title IX processes that the 2019 visiting team identified in its report. The College developed a multi-phased plan and a timeline to address the issues in March, 2019. This included reviewing all of its Title IX procedures and developing a plan to communicate Title IX requirements with the College Campus Community.

A Title IX Procedure Review Team was formed that consisted of the Dean of Student Success (and Title IX Coordinator), the Director of Public Safety, the Director of Student Support, the Executive Director of Finance and Human Resources, and the Assistant Director Human Resources. The Team reviewed all policies and procedures, researched best practices, and developed a more informative procedure which is published on the College's website.

The College identified and trained a lead Trauma Informed Investigator - a support staff member within the Public Safety Office. This individual has previous investigative experience and is able to meet with students and/or staff wishing to report an incident.

The College also implemented a new website entitled "Need Help Now" which provides students the ability to quickly access reporting procedures and alert the College that the student may be struggling with a Harassment Issue, a Class Issue, a Financial or Food issue, or just generally struggling. The student's comments are sent to the appropriate office so that the right staff member can reach out to the student to provide assistance.

Also of note, through the work of the Title IX Procedure Review Team, the College reached out to other New Jersey colleges and is developing a statewide professional network of Title IX coordinators and investigators to share best practices and updates regarding Title IX.

The Team also completely revised the RCBC Title IX Procedures and Processes document and posted it online for the campus community. The revised document provides a clearer process for students and staff needing to report and incident to follow. This document was shared with the Campus through its website and emails. Additionally, student orientation content was updated to include behavioral expectations regarding Title IX regulations and the Student Code of Conduct.

The College conducted several Title IX training sessions for staff after the completion of the new Procedures and Policies document including the Faculty Senate which was able to provide input to the procedures as well as the Need Help Now website initiative. The New Employee Orientation was also modified to include Title IX requirements and procedures.

Finally, the President reviewed all of these modifications, including policy implications, with the Board of Trustees to keep them informed and to make any necessary policy revisions.

During the interview with the Board of Trustees, the need for a regular process of policy review was discussed. While the Board members stated that it was something on which they were working, there is not an assessment process or cycle in place to review and update policies. This is something that the Board should put in place.

**Requirements:** *There are no requirements.*

**Recommendations:** The team makes the following recommendation:

1. *The institution should provide further evidence of the periodic assessment of the effectiveness of all institutional policies and procedures and the manner in which they are implemented.*

**Suggestions:** The team makes the following suggestions:

1. *The team suggests that the Board develop annual goals for itself as part of a Board continuous improvement and development process.*
2. *The team suggests that the Board consider joining an affiliation group for information and development as a Board, such as the Association of Community College Trustees or similar organization to assist with professional development.*

## **Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement**

**The institution's planning processes, resources and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.**

The visitors' judgment is that, at this time, the institution appears to be in compliance with this standard.

### **Summary of Key Evidence and Developments:**

Based on a review of the Monitoring Report, other institutional documents, and interviews with staff, faculty, and Board members, the team developed the following conclusions relative to this standard:

Since the MSCHE visiting team visit of May, 2019, Rowan College at Burlington County has enhanced its planning and assessment process for non-academic functional units. There is evidence that a framework for the thorough assessment of departmental goals and objectives has been developed. There now exist a Unit Review timeline, a Unit Review Questionnaire, and a Unit Review Peer Presentation framework which is being used in the Unit Review process. Several Institutional Effectiveness Assessment documents (matrices) were provided to the team for a number of non-academic functional units. These matrices represent a step in the process which will result in the completion of Unit Review documents and in potential budget resource requests. The team was provided with completed unit review documents for the Athletics Department and Liberal Arts (Academic Year 2019-2020). The existence of the timeline and the

other documents that the team was able to review indicate that, from an operational planning perspective, there is a College commitment to using planning, assessment, and resource allocation processes that are in alignment. The ability to sustain the effort needed to fulfill and deliver upon this commitment on an on-going basis remains a concern.

Institutional Effectiveness Assessment documents result in recommendations for activities, and for next steps to be undertaken by the unit assessed. Most recommendations resulting from the planning and assessment processes do not require the allocation of additional resources, and can be accomplished with resources already allocated to the respective department or unit. There are some recommendations presented to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee that require additional resource allocations. The Committee uses a Prioritization and Decision Making Rubric to make funding recommendations to the President and the Cabinet, which are based upon the degree to which budget requests address institutional priorities.

There is evidence that the College revamped its budget preparation process based upon the results of recently completed assessment. The College gathered input from budget managers / preparers about the process previously utilized, using a Continuous Improvement Survey. The Institutional Effectiveness Assessment: Budget document cited the results of the survey. The assessment also documented next steps in the form of commitments by the unit to conduct another review, and to increase the survey response rate of the budget managers.

As part of the revamping of its Operating Budget process, Rowan College developed a new "Budgeting Process Plan" which is being utilized in the preparation of the fiscal year 2021 budget. The deadlines for the completion of the "budget packages" by the academic departments and non-academic units are staggered over a two-week period, which will provide an adequate opportunity for preparation of the packages and for presentation review meetings.

As the Fiscal Year 2021 budget is assembled, the Budgeting Process Plan provides for adequate review at each appropriate step of the process. From an approval perspective, the process culminates with the approval of the College's budget by the Board of Trustees.

In demonstrably coordinating planning, assessment, and resource allocation, the College has made a commitment to enhance the use of its new template for assessment by undertaking a new annual assessment timeline. The new timeline, which extends from January 1 through December 31, 2021, will align its assessment timeline with its budgeting cycle.

There is evidence that RCBC has addressed the issue of repayment of debt service owed by the College to Burlington County. The majority of the debt has been restructured to make the anticipated payments more stable and manageable for the College.

There is evidence that Rowan College has made progress in its attempts to restructure its overall physical plant, enhancing some of its capital assets and closing others. For example, the operation of the Pemberton campus has ceased, the utilities have been disconnected, and the College anticipates an annual operating budget savings of \$2.5 million.

Subsequent to the team visit of May, 2019, the College has reached agreement with its three collective bargaining units. For two of the bargaining units, the agreements were retroactive to the 2016/2017 academic year, and extend through the 2020/2021 year. The remaining agreement is retroactive to the 2017/2018 academic year and extends through the 2021/2020 year. While this is good news for current financial planning purposes, settling expiring agreements on a timely basis will allow for accurate financial planning in the future as well.

Rowan College at Burlington County provided the team with a recently prepared multi-year financial projection. The assumptions used to prepare the forecast were conservative, and the

plan demonstrates that, given the assumptions, the College will be able to maintain stable tuition rate increases and comply with the Board directive to maintain a reserve equal to at least 3% of the College's operating expenses.

There is evidence that the Enrollment Management team has begun to undertake a new approach to the development of enrollment projections and retention goals for the College. This approach is cross-functional and considers a number of factors in its methodology. The approach includes analyses of persistence (retention of students by various variables), the potential to grant college credit to high school students, marketing effort influence, and the desirability of specific academic programs.

It is important for the College to perform an on-going assessment of the recently revamped processes of assessment and budget preparation to ensure that the efforts are maintained over time.

**Recommendations:** The team makes the following recommendation.

1. The institution should provide further evidence of periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal, and availability of resources.

**Suggestions:** The team makes the following suggestion.

1. The team suggests that the College formalize its debt service agreements in writing with Burlington County.

## **VI. Summary of Compliance**

Based on a review of the follow-up report and appendices, interviews, and other documents reviewed during the visit, the team draws the following conclusions.

The visiting team affirms that, at this time, the institution appears to be in compliance with:

- The Requirement of Affiliation 5;
- Standard II; and
- Standard VI.

**Recommendations:** The team makes the following recommendations:

- The institution should provide further evidence of the periodic assessment of the effectiveness of all institutional policies and procedures and the manner in which they are implemented. (Standard II)
- The institution should provide further evidence of periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal, and availability of resources. (Standard VI)

**Suggestions:** The team makes the following suggestions:

- The team suggests that the Board develop annual goals for itself as part of a Board continuous improvement and development process. (Standard II)



- The team suggests that the Board consider joining an affiliation group for information and development as a Board, such as the Association of Community College Trustees or similar organization to assist with professional development. (Standard II)
- The team suggests that the College formalize its debt service agreements in writing with Burlington County. (Standard VI)