



**STEVE SWEENEY CENTER  
FOR PUBLIC POLICY**

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## **Rowan University launches Sweeney Center for Public Policy**

**Glassboro** – Rowan University President Ali Houshmand today announced the formation of the Steve Sweeney Center for Public Policy at Rowan University to conduct evidence-based research, support workforce development and formulate answers to New Jersey’s most complex policy issues.

“The new policy center will tackle the toughest of issues and make its evidence-based research available to the public both for transparency and to enable greater citizen participation in state and local government issues,” said Houshmand. “We are pleased and honored that Senator Sweeney accepted our invitation to help guide the public policy center we envisioned. Having worked for decades with both Democratic and Republican administrations, he has built relationships across the aisle to develop policy and enact change to improve New Jersey.”

Establishing the center makes it possible to respond to changes and needs apparent both now and on the horizon.

“New Jersey needs an independent bipartisan public policy center that brings together the best experts and rigorous researchers to develop pragmatic, short and long-term solutions that improve our state’s competitiveness, grow our economy, develop our workforce, enhance our quality of life and make the state more affordable for everyone who wants to study, work, live and retire here,” said Sweeney, who will serve as chairperson of the Center’s advisory board. “We are going to do public policy in public. I am gratified that Rowan University shares this vision and honored that the policy center will bear my name.”

Well aware of the imperative to educate students in public policy, the University began to plan a graduate degree in the field in 2019 and began planning the formation of a policy center focused on New Jersey issues in 2021. Acknowledging the continued and urgent need to address policy with the benefit of interdisciplinary and evidence-based perspectives, Rowan’s Board of Trustees approved the degree program, and now the University is creating the center.

“Senator Sweeney’s interest in bringing light to important policy issues coincides perfectly with the University’s interest to further develop applied research and career-centered programming,” said Nawal Ammar, dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, the academic division in which the Center will be housed.

Mark Magyar, who served as Sweeney's Senate policy director, has been appointed as founding director of the Sweeney Center. Magyar will teach an undergraduate course in state and local government in the fall and the graduate course in public finance next spring. An award-winning Statehouse reporter who also served as a senior policy adviser to Governor Christine Todd Whitman, Magyar taught labor studies at Rutgers University for 12 years.

"The Sweeney Center will develop achievable solutions to complex policy issues based on data-driven analysis, benchmarking, rigorous academic research, and convening working groups that bring together policy experts, stakeholders and advocates to reach consensus on recommendations," said Magyar. "I am honored that Senator Sweeney and Dr. Houshmand entrusted me with this mission."

"The Sweeney Center's applied public policy research complements the academic work of our faculty, and I am excited to have Mark join the ranks of our faculty," said Ammar.

Anthony Lowman, Rowan University provost and senior vice president for Academic Affairs, said the addition of the Sweeney Center for Public Policy would strengthen Rowan's Public Policy program as it prepares to launch a Master's degree in Public Policy in September.

"Making the Sweeney Center an integral part of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences will provide strategic linkages for our faculty and afford valuable opportunities for our graduate and undergraduate students in all disciplines to work on interdisciplinary and cutting-edge public policy research projects with top public officials and thought leaders," said Lowman.

The Sweeney Center will attract policy fellows who are among the leading experts in their fields to coordinate major policy research. "We plan to expand scholarship and research at the center through philanthropic efforts that support the center," said Ammar.

A top 100 national public research institution rapidly rising to Carnegie R1 status, Rowan University offers bachelor's through doctoral and professional programs in person and online to 23,000 students.

The addition of the Sweeney Center will enhance the University's public policy research capacity, where its eight colleges and eight schools have focused on practical research at the intersection of engineering, medicine, science, social and behavioral science and business while ensuring excellence in undergraduate education.

Rowan, the fourth fastest-growing public research university in the nation, has earned national recognition for innovation; high-quality, affordable education; and public-private partnerships. With the opening of the School of Veterinary Medicine, Rowan will join Michigan State University as one of only two universities in the nation with medical schools granting M.D. and D.O. degrees and a veterinary school. Rowan is also home to South Jersey Technology Park.

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