

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AT **ROWAN**

An inside look at
the Rowan University
entrepreneurship
ecosystem



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Message from the

FOUNDING HEAD

Entrepreneurship at Rowan University is not just a business discipline; rather, it is a collaborative effort between various disciplines including the sciences, psychology, art, math, and many more. Since joining Rowan University in 2017, I have personally witnessed and can affirm the significant impact of entrepreneurship education on our students and our community. This progress culminated in the establishment of the School for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (SIE) in 2022, solidifying Rowan University's position as a pioneer in entrepreneurship education.

Rowan University is committed to fostering a culture of innovation that encourages creative thinking, embraces risk-taking, and nurtures the entrepreneurial mindset. Through our innovative curriculum, experiential learning opportunities, and

industry partnerships, we have created an ecosystem that propels our students forward. Our entrepreneurial community thrives on collaboration, creativity, and resilience, empowering students to transform their ideas into tangible ventures, supported by the necessary resources and mentorship available through the SIE.

Our theme right now is "Momentum," encapsulating the extraordinary progress we have achieved and the exciting future that lies ahead. I invite you to explore this viewbook and experience firsthand the vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem flourishing at Rowan University. Together, we are shaping the future of entrepreneurship education and championing the next generation of innovators and change-makers.

Dr. Eric Liguori

Founding Head

School of Innovation & Entrepreneurship



The School of **INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

CHAMPIONING THE NEXT GENERATION OF INNOVATORS AND CHANGE-MAKERS



The School of Innovation & Entrepreneurship (SIE) within the William G. Rohrer College of Business launched in 2022 with a mission to further opportunities for professional start-ups and foster a cross-campus entrepreneurial mindset at Rowan University.

SIE is the first of its kind in New Jersey and one of only a few university-based schools of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country. It builds upon 15 years of success in entrepreneurship education, with a highly acclaimed entrepreneurship program that was recognized by The Princeton Review and Entrepreneur Magazine as a Top 50 program in the nation in 2022, 2023, and 2024. In addition, it received three major honors in 2019: a Global Award for Entrepreneurship Excellence from the International Council for Small Business, an Innovations that Inspire Award from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, and recognition as a finalist for the United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship’s National Model Entrepreneurship Program Award.

The school helps students pursue creative career paths to shape their own futures, regardless of their field of study, according to Dr. Tony Lowman, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. “We created the school to bring an entrepreneurial mindset to all disciplines,” said Lowman. “Rowan is building a university of the future, and doing so demands that we encourage students of all majors to think creatively and entrepreneurially.”

SIE offers academic opportunities to both undergraduate and graduate students including the B.S. in Entrepreneurship, B.S. in Engineering Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship minor, various entrepreneurship undergraduate certificates (CUGS), MBA concentrations in entrepreneurship and cannabis commercialization, and related graduate certificates (COGS). Additionally, SIE houses the Rowan Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship and the \$25 million Rowan Innovation Venture Fund.

Dr. Eric Liguori, the Founding Head of SIE, emphasized SIE’s commitment to providing all students with the chance to cultivate entrepreneurial thinking as a fundamental skill. “Rowan graduates are innovators, intrapreneurs and entrepreneurs, operating in a diverse array of industries, spanning the globe,” Liguori said. “Each day, our alumni are creating jobs, stimulating our economy and working to address some of the world’s biggest challenges. The School of Innovation and Entrepreneurship aims to scale this kind of impact.”

Meet the **student entrepreneurs** of Rowan University





Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship

PRINCETON REVIEW RANKED & AWARD WINNING

A Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship from Rowan University’s School of Innovation & Entrepreneurship prepares students to thrive in today’s ever-changing economy and equips them with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the challenges and opportunities of a dynamic business landscape. In a world with rapid technological advancements and shifting market demands, entrepreneurship has emerged as a key driver of innovation and economic growth.

Our entrepreneurship program provides students with a unique set of tools and perspectives that enable them to identify emerging trends, seize untapped market niches, and create value in both traditional and non-traditional industries. A challenge- and problem-based curriculum offers hands-on learning experiences that simulate real-world entrepreneurial scenarios. By tackling real business problems, students develop critical

thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills essential for future success.

Through internships and partnerships with local businesses and organizations, students gain experience, expand their professional networks, and apply their classroom knowledge in real-world settings. These immersive experiences foster an entrepreneurial mindset and promote adaptability, resilience, and a willingness to take calculated risks.

Whether students aspire to start their own ventures, drive entrepreneurship and innovation within established organizations, or use entrepreneurial approaches to solve the world’s biggest problems, a B.S. in Entrepreneurship from Rowan University provides the foundation for a successful and impactful career.



REDEFINING ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CANNABIS INDUSTRY

Jonathan Tecum-Chavez | Entrepreneurship '23

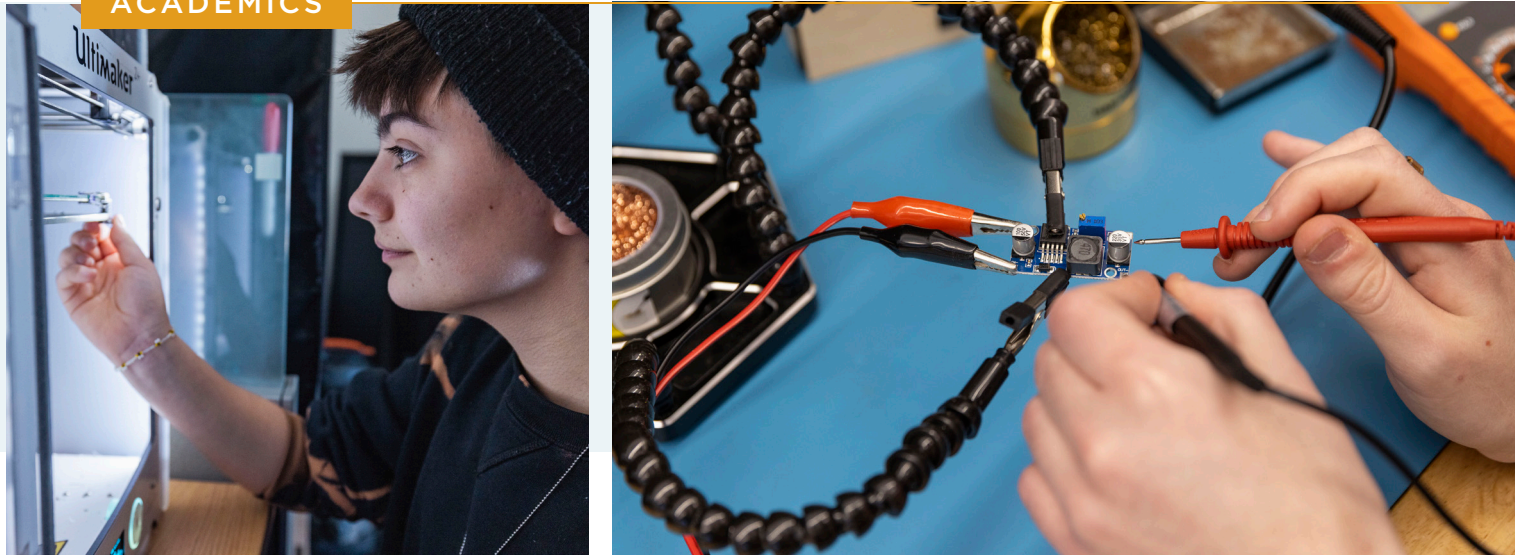
Jonathan Tecum-Chavez is a recent graduate of Rowan’s Entrepreneurship program and a proud first-generation Mexican-American. During his time at Rowan, Jonathan demonstrated his entrepreneurial spirit by co-founding THC GO, a forward-thinking cannabis delivery company dedicated to revolutionizing the New Jersey cannabis market. THC GO’s mission is centered around delivering exceptional service, unparalleled convenience, and enhanced accessibility to meet the needs of the rapidly expanding industry.

THC GO earned significant recognition during the 2022-2023 academic year, being named the Most Promising New Venture for Cannabis Commercialization in both the 2022 Idea Challenge and 2023 New Venture Expo, and a semifinalist in the 2023 New Venture Competition.

Growing up, Jonathan saw what it meant to be an entrepreneur first-hand from his father who owned a landscaping business. Reflecting on his academic and entrepreneurial journey, he shared, “His dedication, resilience, and entrepreneurial spirit echoed in my mind, propelling me forward. He taught me that hard work isn’t just about the physical exertion but also about the mental strength to keep going against all odds.”



“Rowan’s entrepreneurship program gave me the confidence to step-out of my comfort zone and opened my mind to start a new venture of my own. What I love most is that the SIE brings in industry professionals to teach you about real-world experience and actually cares about your success outside of the classroom.”



Bachelor of Science in Engineering Entrepreneurship

WHERE MINDSET MEETS SKILLSET

Rowan University's Engineering Entrepreneurship program equips students with a comprehensive skillset that combines engineering and business, empowering them to generate ideas and develop products for the marketplace while identifying technological business prospects. This program serves as a training ground for the future founders and leaders of high-tech ventures.

As part of the Henry M. Rowan College of Engineering, students pursuing the Engineering Entrepreneurship major participate in the renowned Engineering Clinic course sequence from their first year. This hands-on, minds-on curriculum provides a solid foundation in critical skills such as engineering design, teamwork, technical writing, and public speaking. Throughout their degree program, students choose either

the Mechanical Engineering or the Electrical and Computer Engineering track, and then further specialize their studies with upper-level Engineering and Business electives. Students are exposed to the entrepreneurial mindset and fundamental skills necessary for future success in fields such as Project Management, Technical Sales and Marketing, and Product Development and commercialization.

Rowan's campus offers numerous opportunities for Engineering Entrepreneurship students to apply their innovative and technical skills through involvement in student-led clubs and organizations, such as the University Innovation Fellows (UIF) and Collegiate Entrepreneurs' Organization (CEO). Additionally, students can leverage Studio 231, Rowan's makerspace and experiential learning lab located in Business Hall, to further enhance their practical skills.

FROM STUDENT TO ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADER

Kenyon Burgess | Engineering Entrepreneurship '23

Kenyon Burgess, a recent graduate of the Engineering Entrepreneurship program, played a crucial role in fostering the entrepreneurial ecosystem at Rowan University, leaving a lasting impact on the community.

During his junior year, Kenyon demonstrated his commitment to innovation and entrepreneurship by becoming a University Innovation Fellows (UIF), a renowned program hosted by Stanford University's Hasso Plattner School of Design (the d.school) that provides comprehensive training in innovation and entrepreneurship. As a member of UIF, Kenyon and his cohort organized a successful Startup Weekend for Rowan students, utilizing design thinking tools to generate creative solutions to enhance mental health on campus.

Committed to fostering innovation, Kenyon devoted his senior year to his engineering clinic project, aiming to promote design thinking practices and education among faculty and students throughout the entire campus. Through this collaborative effort, Kenyon and his fellow colleagues empowered others to embrace innovative problem-solving approaches and contributed to the culture of entrepreneurship at Rowan.

In recognition of Kenyon's contributions to Rowan's entrepreneurial ecosystem, he received



"This major is fantastic and unique. I haven't found anything like it anywhere else."

the 2023 Linda Ross Award for Entrepreneurial Engagement. This award, named after Dr. Linda Ross, who taught at Rowan for 43 years and co-founded its entrepreneurship program, celebrates entrepreneurial leaders that selflessly give back to the community. Kenyon's work exemplifies this spirit of giving, as he has made a significant impact on the university and its entrepreneurial initiatives.



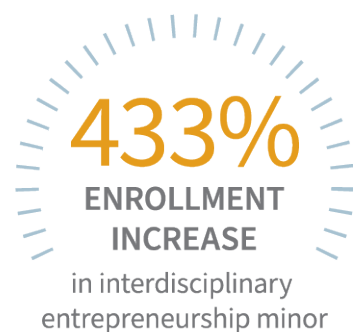
Minor in Entrepreneurship

ONE OF ROWAN'S FASTEST GROWING MINORS

Entrepreneurship is one of the fastest-growing minors at Rowan University, attracting students from a wide range of disciplines, including business, engineering, computer science, music industry, education, journalism, art, physics, theater, and radio, TV, and film.

The program's award-winning curriculum equips minor students with valuable skills and knowledge, making them assets to employers seeking proactive and entrepreneurial team members, applicable across various job roles and industries.

The program strategically integrates into various programs and cultivates an entrepreneurial mindset essential for success, regardless of students' aspirations to start a tech company, a social enterprise, a small business, or work as an intrapreneur in a large corporation or family business. By combining domain-specific business courses with entrepreneurship courses, students from all areas of Rowan's campus can efficiently earn a minor in entrepreneurship.



A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Harrison Nastasi | Business Management '26

Harrison Nastasi is currently pursuing his bachelor's degree in Business Management with a minor in Entrepreneurship. During his freshman year, Harrison embarked on his entrepreneurial journey founding Bobica Bars, a superfood-glazed, high-antioxidant granola bar with unique health benefits.

The entrepreneurship minor has played a pivotal role in Harrison's development as an entrepreneur. Through the hands-on projects and exposure to real-world perspectives from guest speakers and networking opportunities, he gained a new understanding of critical thinking, adaptability, and perseverance that are crucial to his startup.

Bobica Bars has gained significant traction in the health food industry, with a growing customer base and expanding distribution channels. Harrison's dedication and passion, combined with Bobica Bar's unique combination of wholesome ingredients, yummy flavors, and health-enhancing properties, earned Most Promising New Venture in the Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) category in the 2022 Idea Challenge and 2023 New Venture Expo and won third place in the highly competitive 2023 Rohrer New Venture Competition.



"The entrepreneurship minor not only equipped me with the necessary skills to launch Bobica Bars but also gave me the tools and support to scale and grow my startup."



Growth in Graduate Programs

WHERE INDUSTRY LEADERS ARE FORGED

Through its Entrepreneurship concentration and certificate programs, the Rowan MBA program emphasizes the importance of an entrepreneurial mindset in the business world. Our curriculum consists of 50% required and 50% elective coursework, allowing students to customize their educational path as thought leaders. They can choose one or two concentrations within the MBA program and earn Certificates of Graduate Study (COGS) alongside their MBA, enhancing their job prospects, facilitating career transitions, and opening doors for promotions.

The School of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SIE) supports graduate-level business students in developing an entrepreneurial mindset and exploring innovative ideas. Three Certificates of Graduate Study (COGS) are offered in entrepreneurship including Technology & Innovation, Leading Innovative Organizations,

and Corporate Entrepreneurship, which cover essential entrepreneurship principles and teach students how to apply an entrepreneurial thought process in different real-life settings.

Rowan University, in collaboration with the SIE, has launched a new MBA concentration and Certificate of Graduate Study in Cannabis Commercialization. Both prepare students for leadership roles in the dynamic and lucrative cannabis industry, especially within the ever-evolving New Jersey market, which is viewed as a significant opportunity for entrepreneurs from across the United States and beyond.

Employers, alumni, and CEOs across industries agree that an entrepreneurial approach, characterized by a focus on opportunities, innovation, and value creation, is vital for success in today's business world.

SERVING HOPE IN EVERY SIP

Sarah Atai | MBA '24

Following the completion of her Certificate in Graduate Studies, Sarah Atai enrolled in the MBA program and was selected as an esteemed MBA Fellow specializing in Innovations and Impact.

Sarah grew up in Uganda, where she worked with orphaned and vulnerable children. Prior to attending Rowan University, she obtained an internship opportunity with a nonprofit organization in the United States and dedicated the following year to immersing herself in the study of nonprofit development. Witnessing the immense need present, Sarah aspired to contribute to the sustainability endeavors of nonprofit organizations in her home country and throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

Motivated by deep-rooted passion for making a positive difference and drawing from her experience in the nonprofit sector, Sarah recognized that furthering her education was crucial to enacting meaningful change. Consequently, she was chosen as a participant in the Startup Opportunity Fund, a collaborative initiative between the Rowan Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship and the Rowan Innovation Venture Fund, aimed at supporting aspiring first-generation or underrepresented entrepreneurs in initiating their business endeavors.

With the help of the fund's mentorship and support, Sarah launched Steeped in Nature, a tea and coffee company that not only addresses the exploitation faced by local Ugandan farmers but also ensures equitable labor compensation, poverty reduction, decreased inequality, and the provision of high-quality and sustainably sourced products at an affordable price point.



"There is still a great need out there, and I want to be part of this process to help."

Course Spotlight



Entrepreneurship & Innovation

ROWAN UNIVERSITY'S MOST POPULAR, INTERDISCIPLINARY ENTREPRENEURSHIP COURSE

Entrepreneurship and Innovation is a dynamic course designed to cultivate the entrepreneurial mindset, fostering students' abilities to succeed in any professional field. By immersing students in the world of successful entrepreneurs and innovators, this course equips them with the essential qualities and strategic thinking necessary for success.

This interdisciplinary course welcomes students from various majors, including engineering, music, arts, sciences, business, and humanities. Together, they embark on a semester-long journey of collaboration, innovation, ideation, and brainstorming. Through engaging experiential learning

approaches, students are introduced to the entrepreneurial mindset and equipped with the tools and skills to identify opportunities that create both economic and social value.

As the course progresses, interdisciplinary teams are formed and tasked with addressing specific pain points or problems. These teams develop innovative products or services as solutions, gaining valuable insights into the process of establishing a business or social venture. Finally, students participate in either the Idea Challenge or New Venture Expo, where they pitch their business concepts as part of their final project.

To further enrich the learning experience, students engage with Rowan University's vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem by attending speaker events, site visits, and workshops facilitated by the Rowan Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship. By connecting with successful entrepreneurs and industry leaders, students not only expand their knowledge and network, but also reinforce the entrepreneurial mindset and skillset fostered within the classroom.

FROM CLASSROOM TO COMMERCIALIZATION

Kayvon Jahanbakhsh (Finance '19) and **Mike Lombardo** (Marketing '18) embody the transformative power of Rowan's Entrepreneurship & Innovation course. Kayvon's personal battle with ulcerative colitis during his teenage years ignited his passion for gut health and inspired him to seek a healthier alternative to sugary beverages.

In 2017, while enrolled in Rowan's Entrepreneurship & Innovation course, Kayvon and Mike Lombardo, teamed up for a class project to develop Topos Teas, an organic and nutritious iced tea. The duo went on to win first place in the 2018 Rohrer New Venture Competition and later sell in Whole Foods.

Kayvon and Mike rebranded their venture as Halfday Tonics in 2020, unleashing a new line of gut-healthy iced teas infused with prebiotics. With over \$7 million in funding, including two investments from the Rowan Innovation Venture Fund, their growth has been nothing short of remarkable. Recognized as the fastest-growing ready-to-drink Iced Tea in the nation by SPINS, Halfday Tonics can now be found in more than 3,500 retail locations, including Target, Publix, Whole Foods, and Wegmans. Additionally, Forbes named the duo to the prestigious 30 Under 30 List for 2023.



Kayvon and Mike's remarkable success story serves as a testament to the practical education and real-world impact fostered by the Entrepreneurship and Innovation course. From the humble beginnings of a classroom project to commercialization, they have exemplified the entrepreneurial spirit, inspiring future students to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams and illustrating that, with the right support and dedication, they too can create successful ventures.

Discover How Two Rowan Alumni are **Revolutionizing the Tea Industry**





Rowan's Pathways to Entrepreneurship

FOSTERING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET ACROSS CAMPUS

Entrepreneurship is widely disseminated across campus and integrated with majors from a diversity of disciplines, providing students with a solid foundation in entrepreneurial thinking. This approach enables students to leverage a wide range of tools and skill sets throughout their college journey and beyond.

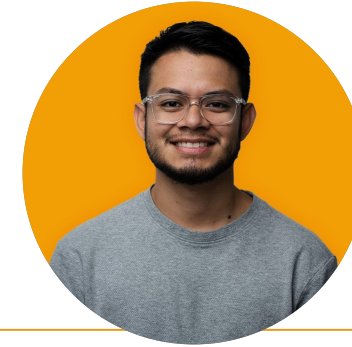
Rowan engineering students exemplify the spirit of entrepreneurship in their everyday pursuit. Dr. Erik Brewer, senior lecturer in the Biomedical Engineering Department, has personally witnessed their unwavering dedication and passion through various clinic projects. These projects tackle life-changing endeavors, such as designing state-of-the-art hospital beds to accommodate diverse patient body types.

Within the College of Performing Arts, entrepreneurship courses are seamlessly integrated with the music industry curriculum, offering students a unique advantage in understanding the business with an entrepreneurial mindset. Whether aspiring to establish their own record labels or pursue careers as sound engineers in the film and television industry, music industry students can take advantage of the courses offered by the School for Innovation & Entrepreneurship. These courses equip them with the essential knowledge and skills to effectively pitch ideas to potential partners and companies, develop strategic business plans, and leverage constructive feedback to refine their concepts.



Javier Molina (Music Industry, '22) serves as a testament to the transformative power of Rowan's Entrepreneurship & Innovation class in shaping one's career trajectory. Initially pursuing a major in music industry with aspirations of becoming a sound engineer, Javier's perspective changed after taking the E&I course. He realized that his true passion was starting his own independent record label.

To further enrich students' opportunities in entrepreneurship across campus, the School of Innovation & Entrepreneurship offers a



"Entrepreneurship & Innovation ignited a fire within me to pursue ideas that may seem unconventional to some but hold the potential for remarkable achievements."

Javier Molina
Music Industry '22

range of certificate programs that seamlessly integrate entrepreneurial principles into various fields of study. These certificates cover a variety of specializations, including Creatives Industries Entrepreneurship, Real Estate Entrepreneurship, Cannabis Entrepreneurship, and Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Technology at the undergraduate level (COGS), and Corporate Entrepreneurship, Leading Innovative Organizations, Technology and Innovation, and Cannabis Commercialization at the graduate (COGS) level.

UNLEASHING INNOVATION: VERGE AERO'S DRONE SWARM TECHNOLOGY TAKES FLIGHT

Philadelphia-based startup Verge Aero, co-founded by Rowan University engineering alumni Tony Samaritano '12, M'18, Chris Franzwa '13, and Anthony Merlino '14, has captivated global audiences with their innovative drone swarm technology. The company's mesmerizing aerial light shows, featuring synchronized drones creating intricate color-changing patterns, have been featured at events like Joe Biden's presidential win celebration, prominent festivals like Burning Man and the Electric Daisy Carnival, and above the Philadelphia Art Museum commemorating the

Eagles before their NFC championship game. Rooted in their hands-on education at Rowan University, the entrepreneurs attribute their success to practical projects and real-world experiences. Their journey took a remarkable turn on America's Got Talent: Extreme, where they earned a Golden Buzzer from Simon Cowell and secured a place in the show's finale. Verge Aero's success reflects their unwavering dedication, blending their passion for drone technology with exceptional engineering skills to push the boundaries of innovation.

Experience Verge Aero's **groundbreaking drone swarm technology in action during its largest field test**, hosted by Rowan University.





The Think Like an Entrepreneur Summer Academy

IGNITING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET OF FUTURE LEADERS

The Think Like an Entrepreneur Summer Academy (TLAE) a dynamic and transformative program designed for rising high school juniors and seniors, primarily serving underrepresented students. It offers a unique opportunity for students to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset and unlock their untapped potential while earning three college credits. These credits can be applied at Rowan University or transferred to another institution, all at no charge, thanks to the generous support from the TD Charitable Foundation.

TLAE immerses students in a stimulating and intensive learning environment where they are

challenged to identify unique problems and develop innovative solutions aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through hands-on experiences, students acquire critical skills in prototyping, problem-solving, customer engagement, design thinking, financial analysis, storytelling, and pitching.

The culmination of the TLAE experience is the highly anticipated pitch presentations, where teams showcase their innovative ideas to a panel of judges. This competitive environment fosters critical thinking and provides a valuable platform for students to receive real-time feedback, ensuring their growth and feedback. TLAE has

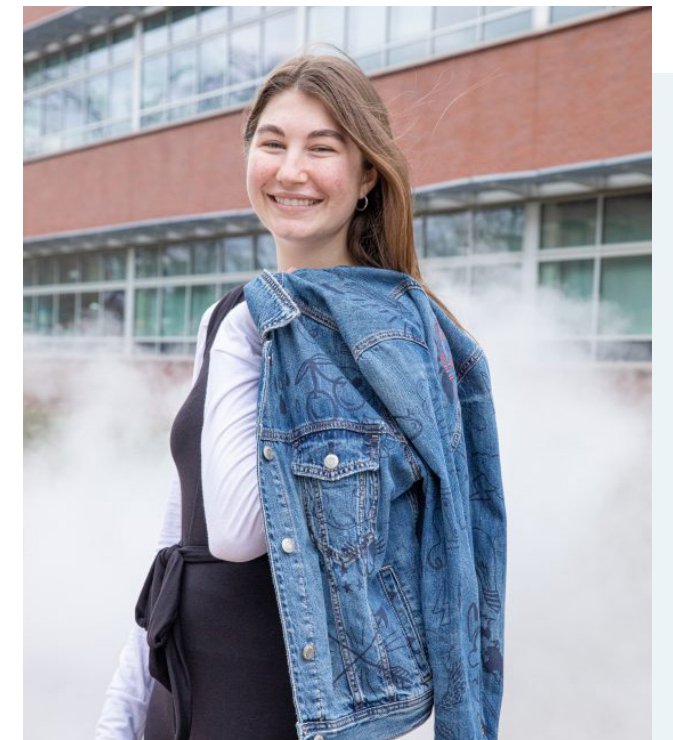
made a lasting impact on its students, opening doors to new possibilities and empowering them to envision a future of opportunity. Many participants, who may not have initially considered pursuing higher education, have found TLAE to be a transformative experience.

Since its inception in 2017 with 24 students from New Jersey, TLAE has experienced remarkable growth. In 2018, it welcomed 48 New Jersey students, and in 2019, the number grew to 62 participants. In 2020, Rowan University invited over 130 students from seven states and 47 high schools, transitioning seamlessly to a virtual format. In 2022, TLAE resumed in-person teaching for its 6th annual Academy, graduating over 60 students and celebrating the awarding of its 1,000th college credit hour.

Distinguished by its unique approach, the Think Like an Entrepreneur Summer Academy sets itself apart from other programs by providing students with the tools and environment necessary to generate high-quality solutions to real-world problems. Not only does the program empower students with practical skills, but it also ignites their passion, fostering a lifelong entrepreneurial spirit and unleashing their full potential as future leaders and entrepreneurs.

1,150+

HOURS OF FREE COLLEGE CREDIT awarded through the Think Like an Entrepreneur summer high school program



"The Think Like an Entrepreneur Summer Academy showed me that my ideas can make a positive impact on the community and world. The program has made a lasting impact on me to pursue an education in Entrepreneurship at Rowan University."

Megan Steckler

Think Like an Entrepreneur Summer Academy '19, Entrepreneurship and Marketing '24

The Rowan Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship



At the heart of Rowan University's entrepreneurial ecosystem lies the Rowan Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (RCIE), a dynamic hub that fuels innovation, creativity, and an entrepreneurial mindset among students across campus. Through its comprehensive programs, partnerships, and accolades, RCIE has emerged as a global leader in entrepreneurship education.

RCIE's impact is far-reaching, offering diverse programs and initiatives tailored to guide and support young entrepreneurs. With over 100 annual speaker and networking events, students gain invaluable opportunities to learn from established entrepreneurs and industry experts. This exposure cultivates practical skills, expands networks, and provides insights into the realities of entrepreneurship.

In addition to speaker sessions, the center hosts large-scale competitions and an annual high-intensity accelerator program, both of which equip students with the knowledge, resources, and mentorship necessary to accelerate the growth of their startups. RCIE also houses Studio 231 and Creatives 230, Rowan's on-campus experiential learning labs designed to foster collaboration and ideation.

Beyond student engagement, RCIE supports faculty in seamlessly integrating entrepreneurship into their courses. This integration ensures that students across various disciplines have opportunities to develop an entrepreneurial mindset and the skills needed to thrive in a rapidly changing business landscape.

RCIE's commitment to promoting entrepreneurship education and cultivating a culture of innovation has earned it prestigious accolades. In 2019, Rowan's academic entrepreneurship program was one of three universities globally recognized with the International Council for Small Business (ICSB) Entrepreneurship Education Excellence Award, leading to Rowan's designation as an official ICSB Knowledge Hub in 2022. In 2021, RCIE's cross-campus programming earned ICSB's Entrepreneurship Center Global Impact Award. The Center was also instrumental in Rowan's recognition as a Top 50 U.S. undergraduate entrepreneurship program by the Princeton Review and Entrepreneur Magazine for both 2022, 2023, and 2024.

DRIVING GLOBAL INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Rowan University proudly stands as a Knowledge Hub (KHub) of the International Council of Small Businesses (ICSB), a distinction earned in 2022. This honor signifies Rowan's commitment to fostering a global network of knowledge exchange, collaboration, and innovative thinking.



A ribbon-cutting ceremony marked the official naming of the RCIE as a KHub and was attended by ICSB President and CEO Dr. Ayman El Tarabishy, ICSB Chair Dr. Winslow Sargeant, and other ICSB leaders from Germany, South Korea, Switzerland, and the U.S. Dr. Sargeant highlighted ICSB's recognition of Rowan's dedication to cultivating innovation across its curricula and campuses, stating, "Rowan University is a magnet now around the world."

Built on a legacy of forward-thinking, the KHub distinction stands as a testament to Rowan University's transformative impact, innovative spirit, and commitment to delivering entrepreneurship education for the greater good. This accolade resonates globally, captivating minds well beyond geographical boundaries, and solidifies Rowan's role as a driving force in fostering innovation and entrepreneurial growth worldwide.



Stay up to date on entrepreneurship news and events at Rowan by subscribing to our [monthly newsletter](#)

Watch the Celebratory Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony of [Rowan's ICSB Knowledge Hub](#)



Studio 231

**DESIGN. MAKE. COLLABORATE.
PROTOTYPE. INVENT.**



"Studio 231 has everything a student needs to develop and prototype their idea - and we are here to help make that happen."

Christopher Burton

*Mechanical Engineering '23, Studio 231
Lab Supervisor from 2021-2023*

Located on the second floor of Business Hall, Studio 231 stands as a hub for innovation within Rowan University. Named one of AACSB's Innovations that Inspire in 2019, this student-led experiential learning lab and makerspace has become a platform for collaboration, ideation, rapid prototyping, and research for the Rowan community.

The idea for Studio 231 was conceived in 2017 by four University Innovation Fellows (UIF) who recognized the need for a dedicated physical space to cultivate year-round innovation and interdisciplinary collaboration. Guided by research and focus groups, and with support from university administration, Studio 231 was made possible, exemplifying Rowan University's commitment to fostering the entrepreneurial mindset.

The studio's unique blend of resources and expertise enables students to transform ideas into reality. Staffed by trained engineering and business students, Studio 231 is equipped with essential tools, including low-resolution prototyping supplies, 3D printers, Arduino and Raspberry Pi kits, Cricut Maker, Glowforge 3D laser printer, and carpentry equipment. This comprehensive toolkit allows projects to seamlessly transition from concept to prototype.

Studio 231's impact extends far beyond its walls and is deeply intertwined with Rowan's curriculum. This integration allows Entrepreneurship and Innovation students to engage with design thinking, low-resolution prototyping, and high-resolution prototyping each semester. Beyond academics, Studio 231 hosts workshops and fosters cross-campus partnerships, amplifying its impact across disciplines.



The studio's success is evident through its impactful projects and initiatives. Among these is the recent development of prosthetic hind legs for Fortunato, a young Nigerian dwarf goat born with septic arthritis. Dr. Matthew Edson, founding dean of the Shreiber School of Veterinary Medicine, saw the potential of Studio 231 in creating prosthetic hind legs for the goat.

Mechanical engineering majors and Studio 231 technicians Addison Deckert and Vince Gallo accepted the challenge. Leveraging the studio's resources, they crafted breathable, custom prosthetics that transformed Fortunato's life, enabling him to roam without pain. "It makes me really happy that we're able to do something like this and it really shows how great this space is," Vince shared.

Studio 231 remains a cornerstone of Rowan University's commitment to pushing boundaries, nurturing innovative minds and equipping them with the tools to shape a brighter future.

"It was a really good feeling to see that a prototype that I made on Fortunato, and working, and actually giving him something that he didn't have before is indescribable."

Addison Deckert

Mechanical Engineering '24

Witness Fortunato's
**Heartwarming
Transformation**





Creatives 230

WHERE ART MEETS ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Creatives 230, located in Business Hall 230, is a student-led experiential learning lab that bridges the gap between creativity and entrepreneurship. Guided by Jennifer Drumgoole, Assistant Professor of Photography, and a dedicated group of students, Creatives 230 facilitates collaborations among creatives, entrepreneurs, and innovators.

Launched in January 2023, Creatives 230 serves as a dynamic hub, providing dedicated space in Rowan’s stARTup Gallery for student artwork and offering services like portfolio, brand, and project consulting. This connection between imaginative thinkers and entrepreneurial minds propels

innovative ventures. This unique peer-to-peer learning model equips students with practical experience and real-world insights, contributing to the growth of both their creative portfolios and entrepreneurial endeavors.

Creatives 230 boasts several successful collaborations with clients such as Bobica Bars, founded by Harrison Nastasi (Management ‘26); Brianna Marie Cosmetics, founded by Brianna Pannullo (Marketing ‘24); ReGelTec, co-founded by Provost Tony Lowman; and Halfday Iced Tea, co-founded by Kayvon Jahanbakhsh (Finance ‘19) and Mike Lombardo (Marketing ‘18).

"To me, Creatives 230 represents the idea that things that are perceived as distinctly different, such as the business world and the art world, can actually exist together beautifully. The running of this space has introduced me to positions in the real world, such as being a content creator, a video script writer, and a creative director. These careers are all things I didn't have knowledge of beforehand."

Isabella Shainline
English Education '24



A standout project in Creatives 230’s portfolio is the partnership with Tanara “DoubleChocolate” Mallory, a TikTok content creator who records candid, comedic reactions to questionable cooking videos for her over 3.2 million followers. Creatives 230 played a significant role in rebranding efforts and the development of an exclusive merchandise line, featuring her distinctive catchphrase “everybody’s so creative.”

“Creatives 230 has allowed so many opportunities for students to connect, learn, build their innovations and share ideas,” shared Taylor Jusino (Communication Studies and Photography ‘23), a founding student of Creatives 230. “As a student and a fellow creative, I appreciate all the experience I’ve gained and can wholeheartedly say that students are blossoming with support from the RCIE.”

Looking ahead, Creatives 230 aims to expand its reach and further strengthen the connections between creatives and entrepreneurs. As it continues to grow, it remains committed to its mission of fostering creative collaboration between creatives and entrepreneurs.



Watch **Tanara’s** interview, produced by Creatives 230, on TikTok



The Rowan Innovation Venture Fund

EMPOWERING GROWTH. FUELING MOMENTUM. IGNITING FUTURES.

The Rowan Innovation Venture Fund (RIVF) is a University-based, \$25 million private-equity fund. Established by the Rowan University Foundation, RIVF began with a \$5 million investment in 2014 and later received an additional \$20 million in 2022. It aims to provide early-stage funding to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and South Jersey individuals and companies that are ready for the competitive market.

RIVF reflects Rowan University's dedication to promoting entrepreneurship, advancing research, and driving economic growth in Southern New Jersey. Its impact is evident through several success stories, supporting over 15 South Jersey-based and regional startups since 2015. Many of these projects were initiated by university students and faculty, including Halfday Tonics, a healthful beverage line available in 1,400+ U.S. retailers, founded by Rohrer College of Business alumni, and MRIMath, a health science company supplying critical information for life-saving procedures, co-founded by Rowan faculty.

Together, RIVF, the School of Innovation & Entrepreneurship (SIE) and the Rowan Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (RCIE) aim



to support and expand opportunities for early-stage student startups. In 2022, SIE and RIVF introduced the Startup Opportunity Fund, offering grants from \$500 to \$2,500 to support first-generation and underrepresented entrepreneurs. In 2023, RIVF boosted RCIE's Rohrer New Venture Competition prize to \$30,000 in 2023, including a \$25,000 convertible note investment option from Rowan Innovation Venture Fund, plus \$5,000 non-dilutive seed funding and automatic entry into RCIE's AccelerateRU summer accelerator program.

Ernest Holzheimer, Managing Director of RIVF, remarked, "A number of the nation's most successful startups were founded in a dorm room or elsewhere on a college campus." Michael Connallon Jr., Chair of RIVF, echoed this sentiment, highlighting the positive impact on the University and community ecosystem.

RIVF's commitment to fostering innovation and supporting entrepreneurs continues to



"It's imperative that we support the people who are today's entrepreneurs and tomorrow's business leaders."

Dr. Ali Houshmand
Rowan University President

play a pivotal role in driving positive change, encouraging entrepreneurial excellence, and enhancing Southern New Jersey's economic landscape. "At \$25 million, the RIVF is among the largest venture funds from a public university in the region," said President Houshmand. "As Rowan grows, part of our mission must be to support innovators with the ideas and ability to launch businesses, create jobs and improve our community."



Learn more about Rowan University's **\$25 million venture fund**

South Jersey Tech Park

INNOVATION. INVESTMENT. OPPORTUNITY.

The South Jersey Technology Park (SJTP) is a vibrant entrepreneurial hub for fostering innovation and collaboration in a dynamic environment that unites faculty, staff, alumni startups, and companies in partnership with Rowan University. This hub acts as an innovation engine, an economic opportunity incubator, and a testament to the power of collaboration between academia, industry, and the entrepreneurial drive.

SJTP houses over 20 companies spanning various sectors, including life sciences, healthcare, defense, and technology, alongside three dedicated research centers. Within this vibrant ecosystem, innovators from both the university community and the broader region gain access to essential business resources. They engage in networking events, immersive learning experiences, and the formation of strategic partnerships. As Rowan University's technology and economic development arm, SJTP serves as a nexus where government, industry, and the entrepreneurial community converge, harnessing the university's resources for innovation projects and applied research.

Strategically located next to Rowan's main campus, SJTP offers an ideal space for entrepreneurs, providing convenient access to Philadelphia, New York City, and Washington, D.C. Spanning an impressive 45,000 square feet, this state-of-the-art facility features office suites, an incubator, fully equipped laboratories, adaptable meeting spaces, and a range of amenities.



The Entrepreneurship Advisory Council



“As a member of the EAC, I have had an amazing opportunity to mentor student entrepreneurs and watch them progress their professional and academic development. Interacting with the students through their journey has been a rewarding experience!”

Amber Deimler
Vice President of Sales,
Demountable Concepts, Inc.



“As a Rowan Alum and former Adjunct Professor, expanding the capability to actively engage with students through mentoring and investing time as a member of the EAC and RIVF panels is an exceptionally gratifying pursuit.”

Christopher Greco, '95
President, Ginsey Home Solutions

SHAPING ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY

The Entrepreneurship Advisory Council (EAC) plays a pivotal role in Rowan University’s entrepreneurial landscape. Committed to advancing the School of Innovation & Entrepreneurship (SIE) and the Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (RCIE), the EAC’s dedicated members drive the attainment of the School’s vision, strategy, and overall excellence.

EAC members contribute their time, talent, and treasure to support the SIE’s mission. Engaged in strategic planning, guest speaking, competition judging, mentoring, and financial support, they enrich the student experience beyond the classroom. Their real-world insights and networking opportunities prepare students for success in the competitive entrepreneurial arena.

This partnership between the EAC and students fosters a culture of innovation, collaboration, and bold ideation. Beyond student impact, the EAC’s influence extends to cultivating a dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem. By actively participating in Rowan’s innovation strategy, EAC members contribute to an environment that nurtures creative thinking and ambitious pursuits.

Entrepreneur in Residence

In 2023, the Rowan Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (RCIE) introduced the Entrepreneur in Residence (EIR) program, connecting seasoned entrepreneurs and experienced business leaders with student entrepreneurs. This program serves as a bridge between the academic and business worlds, enhancing the educational experience for aspiring student startups.

EIRs play a crucial role within the Rowan community by providing multifaceted support to student entrepreneurs, including hands-on guidance, mentorship, and access to valuable resources that amplify the success of student startups. Leveraging their industry expertise and connections, EIRs open doors to potential investors, collaborators, and customers, equipping young entrepreneurs with the knowledge and confidence required to make informed decisions and pursue their goals with greater confidence.



MEET JOSEPH COSGROVE, RCIE’S INAUGURAL EIR

Joseph Cosgrove ‘00, a transformative senior executive, boasts 30+ years of leadership across small to Fortune 500 companies. Skilled in innovative strategy, shared vision creation, and organizational architecture, he drives explosive growth in competitive markets. Formerly Chairman, President and CEO of Pentec Health, a dialysis medication leader, Cosgrove now leads Leiters Health, a top pharmaceutical outsourcing provider, as President and CEO. Throughout his career, Cosgrove has been an advocate for healthcare innovation and excellence, driven by his commitment to nurturing the next generation.

A dedicated healthcare innovator, Cosgrove was named Rowan University’s Distinguished Alumnus of the Year (2022), received honors from Beta Gamma Sigma Honor Society and Marcum Innovator of the Year (2019), and earned accolades such as Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year (2012) and SmartCEO’s Future 50 Award (2012).

Rowan University welcomes Joe Cosgrove as its inaugural Entrepreneur in Residence





AccelerateRU

EMPOWERING GROWTH. FUELING MOMENTUM. IGNITING FUTURES.

AccelerateRU is a dynamic startup accelerator program held each summer through the Rowan Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (RCIE). Launched in May 2018 with a mission to accelerate the success of student ventures, this program provides essential resources for achieving scalable growth.

Over the course of six weeks, AccelerateRU delivers a comprehensive package of support and programming to accepted companies. This includes personalized coaching, specialized workshops, and an immersive two-day, in-person startup bootcamp, all designed to fuel momentum and drive progress. Participants engage in bi-weekly workshops

on specialized topics and receive mentorship from ‘Startup Gurus’ and esteemed faculty mentors. RCIE’s facilities, including co-working spaces, breakout rooms, Studio 231, and Creatives 230, are available for team members. Additionally, the program extends in-kind services such as legal counsel, insurance consultations, and essential software resources.

AccelerateRU provides participants with access to non-equity seed funding of up to \$7,500, while also unlocking avenues for additional funding opportunities, such as equity-based seed funding through the Rowan Innovation Venture Fund, Rowan University’s multi-million dollar venture fund.



TURNING PASSION INTO PROFIT

Madison Mahon | Marketing '22

During her time at Rowan University, Madison Mahon (Marketing '22) discovered her love for crafting home-made jewelry. Inspired by her passion, Madison transformed her hobby into a thriving business. In 2019, Madison launched East Coast Jewels, a jewelry brand specializing in handcrafted pieces made from precious metals, gemstones, crystals, and pearls, offering quality and affordable options for self-expression.

Madison’s participation in AccelerateRU proved incredibly valuable, exceeding her expectations and providing essential insights into business growth. The program’s guidance helped her focus on scaling East Coast Jewels, especially in financial aspects like budget planning and forecasting, enabling her to make informed decisions.

Madison’s dedication to creating beautiful and well-made jewelry has earned her several notable awards and accolades, including the Best Brand Identity Award at the 2022 New Venture Expo, and multiple wins in various categories at the 2022 Best of Jersey Shore awards.



“Through this program, I was able to focus on the growth and expansion of my business, East Coast Jewels.”

The Startup Opportunity Fund

ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR ALL

The Startup Opportunity Fund, a collaborative effort between the RCIE and Rowan Innovation Venture Fund, is dedicated to propelling first-generation and underrepresented entrepreneurs towards success. Offering non-equity seed funding ranging from \$500 to \$2,500, the fund aims to ignite the launch and growth of new ventures.

Beyond its financial support, the fund fosters a comprehensive ecosystem tailored to support new businesses. Participants gain exclusive access to RCIE’s co-working spaces and events, which act as hubs for collaboration and creativity, allowing student entrepreneurs to connect with like-minded peers. Mentorship from accomplished business leaders further accelerates growth, while exclusive exposure opportunities, such as the New Venture Expo and engagement with the Entrepreneurship Advisory Council, open doors to valuable collaborations and feedback.

At its core, the Startup Opportunity Fund is designed to support student entrepreneurs throughout their entrepreneurial journey. It emerges as a dynamic force in championing inclusive entrepreneurship, providing essential funding, mentorship, networking, and visibility to drive success for student startups.



A CUT ABOVE: THE EVOLUTION OF SHEARS

Julian Doroteo | Entrepreneurship '22

From an early age, Julian knew he wanted to be a barber, but his aspirations extended far beyond simply having his own chair. His vision encompassed a chain of storefronts and a training school to empower others in achieving their entrepreneurial dreams. This determination led him to transfer to Rowan University to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship.

At Rowan, Julian discovered guidance and mentorship through the Startup Opportunity Fund, propelling his aspirations into action. He launched Shears, a mobile hair studio, quickly building a dedicated clientele of over 50 on campus and an additional 90 in his hometown. Simultaneously, he followed in his father’s footsteps and enlisted in the Marines, serving until 2022.

Through trial and error, Julian explored different options for Shears, refining his strategies along the way. He developed an app concept that connected customers with local barbers, earning him a spot as a finalist in the Idea Challenge. Impressively, he presented his idea on a video call from a latrine during training at Fort Dix.

Leveraging valuable feedback and insights from the Idea Challenge, Julian recognized the necessary steps to launch his app, prompting a strategic shift. With seed funding and mentorship through the Startup Opportunity Fund, he directed his efforts towards securing a permanent home for Shears. In March 2023, his vision came to life with the opening of the first Shears storefront in Bridgeton, NJ. Reflecting on this achievement, Julian shares, “Not only do I now have a physical place to take care of my customers, but I can also give back to the community and have the opportunity to give jobs to future barbers.”



“I never knew how to create a business plan until I went to Rowan. My family always dreamed of having a business, but never had the resources to fulfill it.”

Watch Julian Doroteo's **Inspirational Journey to Shears**



The Idea Challenge

CULTIVATING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT IN ASPIRING STUDENT ENTREPRENEURS

The Idea Challenge, organized by the Rowan Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (RCIE), is an annual competition that exemplifies Rowan University’s commitment to nurturing entrepreneurial thinking and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration among students. With the generous support of the Rowan Innovation Venture Fund and sponsorships from the Rohrer College of Business, Henry M. Rowan College of Engineering, and the College of Science and Mathematics, the Idea Challenge provides Rowan students with a platform to transform their ideas into reality.

Held each fall, the Idea Challenge encourages students from all disciplines to explore their entrepreneurial mindset and engage in cross-disciplinary

collaborations. Using support from the RCIE and resources from the Studio 231, and Creatives 230 experiential learning labs, students begin to expand their idea into something that can be displayed at an expo table.

Over 45 idea-stage startups are showcased at the event where students passionately pitch their ideas and display prototypes, mock ups and conduct demos to a pool of judges made up of faculty and staff from the university. They compete for First Place or the title of “Most Promising New Venture” in categories like Consumer Packaged Goods, Cannabis Commercialization, Technology, Service, or Social Impact.

Through this showcase, students develop fundamental speaking and pitching skills and receive critical feedback that they can put back into their ideas. The Idea Challenge is the first step on RCIE’s “Roadway to Success” with participants often advancing to the New Venture Competition and Expo in the spring.

REVOLUTIONIZING PEDIATRIC HEALTHCARE WITH 4U MEDICAL DESIGNS

Nicholas Nastasi | Management & Entrepreneurship '23, MBA '26

During an Entrepreneurship & Innovation course at Rowan University in 2021, Nick’s personal experience with medical procedures and vaccinations led him to found 4U Medical Designs. The idea took shape as he sought to alleviate the anxiety and fear faced by pediatric patients during medical treatments.

“As a child, I underwent intravenous therapy from an IV bag, and the experience was overwhelming. The fear of needles during vaccinations only added to my anxiety. I knew there had to be a better way to help young patients cope with medical procedures,” recalls Nick.

4U Medical Designs introduced an innovative solution—a patent-pending medical device sticker system that works seamlessly with IV bags, feeding bags, and syringes. These child-friendly stickers overlay blank portions of medical devices with engaging images, providing not only a distraction but also creating conversation starters for healthcare workers and their young patients.

The spark of this idea ignited Nick’s entrepreneurial spirit, propelling him to

participate in the 2022 Idea Challenge. Throughout the competition, Nick honed his presentation and pitching skills, absorbing valuable feedback from judges. “The Idea Challenge was a transformative experience for me. It provided the perfect opportunity to refine my pitch, gather valuable insights, and gain confidence in my business idea,” shared Nick.

Winning the Idea Challenge was Nick’s starting point. He leveraged the win’s momentum to advance his business and partner with pediatric offices nationwide. His commitment, entrepreneurial drive, and innovative concept led to accolades, such as a spot on Life Changing Labs’ 22 under 22 List. This vision led to more triumphs: first place in the 2023 CEO Global Pitch Competition, the 2023 Values to Ventures Competition, and second place in the 2023 Rohrer New Venture Competition.

Driven by a passion for pediatric healthcare, Nick strives to make a positive impact. He’s dedicated to enhancing and broadening his product range, aiming to revolutionize global healthcare for children.

“The Idea Challenge played an instrumental role in shaping my entrepreneurial path. It provided me with the skills, exposure, and confidence needed to thrive in the competitive business world. The critical feedback I received during the competition was invaluable and helped me make significant improvements to my business. I am immensely grateful for the support and opportunities provided by the RCIE, which have been crucial to the success of 4U Medical Designs.”



The New Venture Expo

SHOWCASING INNOVATIONS AND CELEBRATING STUDENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Held alongside the Rohrer New Venture Competition each April, the New Venture Expo is a lively event organized by the Rowan Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (RCIE). Featuring over 45 early-stage student startups across industries like Food & Beverage, Retail, and Entertainment, it's a day of celebration where the community comes together to explore Rowan University's dynamic entrepreneurial spirit and the innovative ideas of current students.

Throughout the semester, students develop solutions to real-world problems, culminating in the New Venture Expo where they present their ideas at display booths. The event encourages students to embrace the entrepreneurial mindset and helps them develop essential skills

like brainstorming, teamwork, prototyping, pitching, and more.

Distinguished judges from the community, including entrepreneurs and alumni, listen to pitches and offer feedback. Their scores determine the winners of the \$4,000 first place and recognize the most promising new ventures in categories such as Consumer Packaged Goods, Cannabis Commercialization, Technology, Service, and Social Impact. Many teams go on to compete in the Rohrer New Venture Competition, tailored for venture-stage startups.

Beyond business, the New Venture Expo also celebrates the creative spirit. The stARTup Gallery, featuring captivating student artwork curated by RCIE's Creatives 230, complements RCIE's mission of bridging entrepreneurship and the arts. Guests can vote for their favorite pieces, and top artwork is acknowledged with awards. Attendees also have the opportunity to purchase prints of the showcased artwork during the event.

The New Venture Expo stands as a testament to Rowan University's unwavering commitment to fostering student entrepreneurship and innovation. It highlights the hard work, collaboration, and support from our community, marking a pivotal moment in our students' entrepreneurial journey.



IGNITING CHANGE, ONE ART PROJECT AT A TIME WITH ART FOR HOPE STUDIO

Ashley Kulikowski | Psychology '23

Ashley Kulikowski is on a mission to provide a safe space for youth to express their emotions and combat the mental health crisis. As a psychology student and founder of Fearless Movement, a Mental Health Advocacy Non-profit organization established in 2017, Ashley recognized a critical need for a solution to address the rising suicide rates among young individuals.

From this mission, Art for Hope Studio was born, a psychology-based art studio leading the charge against the mental health crisis. The studio offers mental health-focused art classes for all ages and personalized therapeutic art mentorships for children. "Our goal is to provide mental health services while using art as a powerful tool for emotional expression. Every class attended helps us provide a mental health class to a youth in need," Ashley explained.

Art for Hope Studio quickly gained notice, earning third place in the 2022 Rohrer New Venture Competition and an honorable mention in 2023. It was also hailed as the Most Promising New Venture in Social at the 2022 Idea Challenge. Yet, Ashley's crowning achievement came with her first-place victory at the 2023 New Venture Expo, enabling wider impact and meaningful discussions on mental health.

Ashley remains grateful for the support she has received. "My experience with Fearless Movement and my psychology background have been instrumental in shaping Art for Hope Studio, but



"The New Venture Expo win for Art for Hope Studio wasn't just a victory; it was validation that reinforced our mission. It's amazing how much impact one event can have on your journey as an entrepreneur."

the recognition and exposure received from the Expo opened doors to new opportunities and accelerated our progress."

Art for Hope's success, including sold-out events, partnerships with Walmart Foundation and Nemours Children's Health, and Expo victory, strengthened its community impact. The curriculum now enriches select New Jersey public schools, a major milestone for founder Ashley. She expressed her joy, stating, "Reaching students in schools breaks barriers, prioritizing emotional well-being—a step towards tackling the mental health crisis."

As Ashley's journey continues, she remains committed to empowering minds, igniting hope, and proving that with passion, innovation, and dedication, real change is possible. "We are fostering change, one art project at a time. And we're just getting started," she exclaimed.



THE ROHRER New Venture Competition

A LAUNCHPAD FOR TRANSFORMING IDEAS INTO IMPACTFUL VENTURES

Since its inception in 2007, the Rohrer New Venture Competition, hosted by the Rowan Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (RCIE), has played a pivotal role in shaping Rowan University’s entrepreneurial ecosystem. The competition marks a crucial milestone for student entrepreneurs and their startup ventures.

Originating as the Business Plan Competition, this event has evolved into a launchpad for aspiring innovators, providing over \$130,000 in funding to students to fuel their startups. Aligned with RCIE’s mission, the competition equips participants not only with practical business skills but also with the competitive edge needed to succeed in the business world. The journey to the finals builds upon the groundwork laid through the Idea Challenge and New Venture Expo. Students attend preparation workshops covering crucial elements like business model and intellectual property, customer discovery and development, and financial and presentation skills. Guided by mentors, teams refine their business

concepts and strategies over several weeks, culminating in a semi-final round from which five teams proceed to the finals. Here, they present their ventures to a judges panel of industry experts and a live student audience, followed by a Q&A session from the judges.

The prize pool, valued at over \$40,000, offers a range of incentives designed to support business growth. The top prize includes a \$25,000 convertible note from the Rowan Innovation Venture Fund, \$5,000 in non-dilutive seed funding and automatic acceptance into the AccelerateRU program.

The true impact of the competition experience is evident in the success achieved by its participants. Many companies that have participated have gone on to establish thriving businesses. Whether through the potential financial support or the practical business experience gained, the Rohrer New Venture Competition serves as a stepping stone that often plays a pivotal role in turning startup ambitions into tangible reality.

EMPOWERING FEMALE SAFETY THROUGH PULLATRACKER

Siena Rampulla | Psychology '23, MBA '26

Meet Siena Rampulla, CEO and Founder of PULLATracker. A recent Rowan University graduate and a current MBA student, Siena’s entrepreneurial journey is a testament to her dedication and commitment to making a difference on college campuses.

Siena hopes that PULLATracker will one day stand at the forefront of campus safety for women. The app revolutionizes personal security on college campuses by empowering women with a customizable safety solution. PULLATracker’s unique safety button gives users the ability to select appropriate responders for various scenarios, covering a wide range of potential emergencies.

Siena’s inspiration stems from her own experiences as a female college student, where she recognized the limitations of existing safety measures. Reflecting on her inspiration, Siena shares, “Living on campus, I understood the genuine concerns women have about safety. PULLATracker was my response, putting control

“The Rohrer New Venture Competition was a game-changer for PULLATracker. The \$30,000 prize made our vision a reality. The workshops I attended and the invaluable mentorship I received throughout the process were instrumental in refining PULLATracker’s vision and strategy, leading our team to first place.”

and confidence back into the hands of its users and making criminals fear pink.”

Siena introduced her idea at the 2022 New Venture Expo where she won Best in Show. She refined her concept and went on to win the \$30,000 first place prize at the 2023 Rohrer New Venture Competition.

Siena’s journey with PULLATracker embodies Rowan University’s entrepreneurial spirit and illustrates how a single concept can make a real difference. Siena’s experience is a prime example of how the university helps students turn their ideas into reality through the Rohrer New Venture Competition.

Experience PULLATracker's
Road to Victory



Beyond the Classroom

REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCES FROM INDUSTRY LEADERS

In the heart of Rowan University’s entrepreneurial hub, the Rowan Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (RCIE) hosts a variety of dynamic speaker series that offer essential insights into the world of business and innovation. These sessions connect students with seasoned professionals, providing a unique opportunity to learn from those who have walked the entrepreneurial path. RCIE’s events showcase diverse facets of entrepreneurship in business, arts, engineering, and more, aiming to foster a mindset that challenges norms, welcomes fresh viewpoints, and embraces the entrepreneurial journey.



COFFEE WITH AN ENTREPRENEUR

Coffee with an Entrepreneur welcomes accomplished entrepreneurs and innovators who share candid stories from their entrepreneurial journey. These conversations highlight the pivotal moments that shaped their careers along with stories of triumphs, setbacks, and lessons learned. These events shed light on the true essence of entrepreneurship, highlighting the importance of resilience, adaptability, and seizing opportunities, often reinforcing classroom teachings.

“I feel that it is my time to support today’s students in incentivizing them to be business owners and forging their own path as entrepreneurs and community leaders.”

Mike Williams

President of Sureway Property Management

CATCH UP WITH A STARTUP

Catch Up with a Startup is a unique platform for Rowan’s student entrepreneurs to share their own entrepreneurial journeys. Balancing the demands of academics and business, these speakers discuss the inception of their startups, offer advice on managing a dual life, and provide practical tips on securing initial funding. With a focus on peer-to-peer learning, this series embodies the supportive spirit of the Rowan entrepreneurial community.



Malicka Barro
Supply Chain & Logistics '20
Founder, Konay Spice Shop

SPOTLIGHT SPEAKER SERIES

The Spotlight Speaker Series casts a spotlight on accomplished entrepreneurs, founders, and industry leaders. These individuals take center stage to share their stories in an engaging format, offering a behind-the-scenes look at their rise to success. Through discussions of achievements, challenges, and pivotal moments, students gain valuable insights into the diverse world of entrepreneurship. The series encourages candid interactions, allowing students to pose questions and build connections with these accomplished guests.



Jason Feifer
Editor in Chief, Entrepreneur Magazine

Rowan University Innovation Fellows

CULTIVATING CHANGE AGENTS

Each year at Rowan University, a group of select students make their mark on campus as a University Innovation Fellow (UIF). This program empowers student fellows worldwide to become change agents on campus. They take the lead in unlocking their peers' creative potential and nurturing a design-centered mindset to tackle today's complex challenges.

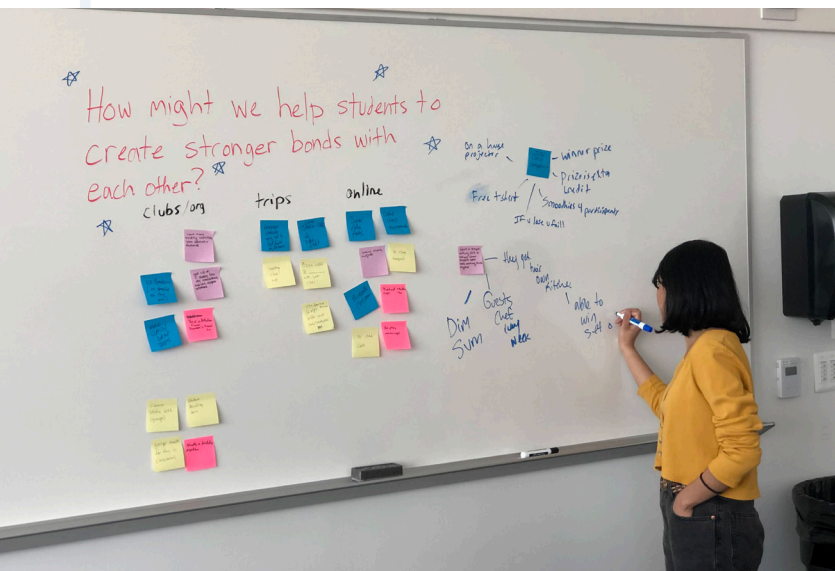
The journey begins with a six-week immersive training at Stanford University, where UIFs collaborate with global peers. The students are equipped with essential entrepreneurial skills and design thinking techniques,

enabling them to pinpoint and resolve real campus issues.

Armed with this knowledge, the fellows return to campus ready to make a significant difference in their campus community. After identifying a key pain point to tackle, they engage in a process of ideation, collaboration, and innovation to develop practical solutions.

Previous UIF cohorts have achieved impressive outcomes. For example, they bridged the gap between business and engineering through the creation of Studio 231. Celebrating its fifth anniversary in January 2023, this makerspace and experiential learning hub stands as a testament to the power of UIF's impact.

Past groups have also addressed mental health resources, orchestrated campus-wide innovation weekends, and facilitated design thinking workshops for both faculty and students. Leveraging their entrepreneurial mindset and design thinking skillset, UIF Fellows collaborate with students and university stakeholders to create effective strategies and tangible solutions.



CEO Club

WHERE STUDENT ENTREPRENEURS THRIVE TOGETHER

The Collegiate Entrepreneurs' Organization (CEO) Club at Rowan University is a dynamic hub for aspiring entrepreneurs. With college chapters spanning across North America and beyond, CEO is the ultimate entrepreneurship network.

CEO's core mission is to inform, support and inspire college students to cultivate their entrepreneurial spirit and pursue opportunities through enterprise creation. The club offers a wide range of opportunities, events, and conferences, cultivating a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem. From engaging guest speaker sessions to national startup conferences, the club creates a thriving ecosystem where students from various disciplines come together to explore entrepreneurship and gain insights that extend well beyond the classroom.

Harshaila Saini (Entrepreneurship '26), founder of Lushious Beauty, unlocked her true potential through the CEO Club. Surrounded by like-minded peers, she drew inspiration to push herself to new heights and set ambitious goals. The club's support fueled her growth as both a student and entrepreneur. Maximizing CEO events and workshops, Shaila refined her business skills, focusing on her startup that offers luxury and sustainable makeup for every skin tone. This dedication led to her impressive achievement as a freshman finalist in the 2023 Rohrer New Venture Competition, where she earned an Honorable Mention.

Looking forward, Rowan's CEO chapter aims to grow its membership and strengthen local business relationships. Continued support for student entrepreneurs, like Shaila, remains a key focus. The club's goal is to create an inclusive environment that fosters collaboration and provides valuable opportunities for all members to thrive.



Stay up-to-date with the Entrepreneurship at Rowan podcast!

Continuing our commitment to provide experiential learning opportunities for students, the Entrepreneurship at Rowan podcast is a student-led initiative organized in collaboration between the School of Innovation & Entrepreneurship and Rowan Radio. The hosts for each season of Entrepreneurship at Rowan are students or recent alumni, engaging in insightful interviews with current students, alumni, and community members who play an active role in Rowan's vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem.



Scan to listen!



Saxbys

BREWING SUCCESS THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY

Saxbys, founded in 2005 by Nick Bayer as a certified B Corporation, has been at the forefront of innovation in the coffee industry. In 2015, the company embraced its "Make Life Better" mission, launching the Experiential Learning Platform (E.L.P), which now boasts over 15 locations across the Northeast. This initiative is driven by the belief that empowering young people is crucial for shaping the future business landscape.

In 2021, the Rohrer College of Business at Rowan University welcomed the first Saxbys' E.L.P. Café in New Jersey. Through this platform, a Student Café Executive Officer (SCEO) assumes complete ownership of their café. It is a student-led venture in every sense, from designing the menu to overseeing day-to-day operations. SCEOs receive a semester's worth of college credit, a competitive salary, and a performance bonus, all while gaining priceless management experience.

"From this experience, I have developed greatly as a business professional and have become more passionate about leadership, management, and people than ever before."

Melody Wozunk
Management '22, SCEO Fall '21

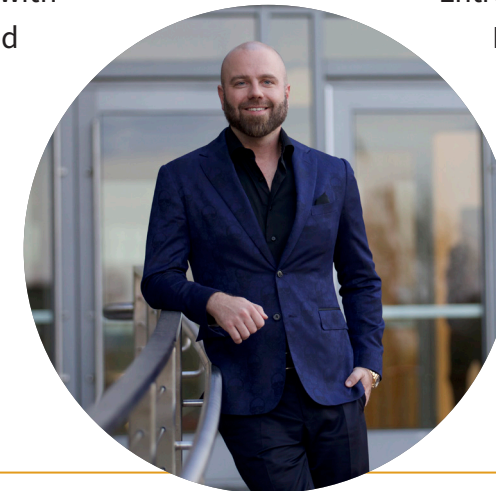


Alumni Spotlight

ANTHONY MAGARACI: FROM GRADUATE TO GLOBAL IMPACT

Anthony Magaraci (Entrepreneurship '06) is Founder and CEO of Trinity Packaging Supply and SupplyStream. Anthony's journey began at Rowan, where he was among the first graduates of the Entrepreneurship Program. He credits the program for equipping him with the confidence and skills needed to thrive as the entrepreneur and innovator he is today.

Entrepreneur of the Year and recognized as one of the Greater Irvine Chamber of Commerce's 40 Under 40 winners. Additionally, he was a finalist for the Orange County Business Journal's Excellence in Entrepreneurship Award and Ernst & Young's Entrepreneur of the Year 2023 for the Pacific Southwest region.



Anthony's impact isn't confined to business alone - he is also a dedicated philanthropist. In 2022, he donated over \$2 million to various organizations including the American Heart Association and Hiring Our Heroes. On a global scale, he helped form the Young Presidents' Organization (YPO) Manufacturing Coalition to Fight COVID-19, which aided in the global supply of PPE.

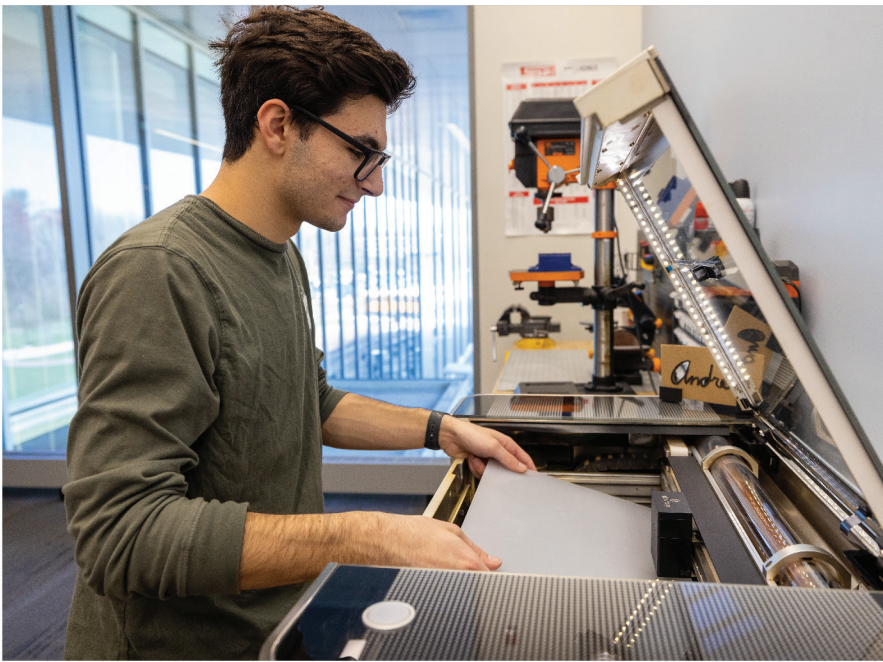
"Rowan University's Entrepreneurship Program faculty bridged academia with the real world, which left a lasting impact on me and gave me the foundation to create Trinity Packaging Supply and SupplyStream."

Anthony Magaraci
Entrepreneurship '06
Founder and CEO of Trinity Packaging Supply and SupplyStream

In 2010, Anthony founded Trinity Packaging Supply with the goal of disrupting the packaging industry. Since then, it has flourished into a \$100 million enterprise, earning numerous accolades, including spots on the Inc. 5000 Fastest-Growing Companies in America list seven times in a row and the Inc. Best Places to Work list three times. Beyond Trinity, Anthony successfully founded SupplyStream, an e-commerce platform revolutionizing the wholesale industry.

Anthony's accomplishments have earned him several distinguished awards. In 2023, he received Rowan University's inaugural Global Impact Award, recognizing his excellence in chosen pursuits, civic involvement, and community impact. Anthony was also named South Jersey

Anthony is committed to guiding the next generation of entrepreneurs, serving on Rowan's Entrepreneurship Advisory Council where he plays a pivotal role in shaping the strategic direction of the School of Innovation & Entrepreneurship. His entrepreneurial journey and success are also prominently featured in the textbook "Entrepreneurship: The Practice and Mindset", by Neck, Murray, and Neck.





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