



Ali A. Houshmand, Ph.D.

President

Dr. Ali A. Houshmand became Rowan University's seventh president in 2012 after serving for approximately six years as provost/senior vice president, CEO and interim president. Dr. Houshmand is a dynamic leader whose personal connection with students, employees, alumni, government leaders, the business community and the public has become a hallmark of his presidency. A lifelong believer in the power of education, Dr. Houshmand holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics, a master's degree in mathematical statistics, and master's and doctoral degrees in industrial and operations engineering. His entrepreneurial approach to higher education focuses on four goals: increasing access, improving quality, ensuring affordability and promoting economic development. His success is evident. Under Dr. Houshmand, Rowan has evolved from a well-regarded state school to a Carnegie-classified R2 (high research activity) national university that now operates at R1 level with very high research activity. The University is home to three medical schools, including New Jersey's first veterinary school.

During Dr. Houshmand's presidency, Rowan:

- more than doubled enrollment, becoming the fastest-growing public research university in the Northeast and among the top 10 fastest-growing in the nation;
- completed \$1.8 billion in University-related construction projects, with \$1.3 billion more planned in the next five years;
- partnered with community colleges to develop nearly 50 3+1 and 2+2 bachelor's degree programs, lowering the cost to roughly \$30,000;
- climbed in key national rankings and placed among the top 100 public research institutions in America;
- raised \$362.9 million in new gifts and pledges since 2011.

Transformational changes

With his entrepreneurial perspective, Dr. Houshmand has been instrumental in fostering public-private partnerships and creating new opportunities to collaborate with business and industry on research, relevant education that leads to productive, responsive careers, and economic development. He is deliberate about strategic growth, public stewardship and steering the University toward becoming financially self-reliant. Rowan's workforce more than doubled in 12 years, a key indicator of the institution's vitality and a major contributor to Rowan's \$2.9 billion annual statewide economic impact.

Early in his tenure, Dr. Houshmand partnered with community college leaders in Gloucester, Cumberland and Burlington counties to develop programs in which students at those schools may earn a Rowan bachelor's degree for about \$30,000. In the unique partnerships, the schools remain independent but adopted the names Rowan College of South Jersey-Gloucester, Rowan College of South Jersey-Cumberland and Rowan College at Burlington County to reflect their close relationship to the University. Legislation was passed to encourage 3+1 partnerships between four- and two-year institutions statewide.

In 2012, Dr. Houshmand oversaw the opening of Cooper Medical School of Rowan University and, in 2013, the integration of the School of Osteopathic Medicine from the former University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.



In early 2022, Dr. Houshmand joined leadership at Virtua Health, South Jersey's largest health system, to announce a landmark agreement establishing a new academic health partnership to transform and advance health care education, clinical care and research. Virtua Health College of Medicine & Life Sciences encompasses medical, nursing and health professions education, as well as translational biomedical engineering, research and clinical practices in an innovative public-private partnership.

In 2025, the University opened New Jersey's only veterinary school, the Shreiber School of Veterinary Medicine of Rowan University. Rowan is now one of two institutions in the nation to offer M.D., D.O. and D.V.M. medical degrees.

Revitalizing through partnerships

Active in reshaping virtually all aspects of the University, Dr. Houshmand helped guide the success of Rowan Boulevard, a \$426 million collaboration between Rowan, private developers and the Borough of Glassboro that, since 2008, has created a new downtown with housing, retail, restaurant and academic space.

Relationships with industry, government agencies and startups continue to drive the institution's growth. Novel agreements with national and local trade unions created stackable certificates and new degree pathways in construction and project management. Other agreements are underway to develop a manufacturing hub and wellness village on the West Campus.

With support from its \$25 million Rowan Innovation Venture Fund and the fund's management team, Garden State Venture Partners, Rowan is a key collaborator in two state Strategic Innovation Centers in medical technology. In 2025, the institution agreed to serve as the academic lead in work to build a statewide and national aerospace academic consortium.

From poverty to presidency

One of 10 children raised by hardworking but illiterate parents in Iran, Dr. Houshmand embraced education as a way to a better life. He earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics and his first master's degree in mathematical statistics from the University of Essex in the United Kingdom. He earned a second master's and a doctoral degree in industrial and operations engineering from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

After earning his doctorate, Dr. Houshmand worked as a staff analyst for United Airlines, developing large-scale optimization and forecasting models. Leaving industry for academia, he served at the University of Cincinnati and, later, Drexel University, where he taught and held various administrative positions before joining Rowan as provost in 2006.

Dr. Houshmand lives in Harrison Township, New Jersey, with his wife, Farah. They have two adult children.

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Recent Accolades

- Diversity in Business Lifetime Achievement Award, Philadelphia Business Journal, 2025
- Helms Academy Award, Goodwill, 2025
- Trailblazer, 2024 NJ Business Hall of Fame, Junior Achievement of New Jersey
- Philadelphia Titan 100 Hall of Fame, 2024
- Philadelphia Titan 100, 2022-2024
- Knight of the Order of the Star of Italy
- Distinguished Honoree, Catholic Charities of South Jersey, 2023
- Higher Education Influencer, ROI-NJ, 2023, 2021
- #1 Higher Education Influencer, ROI-NJ, 2022
- Lifetime Achievement Civic Leadership Award, Community Planning & Advocacy Council, 2022
- ICON, NJBIZ, 2021
- President of the Year, Education Dive, 2019

- Citizen of the Year in Education, March of Dimes, 2019
- ROI Influencers: People of Color, ROI-NJ, 2024, 2019
- Champions of the C-Suite, ROI-NJ, 2023
- 100+ Club, The Star-Ledger, 2019
- Educator of the Year, Research & Development Council of New Jersey, 2018

Power Lists (selected)

- Education Power 50, NJBIZ: 2025, 2024, 2022, 2019
- Power 100 List, NJBIZ: 2025, 2019, 2018, 2015, 2014, 2013
- Power List, Philadelphia Business Journal: 2022-2024, 2016-2018
- ROI-NJ: 2024, 2019, 2018
- ROI-NJ Influencers Power List 2024: Super 60 (#19)
- ROI-NJ Influencers Power List 2025: Super 75 (#30)

Professional Memberships (selected)

- New Jersey Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Chair

- New Jersey Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
- EAB 2025 Presidents Advisory Council
- Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
- Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce CEO Council for Growth
- Select Advisory Board, Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce
- Union League of Philadelphia Board of Directors
- Task Force on New Jersey's Plan for Higher Education, Making College Affordable Committee, Co-chair
- New Jersey Presidents' Council, Board of Directors
- Goodwill Industries of Southern New Jersey and Philadelphia, Executive Committee, Vice Chair
- New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) Presidents' Council
- Free All Minds Academy, Board Member