CHAPTER 1

MISSION, LEADERSHIP, AND GOVERNANCE
STANDARDS 1, 4, 5, AND 6
CHAPTER 1

MISSION, LEADERSHIP, AND GOVERNANCE
STANDARDS 1, 4, 5, AND 6

GUIDING PRINCIPLES
(Ramapo College Strategic Plan 2007-2012, p. 7)

• All strategic goals and objectives must be consistent with the role of providing a high-quality comprehensive education based on the liberal arts, with particular emphasis on international education; intercultural understanding; interdisciplinary curricula, perspectives, and analysis; and experiential learning.

• All strategic goals and objectives must be consistent with the College mission and vision and the primacy of facilitating student learning while also taking into account the needs and interests of faculty, staff, alumni, and the local, state, and global communities.

• All strategic goals and objectives must be consistent with infusing inclusive excellence into the campus environment, fostering diversity, encouraging the dignified and respectful treatment of others, and promoting engaged citizenship.

• All strategic goals and objectives must be consistent with the commitment to environmental, social, and economic sustainability by the College.

• All strategic goals and objectives must be defined in such a way that progress and fiscal soundness can be assessed.

• All strategic goals and objectives must be defined and pursued with transparency, collegiality, and open communication.

STANDARD 1: MISSION AND GOALS

The institution’s mission clearly defines its purpose within the context of higher education and indicates whom the institution serves and what it intends to accomplish. The institution’s stated goals, consistent with the aspirations and expectations of higher education, clearly specify how the institution will fulfill its mission. The mission and goals are developed and recognized by the institution with the participation of its members and its governing body and are used to develop and shape its programs and practices and to evaluate its effectiveness.

THE CONTEXT

Ramapo College has changed dramatically over its nearly 40 years. Since the last self-study, in 2000, the college has revised its mission; created and subsequently revised a far-reaching and comprehensive strategic plan (2002 and 2007); enhanced the curriculum and changed courses from three credits to four credits (2006); constructed and renovated residence, recreational, and classroom buildings; changed from being primarily commuter to primarily residential; and attracted a larger and better-prepared student body. Although the college’s curriculum remains grounded in the liberal arts, its mission has evolved over the past decade. The most recent changes occurred in 2002, when the mission statement was revised as part of the development of the strategic plan, titled Enhancing Institutional Excellence (2002-2012). The revised mission statement acknowledges the emergence of professional and graduate programs and the change in the college’s classification from liberal arts to comprehensive, but maintains the centrality of a strong liberal arts curriculum. The revised statement also acknowledges that four pillars—interdisciplinary curriculum, international education, intercultural understanding, and experiential learning—
are central to the mission, and places greater emphasis on the college’s vision of creating a learning community that promotes diversity, sustainability, and civic engagement.

When President Mercer arrived in 2005, Ramapo College was emerging from a period of relative instability, yet it was a time in which there was a remarkable sense of campus unity, which had been forged during the presidential search process (see State Commission of Investigation Report, 2007 available in the Resource Room). Dr. Mercer previously served as dean of the law school and then as vice president (administration) and general counsel at the University of Western Ontario, where he was professor of law. He was drawn to the mission and sense of community at Ramapo College:

Ramapo College has been…a very welcoming community, and at this early stage that is my most powerful impression. It is one that I hope all can experience who join this community, and it will be important to me as President to help foster the conditions which enhance that prospect. (State of the College Address, 2005)

In May 2006 President Mercer devoted his inaugural address to the topic, “The Enduring Value of a Liberal Education,” affirming his appreciation of the college’s mission and vision of itself. In that address, he reflected on his own experience with a liberal arts education and how that experience shaped who he is and how he sees the world. He concluded that address as follows:

What does this mean for Ramapo College and for my role as your President? Ramapo College is New Jersey’s Public Liberal Arts College. We must continue to assert what we and our students and graduates and indeed our Governor and legislators know to be true: a liberal arts education is the very weave of a strong social fabric, not its embroidered border, and we must offer public education which makes it possible for qualified New Jersey students to fulfill their educational and societal potential.

MISSION
Ramapo College Mission Statement (adopted 2002)

Ramapo College of New Jersey is a comprehensive institution of higher education dedicated to the promotion of teaching and learning within a strong liberal arts–based curriculum, thus earning the designation "New Jersey’s Public Liberal Arts College." Its curricular emphasis includes the liberal arts and sciences, social sciences, fine and performing arts, and the professional programs within a residential and sustainable living and learning environment.

Organized into thematic learning communities, Ramapo College provides academic excellence through its interdisciplinary curriculum, international education, intercultural understanding and experiential learning opportunities. These four pillars, supported by global partnerships established in Europe, Africa, Asia, South America, the Caribbean, and several Native American tribal communities, have become central themes in Ramapo College’s excellence in the teaching and learning continuum.

Ramapo College provides students with individual academic attention and social support within a caring, sensitive, and intellectually vigorous community. The College provides service and leadership opportunities for students and faculty through a combination of internships, field placements, community service, study abroad, and cooperative education. These opportunities allow students, faculty, and staff to encounter the world beyond the campus.

Ramapo College is committed to maintaining strength and opportunity through diversity of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and economic background among faculty, staff, and students. Ramapo College is a selective institution committed to providing equal access to under-represented populations. Barrier-free, the College maintains a continuing commitment to persons with disabilities.
Ramapo College provides a rich living and learning environment through almost one hundred student organizations, including intramural sports and intercollegiate athletics. The College maintains a strong positive and economic impact on the surrounding communities by partnering with area communities, corporations, schools, service organizations, and governmental entities, while sharing its intellectual and cultural resources and its facilities. Ramapo College of New Jersey is committed to providing service and ethical leadership through international understanding and the creation of 21st century partnerships.

The academic programs of the college are organized into five schools, the thematic learning communities referred to in the mission: American and International Studies, Anisfield School of Business, Contemporary Arts, Social Science and Human Services and Theoretical and Applied Science. These schools, or “units,” house major and minor programs, organized into convening groups. Thus there are no traditional departments or divisions.

Ramapo’s effort to fulfill its mission has been enhanced by the college’s transformation to a residential campus. This transformation has had a significant impact on many facets of the college, both in and out of the classroom. Having more residents contributes to the vibrancy of campus life, as students who live on campus are more likely to engage in co-curricular activities and seek support services, particularly in the evenings and on weekends. This demographic change also places a greater demand on many campus offices and services. Operating hours for the library, computer labs, dining services, fitness facilities, meeting rooms, recreational spaces, and some support services have been expanded to accommodate increased usage.

THE STRATEGIC PLAN AS IT RELATES TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF MISSION AND GOALS

Ramapo College created and subsequently revised its strategic plan since the last self-study. In 2002, then-President Smith charged thirteen task forces and special ad hoc committees with conducting “a broad-based institutional analysis of all academic, administrative, and support units throughout the college” (Enhancing Institutional Excellence, 2002). In addition, the president appointed a Blue Ribbon Commission in spring 2002, chaired by former Interim President Chandler, to review all administrative personnel and all non-academic, non-student intensive programs and services that were viewed as not cost-effective, with the goal of making recommendations that would lead to greater efficiency and effectiveness. These recommendations informed the strategic plan and provided the impetus for placing a greater emphasis on teaching and learning and conducting a further analysis of institutional effectiveness and administrative structure. The analyses led to important actions, including a commitment to add faculty lines and the reorganization of certain service units (Financial Aid, Admissions, Registrar, and Advisement) under the umbrella of Enrollment Management.

The strategic plan adopted in 2002 required annual reviews and revisions at five-year intervals. The decision to update the 2002 plan stemmed from an analysis of whether existing goals were attainable and measurable. The original plan listed twenty-two long-range goals in no order of priority, with outcomes that were difficult to assess. In fall 2005, shortly after the arrival of President Mercer, the college conducted a review of the progress toward these goals and determined that 50% had been accomplished. This assessment led to the president’s decision to “refresh” the existing plan.

The refreshed plan was drafted by the Strategic Planning Task Force, which was chaired by President Mercer and consisted of broad representation from the college (list of task force members appended). The task force began its work by reviewing the original plan with the intention of creating a shorter document that would reflect Ramapo College’s traditions while providing clear strategic direction. The task force presented its draft document to the community and solicited feedback through open forums and meetings with constituency groups. College members were encouraged to e-mail comments directly to the president. The task force incorporated much of the community feedback into the final document, which the Board of Trustees approved in December 2007.

The building blocks of the Ramapo College Strategic Plan 2007-2012 are a vision statement, guiding principles, major goals, and specific objectives. The vision statement asserts that Ramapo aspires to be “...the premier public
college in the greater New Jersey/New York metropolitan area providing a high quality education across programs whose curricula are founded on a commitment to the liberal arts.” This vision statement creates the foundation on which the goals of the Plan are built. The six guiding principles, listed at the beginning of this chapter, are basic underlying assumptions. The three major goals—enhancing academic excellence, investing in the future, and enriching college life and community presence—are general statements of strategic direction. While the goals of future strategic plans may vary, the principles are likely to be retained. The objectives enumerated under each goal are specific enough to assess progress but not so detailed that they dictate the way each unit will approach its pursuit of the strategic goals.

The focus on student learning and the purposeful integration of planning, budgeting, and assessment are hallmarks of the Plan. The goals and objectives of units and divisions must be specific, measurable, and aligned with the major goals and objectives of the Plan, ensuring that they are central in all programs and activities. Budget requests are likewise aligned with the goals of the Plan, and funding is contingent upon demonstrated outcomes.

Indicators of the college’s progress in achieving its mission and goals are contained in the 2008 Institutional Profile. The Profile displays information on enrollment growth, 4- and 6-year graduation rates, retention, net assets, etc. This information is presented to the Board of Trustees and the college community to demonstrate Ramapo’s year-to-year progress toward achieving its goals and to provide a measure for comparison to peer and aspirant schools. The primary indicators include number of full-time faculty, resources, faculty-student ratio, retention and graduation rates, and ethnicity of students and faculty. The college uses these measures to determine what actions should be taken to further its goals. For example, a comparison of the number of full-time faculty at Ramapo versus peer and aspirant institutions revealed that Ramapo’s complement was comparatively low. Therefore, President Smith in 2003 made increasing the size of the faculty a priority. President Mercer continued this effort by committing to five additional faculty lines per year until specific benchmarks are met. This has resulted in forty-two new faculty lines as of fall 2008.

**STANDARD 4: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

The institution’s system of governance clearly defines the roles of institutional constituencies in policy development and decision-making. The governance structure includes an active governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource development, consistent with the mission of the institution.

**STANDARD 5: ADMINISTRATION**

The institution’s administrative structure and services facilitate learning and research/scholarship, foster quality improvement, and support the institution’s organization and governance.

**STANDARD 6: INTEGRITY**

In the conduct of its programs and activities involving the public and the constituencies it serves, the institution demonstrates adherence to ethical standards and its own stated policies, providing support for academic and intellectual freedom.

**THE CONTEXT**

As indicated in the college’s 2005 Middle States Periodic Review Report (available in the Resource Room), significant changes in leadership occurred at the college in the preceding five years, with five presidents (including interim positions) and five senior academic officers. President Mercer arrived in 2005 and Provost Barnett in 2006. Leadership and structural changes also have occurred in the Division of Administration and Finance and more recently in the Division of Student Affairs. Changes in senior leadership create both opportunities and challenges as new administrative structures emerge, new relationships are forged, and plans are revised, refreshed, or replaced.
During this period of change, the college has demonstrated remarkable resiliency, evidenced by 1) a revised curriculum, 2) a change in administrative structure, 3) the growth in enrollment and overall improvement of the student academic profile, 4) the renovation and construction of facilities, 5) the revision of the strategic plan, and, 6) an integrated approach to planning, budgeting, and assessment.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Ramapo College is governed by a Board of Trustees appointed by the governor of New Jersey. The board holds general supervision over and is vested with the conduct of the college. Members are appointed for their expertise and relevant experience. Up to eleven trustees may be appointed in this manner. A student trustee, interviewed and screened by a committee of peers and selected by the Student Government Association, also sits on the board and has full voting rights, with the exception of personnel decisions. The board has ultimate responsibility for all college personnel, policy, and fiscal decisions as well as for selecting and evaluating the president. The president and board maintain an open line of communication and the president meets monthly with the board chair to discuss college activities and statewide issues.

The makeup of the board has changed significantly since 2000. Between 2003 and 2005, nearly three-fourths of the membership changed, creating a period of transition. While greater continuity has been established, two seats remain vacant and three board members whose terms have expired continue to serve while awaiting further direction from the state. The college has had very little influence in getting the state to address the expired terms or fill the vacancies.

New trustees participate in an informal training with the president and current board members. During this half-day session, they are oriented to the duties and responsibilities of the position. Trustees also receive a copy of the board’s Policies and Procedures Manual and the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities Trustees’ Reference Guide. Board members are encouraged to attend the association’s seminars for trustees, which cover topics such as Sunshine Law regulations and the annual National Conference on Trusteeship offered by the Association of Governing boards of Universities and Colleges. In addition to the regular board meetings during the year, the president establishes half- or full-day retreats to address specific issues, such as the budget or planning for the coming year. These retreats allow for extensive discussion of specific issues and usually involve the presence of other senior administrators of the college.

The board holds six formal meetings per year and committee meetings focused on particular areas, such as human resources, academic and student affairs, capital improvements, institutional advancement and alumni affairs, and finance, as well as audit committee and ad hoc committees created by the board to serve a specific purpose. Full board meetings are open to the public, and members of the audience are invited to comment on agenda items and board actions. Before agenda items are introduced for a full board vote, matters are discussed at committee meetings. Board members, the president, the provost, and vice presidents sit on the committees, along with representatives from the administration, Faculty Assembly, the Professional Staff Association, and the Student Government Association. College personnel, such as members of the President’s Cabinet, attend board meetings, present reports, and serve as resources.

THE PRESIDENT

The president is designated the chief executive officer of the college and is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the college. The provost, vice presidents, chief planning officer, internal auditor, affirmative action officer and ombudsperson all report to him directly. The president is also the administrative liaison to the Board of Trustees, as evidenced by his designated status as ex-officio, non-voting member of the board.

When President Mercer began his tenure at the college, he sought to establish open lines of communication and to meet with the various constituencies across campus. He addressed each faculty unit council, attended division and unit staff meetings, and met with student leaders in order to get a sense of the community. From these discussions,
he learned that people at Ramapo were extremely engaged and eager to be a part of the planning process, but that there were few formal opportunities for communication with the administration, across divisions, and even within specific constituency groups. Based on this careful assessment, the president identified several action items intended to move the college forward in achieving its goals: revising the strategic plan, creating an integrated planning process, facilitating a greater and broader involvement in governance, increasing transparency, and enhancing communication.

In addition to leading the process for revising the strategic plan, outlined earlier in this chapter, the president instituted several initiatives to achieve the aforementioned goals.

Quarterly communications meetings, one with support staff and one with managerial and professional staff, were established in fall 2007 to improve communication and increase transparency. The vice president for institutional advancement convenes these meetings and the president often leads the discussion. The meetings are structured to address particular staff groups so that people can speak freely about concerns regarding their own units as well as campus-wide matters. The meetings are designed to provide pertinent and timely information and to answer questions posed directly or submitted anonymously on index cards. Topics have included budget and planning efforts, the managerial evaluation process, the college’s Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, and state-mandated furloughs.

In March 2008, the president hired a consultant to facilitate discussions on how Ramapo could support new revenue-raising ventures that bring external groups to campus. The president also charged the consultant with identifying internal challenges to greater communication. Ninety-six faculty and staff members participated in small-group discussions that generated a list of communications ideas. This list underscored the importance of the quarterly communications meetings and identified the need for a recognition program for administrators and staff that parallel existing faculty awards. This recognition program has been instituted and is discussed later in this chapter.

A Daily Digest, an electronic newsletter introduced in April 2008, offers centralized written communications regarding campus programs and events and policy changes or approvals. The Digest, sent to all faculty, staff, and student e-mail accounts, also alerts the community to activities that directly impact them, such as technology upgrades and power shutdowns.

In fall 2008, the president formed a Constituent Assembly. This group includes representatives from all three unions (AFT for faculty and professional staff, CWA for support staff, IPFTE for trades, public safety, and housekeeping), the Professional Staff Association, the Ramapo College Foundation Board of Governors, faculty, undergraduate students, graduate students, and alumni. The Constituent Assembly convenes periodically to discuss substantive issues and concerns affecting the college and its constituent groups. The president also meets separately with the major constituent organizations and/or their leadership as needed or requested.

The Campus Communications Web site is a recent initiative that ties together information and outcomes related to many of the previously mentioned activities. It provides a single location for accessing critical information and announcements. The Campus Communications Web site includes links to the President’s Blog, key publications, programs and offices, and information about new hires and promotions.

In fall 2008, the president established the President’s Staff Recognition Program to recognize excellence and extraordinary effort demonstrated by Ramapo College employees. A committee, chaired by the special assistant to the president, reviewed the forty-nine nominations and, at the June 2009 Board of Trustees meeting, formally recognized three individuals and one unit for their leadership and service.

The president also has continued the tradition of meeting with student leaders. He meets biweekly with the president and vice president of the Student Government Association, and at least twice a semester he and the cabinet meet with the Student Leaders Coalition (comprised of the leaders of the major umbrella organizations and media groups) to discuss developments and substantive issues that impact students.
In addition, the president has used his “open door policy” to enhance communication and maintain relationships
with the three unions, the Professional Staff Association, the Student Government Association, the Faculty
Assembly, and the deans. The president typically meets with leaders of these groups at least monthly to discuss
pressing issues or further explain policy decisions.

The president prepares an annual self-assessment, which includes a statement on the state of the college that is
presented to the board. The president requests annual reports from the provost and vice presidents and includes
elements of these reports in the assessment package as well. The president reviews the division goals with each
vice president and incorporates these goals into his overall statement of college goals. The board meets with the
president to review progress made over the past year and to discuss goals and recommendations for the future.

THE PRESIDENT’S CABINET

The President’s Cabinet, the senior administrative body of the college, aids the president in decision-making.
According to its mission:

The Cabinet meets weekly to discuss campus issues and initiatives, decisions being considered,
policies and procedures, and items of importance to the well-being and advancement of the
college. Cabinet members provide advice and counsel to the President, assisting him/her in
making decisions that align with the College’s Strategic Plan (President’s Web site).

Members of the cabinet are responsible for reporting on the areas they oversee and relaying institutional decisions
through their direct reports.

THE PROVOST

The Ramapo College Office of the Provost was established in 2002. The office has evolved over the years, often in
response to internal needs and the desire to improve assessment and transparency in academic decision-making.
The provost governance model emphasizes the centrality of student learning and the responsibility of all units for
meeting the outlined student learning goals. This model was first proposed in the Chandler Blue Ribbon Commission
Report (available on the visiting team Web site), partly to increase effectiveness and efficiency and partly to
“match the level of expenditures and resources to the identified priorities of the College and its mission” (Chandler
Commission Report, Spring 2002, p. B5). Several reorganizations and changes in reporting lines over recent years
have furthered this model. In addition to Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, Information
Technology Services, and the Center for Innovative and Professional Learning all report to the provost.

In 2006, the provost created two standing councils. The Graduate Council deals with issues regarding the
development and maintenance of Ramapo’s graduate programs. The Provost Council deals with broad academic
policies. In addition, there is a Deans’ Council, which focuses primarily on academic planning and operations issues,
policy implementation, and resource distribution. The provost also meets regularly with the Faculty Assembly
Executive Council and reports at meetings of the Board of Trustees and the Faculty Assembly.

THE FACULTY

The faculty governance structure has changed significantly in recent years. The Faculty Assembly Executive Council
was established in 2007 to serve as a representative faculty voice. Members of the Executive Council, who are
elected by the Faculty Assembly, include representatives from each academic unit including the library. The Faculty
Assembly Executive Council meets regularly with the president and provost to exchange ideas and communicate
on current issues. It also does preliminary work and sets the agenda for the full Faculty Assembly meetings so that
discussions there can focus on broad issues and substantive topics.

The Faculty Assembly is organized so that curricular changes move from the convening groups and schools to the
Academic Review Committee and then directly to the Faculty Assembly (see Faculty Assembly and Academic Review
Committee bylaws, available in the Resource Room). The Academic Review Committee was created in 2002 as a
single committee that replaced four previous committees. This change represented both a consolidation of faculty
responsibilities and an expansion of faculty oversight of the curriculum. The multi-committee system, which was filled with redundancies, made it difficult to track oversight of curriculum and academic policy.

Ramapo also has moved toward a more conventional process for selecting deans, another significant change in faculty leadership and governance. Until recently, deans were elected from the faculty of each school, serving up to two three-year terms. Currently, deans may be recruited from within the faculty or through an external search and can be retained for renewable terms.

THE STAFF

Ramapo’s professional, support, and service staffs play a vital role at the college, serving as the backbone for all programs and services. Perhaps unique to an institution of Ramapo’s size and age, staff members are especially engaged in the mission and goals of the institution and work closely and collaboratively with faculty and students. Governance among the staff is not as formal as with the faculty, given the different levels and types of staff on campus and the fact that they do not vote on policy. Nonetheless, staff members participate in formal organizations, both professional and union, to ensure their participation in governance and decision making. The Professional Staff Association focuses on education, support, and advocacy. The three major unions that serve faculty/professional staff (AFT), support staff (CWA), and public safety/trades staff (IPFTE) provide information, advice, and advocacy. Staff members also sit on all-college committees and the Constituent Assembly, and are represented at meetings of the Board of Trustees and its committees.

THE STUDENTS

Ramapo’s students have a voice in governance primarily through the Board of Trustees, the Student Leaders Coalition, and the Student Government Association. A student sits as a full member on the Board of Trustees and on all board committees. The Student Leaders Coalition, comprised of leaders of the major umbrella and media organizations, meets at least twice a semester with the President’s Cabinet to raise questions and concerns and discuss substantive issues. The Student Government Association meets weekly to discuss activities and concerns, develop initiatives to benefit students, and pass legislation. Furthermore, elected senators and/or designated liaisons of the Student Government Association meet regularly with specific unit administrators to discuss topics of interest and concern and then report back to the general body or their constituents.

ADMINISTRATION

The mission statement and major goals of the strategic plan – enhancing academic excellence, investing in the future, and enriching college life and community presence – guide the administration. Administrative structures and reporting lines, as illustrated in the college’s organizational chart, are reviewed annually and revised as the institution evolves and priorities shift.

Under the direction of the president, the administration is organized into four divisions, each overseen by the provost or a vice president. The divisions are Academic Affairs, Administration and Finance, Institutional Advancement, and Student Affairs. Managers oversee units and areas that fall within each of these divisions. Specific units develop policies and procedures based on standards and practices developed by applicable professional organizations and the expertise of unit and division heads. The responsible vice president or associate vice president must approve policies and procedures for the division and bring to the President’s Cabinet for approval those that have significant and broad impact on the college. In some cases, formal approval by the Board of Trustees is required. Human resources policies, the college’s code of conduct, and all board-approved policies are posted on the college Web site.

The college seeks to hire faculty and staff who are well qualified, with the credentials and experience necessary to achieve the strategic goals of enhancing academic excellence, investing in the future, and enriching college life and community presence. This is accomplished through formal job descriptions that include educational and experience requirements and rigorous search and selection processes. Resources and ongoing workshops offered
by the Faculty Resource Center, Human Resources, and the Instructional Design Center provide faculty and staff with opportunities to further their skills in pedagogy, technology, and management, as well as familiarize them with policies and procedures that impact their work. A commitment to additional faculty lines, the change in course load and added flex unit, and ongoing faculty development (discussed more fully in Chapter 5) ensure that Ramapo continues to support student learning, research, and scholarship.

The employee assessment processes help the college improve administrative operations and provide employees with feedback and opportunities for development. Employees generally fall into one of two broad categories, union and non-union, and within these categories are classified, unclassified, and managerial employees. The evaluation and assessment process is different for each type of employee. For managers, the evaluation process is also a reappointment process, since managers are generally given one-year contracts, while the contract length for AFT professionals is governed by negotiated contract. After an initial five-year phase of single-year contracts, long-term AFT employees currently can be awarded multi-year appointments. The performance appraisal process has been integrated with the planning process so that individual goals are tied to unit, division, and institutional goals.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Over the last five years, internal and external forces have led to significant changes in the administrative structure of the college. The state of New Jersey continues to reduce funding for higher education. Striving for a balanced budget, the college identifies expenditures that can be significantly reduced and opportunities for revenue-generating initiatives to build on current Ramapo strengths. Internally, the college has moved to a process that formally links planning, budgeting, and assessment, with the strategic plan at its center. The focus on strategic advancement within a context of finite resources prompted a shift in institutional priorities. At the same time, retirements in senior level positions provided an opportunity for Ramapo to review its administrative structures in light of the three strategic goals.

Using the organizational chart from 2003 as a benchmark, the most noticeable changes have been the reorganization of the Division of Administration and Finance and the development of the Provost model of governance. After a leadership change in the Division of Administration and Finance, the senior title was changed from vice president of administration and finance to Chief Planning Officer. The need for a senior position to drive a systematic and strategic approach to resource allocation grew out of the refreshed strategic plan, and the new title underscores the importance of planning. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP) moved from Academic Affairs to Administration and Finance to reflect the importance of institutional data in decisions regarding resource allocation. With both the Office of Budget and Fiscal Planning and OIRP reporting to the Chief Planning Officer, a formal planning, budgeting, and assessment process was created and implemented in 2008.

In June 2009, following the retirements of the vice president for student affairs and the dean of students, the reporting lines for the Division of Student Affairs changed. To strengthen the link between the curriculum and co-curriculum and to further acknowledge the centrality of student learning, Student Affairs, along with Academic Affairs, now reports to the provost and is led by two associate vice presidents.

To better serve students, academic support units with related services have been grouped together under one major unit. The Enrollment Management unit, which previously included Admissions and Financial Aid, was expanded to include the Registrar, the Graduation Office, academic advisement, placement testing, and first-year experience. An associate vice president who reports directly to the provost oversees the Enrollment Management unit. Academic advisement, placement testing, and first-year experience were combined under one director for the purpose of increasing retention and graduation rates. Combining these areas also allows the college to share data and better evaluate the effect of policy changes on important institutional indicators.

There have been other organizational and reporting changes involving marketing and communications, events and conferences, technology and media services, contracted services, public safety, business continuity, and innovative and professional learning that are discussed elsewhere in this self-study and/or reflected in the changes in the organizational chart.
ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES

Under the aegis of the chief planning officer, the college convenes an Institutional Effectiveness Committee with broad campus representation. The committee evaluates requests from academic and administrative areas to fund strategic initiatives that are not considered part of regular operating expenses. Requests are submitted through a process that links budgeting, planning, assessment, and annual reports. The committee analyzes the requests based on their alignment with the strategic plan and the existence of measurable outcomes. Continued funding of a unit objective is not a given. Instead, each year units must reassess their rolling plans and report on the progress made toward achieving articulated goals. Tools to assess achievement include internal surveys, focus groups, student surveys, employee questionnaires, and national benchmarks. Funding may be shifted based on the success of the original initiatives and competing priorities.

The college established the Position Review Committee to review requests for all new and replacement positions other than faculty lines. The committee helps the college address two priorities: allocating financial resources efficiently and making the best use of human resources (Position Review Committee Policy and Procedures in the Appendix). Unit supervisors seeking to fill a vacated position or create a new one must present a proposal to the committee with substantial data supporting the need for the position. The committee conducts a thorough analysis of existing and potential staff positions, goals and priorities of the college, and available resources in order to enact institutional staffing decisions based on qualitative and quantitative data. As a result of this centralized review, many positions were eliminated and those lines reallocated to higher priority areas. In FY 2007, the approximate savings in salary was $612,000. (Position Review Committee Summary, 2007)

The Budget Committee is the standing committee that monitors the allocation of resources throughout the year. The committee allocates resources “based on ongoing planning linked to [the college] mission and strategic goals.” The committee is committed to achieving these objectives by using “the results of its assessment activities for institutional renewal and continuous improvement.” (Principles of Budget Development in the Appendix)

The Space Allocation Committee is a standing committee that makes decisions about space allocation and usage in the context of the college’s mission and strategic plan, “keeping in mind budget and sustainability” (Space Allocation Form). The committee was charged with creating a transparent and equitable process for reviewing requests and making recommendations to the president’s cabinet (Space Allocation Committee policies, application, and membership list on the visiting team Web site). A recent example of a positive outcome from this process was the relocation of the Graduation Office and reconfiguration of the Counseling Center space. This resulted in the Graduation Office being on a main hallway and closer to linked units (Registrar and Advisement Center) and afforded Counseling Services required additional space and a more private entrance for students seeking counseling services.

The Information Technology Services Steering Committee takes an “approach that will be especially valuable when mediating technology conflicts in priorities and/or departmental perspectives that may not be in the best interest of Ramapo College” (Information Technology Services Steering Committee Mission Statement). As with the aforementioned committees, this provides a centralized process for making decisions that are aligned with the college’s mission and the strategic plan. This process has helped the college realize savings since units that were purchasing technology independently were not always benefiting from contracted or group pricing that would be accomplished by purchasing through the steering committee. In some cases the steering committee was able to advise the unit on alternative technology that would both meet the needs of the requesting unit and save the college money.

All of these committees, which report directly to either the chief planning officer or the provost, are vehicles for managing the critical resources of the college – human, financial, physical, and technological – effectively and efficiently. (For further discussion, see Chapter 3).
ETHICS IN GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION (Integrity)

The Uniform Ethics Code published by the New Jersey State Ethics Commission is the primary code of ethics for Ramapo College. In compliance with this code, the college distributes to all employees the Plain Language Guide, the Mandatory Ethics Briefing, and the Outside Activity Questionnaire. Furthermore, the ethics liaison officer must review and approve employee requests to attend external events to ensure that there is no conflict of interest with outside sponsors/vendors and state employees. Faculty, who are exempt from the events approval requirement, are governed by the Scholarly Capacity Rule. Under this rule, they report their activities/benefits annually on the College and University Disclosure Form. Each member of the Board of Trustees files a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form, and the president files an annual Financial Disclosure Statement. In addition, specific employees with purchasing and contracting responsibilities annually file the Personal and Financial Disclosure Form. All of these forms are filed with the State Ethics Commission.

The Board of Trustees has adopted policies regarding the Code of Professional Responsibility, nepotism, and reporting financial and other irregularities (also known as the “whistleblower” policy, which is administered by the Audit Committee of the board and the college’s internal auditor). Integrity and ethical conduct are monitored, reviewed, and adjudicated in a variety of venues, including through the ethics liaison officer, the State Ethics Commission, the Board of Trustees Audit Committee, the internal auditor, the ombudsperson, the affirmative action officer, and the Department of Human Resources.

The board has been proactive in the area of ethics. Ethics is a major public issue in New Jersey, and in October 2007 the State Commission of Investigation published a report on public higher education. This extensive audit and investigation found Ramapo College to be without violation and free of tawdry practices found at other institutions. The college and the board, however, have not rested on their laurels. The chair of the board’s Audit Committee, along with the college’s ethics liaison officer, has conducted several workshops on campus regarding ethics in practice. Compliance with conflict-of-interest reporting and disclosure requirements is thorough, with a report rate of 100% in 2008-09.

FINDINGS OF THE SELF-STUDY

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Revised mission and developed a vision statement
- Revised strategic plan, allowing mission to be implemented in more assessable ways
- Reorganized the administrative structure to strengthen the focus on student learning and operationally link budget to planning and assessment
- Reorganized faculty governance, creating the Academic Review Committee and the Faculty Assembly Executive Council
- Expanded efforts to improve communication

CHALLENGES

- Maintaining mission in a context of declining state support
- Maintaining morale in a time of change
- Maintaining open lines of communication as leadership changes and governance structures evolve
RECOMMENDATIONS

• Continue discussions of curricula founded on a commitment to the liberal arts and assess all programs in light of this vision.

• Develop a process for reviewing new program proposals to emphasize alignment with mission.

• Given the considerable responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, provide greater and more formal training for new members.

• Assess faculty governance structure and revise as needed to meet the needs of a larger faculty with more new members.