

Higher Education Healthcare Coalition

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Contact: Nat T. Bender
908-377-0393 (mobile)
nbender@aftnj.org

Ed. note: a copy of the Rowan report is online http://aftnj.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/New-Rowan-Report_final_1-26-12-1.pdf

Rowan plan would weaken workers' rights and undermine academics

Recommendations would damage recruitment and retention efforts

EDISON... Suggesting extreme changes to faculty and staff working conditions is a major component in a report commissioned by Rowan University in anticipation of Governor Christie's plan to have Rowan University absorb Rutgers-Camden. The report, *Establishing the New Rowan University*, was made public this week. "How can university management really expect us to become a research university while disrupting long-standing bargaining units, diluting the quality of instruction by expanding the hiring of instructors with limited opportunity for growth and eliminating civil service protections against fraud and patronage?" asked Nick Yovnello, a Rowan librarian and President of the Council of New Jersey State College Locals, which represents faculty and professional staff at the institution.

"It's disturbing that this secretly commissioned report dismisses all of the anticipated opposition to the takeover by creating various scenarios for effectuating the takeover and it specifically counsels supporters not to address the concerns or questions of the opposition," said Adrienne Eaton, President of the Rutgers AAUP-AFT. "Once again, we see no details or cost estimates for the takeover, though, for the first time this report makes clear what the Governor has denied, that there will be substantial costs. If a continued attack on the bargaining rights and civil service protections of current Rowan employees is the vision for a New Rowan, then I can't expect that anyone supports this plan now."

Prior to the release of the Governor's task force report on higher education, Rowan University management paid \$30,000 to out-of-state advisors to craft the plan suggesting that faculty contracts could possibly be invalidated and long-established bargaining units be forced to re-certify their unions. "Forcing continual re-certification of unions is a practice that distracts workers from advocating for their basic rights and has been used in places like Wisconsin to weaken unions," said Donna M. Chiera, President of the American Federation of Teachers New Jersey. "Forced re-certification is a tactic advanced by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), the conservative group that crafts model legislation which often attacks workers' rights." Recent reports tie elementary education legislation advanced by the Governor to ALEC models with word-for-word correlations.

The report goes on to detail how existing Rowan faculty could be granted more time off from teaching to pursue research—an integral part of establishing a research university. A published report from an academic conference this week quotes Robert Zazzali, vice president for employee and labor relations at Rowan University, with outlining a plan to hire more instructors instead: a full-time teaching position is not eligible for promotion.

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The Higher Education Healthcare Coalition (HEHC) is an umbrella group comprised of UMDNJ, Rutgers and Rowan labor organizations. The coalition's mission is to ensure that any reorganization of healthcare education in New Jersey makes each of the institutions stronger and enhances the quality of higher education in New Jersey. The coalition maintains that any reorganization must protect the services currently provided, the skilled professionals who provide those services and the New Jersey communities that rely on these services.

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The Communications Workers of America, Local 1031 issued a statement about the report: "It is becoming more and more evident that these mergers are not about higher education. They are about big money, big debt and big politics. The secret report endorses the Governor's agenda of attacking collective bargaining and workers' rights, all while distracting the public and lawmakers from the costs and long term implications for higher education and research in New Jersey"

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