

# COUNCIL of NEW JERSEY STATE COLLEGE LOCALS

AFT/AFL-CIO



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Rowan University's "Higher Education Reorganization for Southern New Jersey" press release and report issued today included a call for the elimination of civil service on their campus and the elimination of the current Statewide bargaining that Rowan is a part of with the other eight senior State Colleges/Universities. Instead the plan calls for Rowan to conduct local collective bargaining the same as research institutions Rutgers, UMDNJ and NJIT.

Nicholas Yovnello, Council President and Assistant Director of Library Services at Rowan University said, "The plan by the Rowan administration in its current form is a complete betrayal of the longtime excellent working relationship the three unions on the Rowan campus have enjoyed with the Rowan administration. Eliminating civil service on our campus could eventually lead to the same kinds of abuse that have occurred at UMDNJ over the last several years and will undermine the transparency and accountability that currently exists on our campus."

The State Commission of Investigation (SCI) 2007 Report titled "*Vulnerable to Abuse - The Importance of Restoring Accountability, Transparency and Oversight to Public Higher Education Governance*" recommended sweeping reforms in the governance, oversight and accountability of public higher education in New Jersey, finding the entire system vulnerable to waste, abuse and violations of the public trust." Rowan University was also cited. One of the Report's major recommendations was to establish a higher degree of coordination and accountability at the state level. Apparently some administrators of Rowan University do not agree, according to Yovnello.

The existing state-wide bargaining unit was created by the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) decades ago. PERC has ruled time and time again that broad-based units are in the public interest. The Council and the State of New Jersey have a bargaining history that has served the interests of the employees and their institutions fairly for 40 years, according to Yovnello. "The current system works and allows for local negotiations for specific areas of interest to each institution," said Yovnello "There can be no stronger evidence of this fact than the agreement recently reached between the AFT local on campus and the Rowan administration regarding the new medical school." He pointed out that Governor Christie has repeatedly called for the establishment of uniform salary guides for pre K-12 statewide an objective achieved by the College Council for the nine NJ senior public higher education institutions.

“The Council strongly opposes any move by the Rowan administration or the State to implement Rowan’s ill-conceived proposal requesting local only bargaining and removal of civil service,” said Yovnello. After meeting with management subsequent to Rowan’s release being issued, Yovnello reports that the Rowan administration has indicated that this is a working document subject to modification of the implementation of this and other parts of the proposal.

“If the merger does come about, the Council, the Rowan AFT Local and its Rowan sister unions remain willing to work cooperatively with Rowan University on a smooth transition to a research university that will evolve into a world class institution,” said Yovnello

The Council of New Jersey State College Locals, AFT-AFL-CIO representing over 8,700 faculty, librarians and professional staff at the nine state colleges and universities including Rowan University.

For further information contact Council Executive Director Steve Young at (908) 964-8476