

# Businesses Voice Now Driving Curriculum Development to Alleviate Workforce Shortages

*Gloucester County Chamber of Commerce works with the "Rowan Work and Learn Consortium" to help college deliver programs that addresses needed workforce skills.*

GLASSBORO, NEW JERSEY, UNITED STATES, April 5, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With last week's

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*Les Vail*

announcement of the Rowan Work and Learn Consortium, an initiative designed to match academic programming with current and future skills demands within the local job market, Les Vail, president and CEO of the Gloucester County Chamber of Commerce said the voice of the business community has a seat at the table.

"The headline that there is a massive shortage of workers in New Jersey is true. Now, with businesses having a voice in educational programming, we are able to work more collaboratively to fix this issue and help our community thrive,"

Vail said.

The chamber leader has been serving as that voice from the inception of this initiative and Vail is confident the local academic community is now well positioned to help businesses prepare the workforce with skills training they need now.

"For all these years, academia was telling the business community what they wanted. Now, we were brought in to provide an assessment of what specific skills the business community really needs. With the Rowan Work and Learn Consortium, the academic community better understands the in-the-field needs we all have," he said.

With this consortium, Vail said the chamber has truly become dot connectors for academia.

"We learned from advanced manufacturing what their needs are. Through the Talent Network we learned that other industries may have the exact same needs," he said.

An advisory board of seven areas of high labor demand within the state was formed to identify the specific certifications and training that are in-demand within each field. Those industries include advanced manufacturing, financial services, transportation, logistics and distribution, healthcare, biopharmaceutical life sciences, hospitality, retail and tourism, as well as construction management.

"The sky is truly the limit with this program," said Rowan College of Gloucester County Education Liaison Freeholder Lyman Barnes during a signing ceremony March 27 at the college.

"The opportunity for our vocational school, county college and Rowan University to create specialized degree programs developed in conjunction with business and industry leaders to address the seven highest areas of labor demand in the state will offer our students an edge in the workforce," he said.

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he chamber's South Jersey Business Institute will also be a vital clearing house of resources that will help draw together the needs of the region as well as the professional talent that can train would-be workers.

"The South Jersey Business Institute is a clearing house for quality education opportunities with trained facilitators designed to take the guess work out of finding quality business development programs available in the Gloucester County and southern New Jersey region," Vail said.

The business leader said he is looking forward continuing its mission of helping businesses grow their relationships and their strength.

"We're the fifth largest chamber in the state of New Jersey because the results of the relationship building commitments we've made to our community for the past 17 years. With nearly 1,000 members, a working relationship with local and state government influencers, strong partnerships with Rowan University and RCGC and other organizations throughout the region, we are able to serve as that central merging point for much of the economic vitality that we all want to continue in the region," Vail said.

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