CHAPTER 2

PLANNING AND RESOURCES
STANDARDS 2 AND 3
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GOAL 2: INVESTING IN THE FUTURE
(Ramapo College Strategic Plan, p. 9)

The College will strive to increase and diversify its revenues to provide the human and material resources needed to deliver high-quality programs and services.

- Objective 2.1: The College will operate all units efficiently and effectively in administration, communication, practices, and use and provision of human and material resources.

- Objective 2.2: The College will actively seek initiatives, consistent with the College mission, that generate revenue.

- Objective 2.3: The College will identify the strategic initiatives for which funding support will be sought from the College Foundation.

- Objective 2.4: The College will develop financial decision-making models to address management of assets and debts.

THE CONTEXT

The term “public college” is perceived by the general public to mean that substantial support is received from the state legislature as part of its commitment to creating a highly educated workforce and citizenry. However, state funding for higher education in New Jersey has diminished as the state faces increasing budget demands and declining revenues. State funding represented 26.8% of Ramapo College revenues in 2009, compared with 43.4% in 2000.

The college balanced its 2009-10 budget with the help of stimulus funding (which came with the condition of a 3% cap on tuition increase), but state budget deficits are likely to be a persistent challenge given economic conditions, the reluctance to raise taxes, and continuing demand for high levels of service from state government. Recognizing this financial reality, the college must focus its resources on its highest priority goals: those outlined in the strategic plan.

From the time President Scott left the college in 2000 to the time President Mercer arrived in 2005, the process of institutional planning and budgeting was incremental. Goals for each unit of the college were approved through a decentralized process based in the academic and administrative divisions. The president reviewed annual reports prepared by the units and then shared plans with the Board of Trustees. Budgets increased as needed to cover inflation, the cost of negotiated contracts and other salaries, and a few new initiatives. The college carried out cost-cutting initiatives and raised tuition and other fees to cover shortfalls.

During President Smith’s tenure (2001-04), the Board of Trustees approved a new ten-year strategic plan. Despite its complexity and diversity, the college experienced many positive achievements as a result of the Plan. Enrollment grew more than 4%, twenty-two additional full-time faculty members were hired, and the curriculum received a complete overhaul. The college purchased a new home for the president and constructed several new non-academic facilities, including the Bill Bradley Sports and Recreation Center, The Village residences (524 beds), Laurel Hall
(432 beds), and the Overlook (295 beds). A new academic building, the Anisfield School of Business, was approved during that period and opened in 2007.

Reflecting upon what he found when he arrived at Ramapo, President Mercer determined that the strategic plan was too unwieldy and somewhat outdated, so in 2006 he convened a representative group to update and refine it. The president demonstrated the importance of the task when he personally chaired the group and committed a significant amount of time to its work. This new plan, approved by the Board of Trustees in December 2007, became the basis for all college planning, with the allocation of resources tied to its goals and objectives. This decision, at this point in time, has proven to be critically important, as state support for Ramapo continued to decline while costs increased. In addition, the state's demographics portended difficulty in the college's plan to attract a growing share of well-prepared students without an increase in scholarship support.

The move to a centralized approach to planning, requiring that each unit of the college focus its activities on the priorities of the strategic plan, was not initially met with total enthusiasm, as it was understood that resources would be more centrally allocated (and reallocated) and that priorities would be finally decided at levels above unit directors. But significant efforts were made to educate the entire community and the Office of Institutional Research and Planning conducted training sessions on the completion of annual reports for every unit director. The sessions were designed to ensure unit directors were aware of the ways in which ongoing work might be connected to the strategic plan's priorities and to encourage discussions that might generate creative solutions to the challenges facing the college. Furthermore, at the suggestion of the president, the college dedicated 2% of its annual operating budget to support strategic initiatives. This ensures that even in difficult times the institution will continue to move forward strategically. Despite predictable state cuts to higher education over the past two years, the college maintained its commitment to directing 2% of the operating budget to Strategic Priority Incentive Funding. This amounted to approximately $2 million in Fiscal Year 2009. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee reviews all requests for Strategic Priority Incentive Funding and scores them based on established criteria before making recommendations for funding to the President's Cabinet (see Chapter 3 for further discussion).

STANDARD 2: PLANNING, RESOURCE ALLOCATION, AND INSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL

An institution conducts ongoing planning and resource allocation based on its mission and goals, develops objectives to achieve them, and utilizes the results of the assessment activities for institutional renewal. Implementation and subsequent evaluation of the success of the strategic plan and resource allocation support the development and change necessary to improve and to maintain institutional quality.

At Ramapo, various constituencies of the college are involved in campus planning, resource allocation, and renewal. These groups—which include the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, students, alumni, the Foundation, and the larger local community—often engage in matters beyond those that directly affect them and feel ownership of the larger enterprise. In Ramapo's early history, the shared experience of building the college inspired many large group discussions as major planning and resource-allocation decisions were made. As the college grew and matured, individual units operated more independently, but there remains an abiding need to know where the college is going and how it will get there.

The allocation process was decentralized and not as transparent as it could have been. This combination led some to question whether the planning process led to an equitable allocation of resources. While the decentralized process served the college well in some ways during a period of growth, the results of that process were not always well understood. In 2008, the college implemented a coordinated process to improve its allocation of resources. The process makes the allocation more equitable and helps the community understand the method of connecting priorities in the strategic plan to the development of a college-wide budget.

The president, an avid supporter of the need for focused college-wide planning, met with each unit on campus to provide information about the new planning process and to answer questions from those who were beginning to use it. The planning process begins at the unit level, where goals and outcomes are reviewed annually and requests are
made on a three-year cycle. These reviews lead to appropriate revisions and inform planning and budget requests. Actual funding is done yearly, as revenues cannot be accurately projected on a multi-year basis because the state does not budget on a multi-year cycle and tuition and fee increases are approved on a yearly basis. Each element for which funding is sought must be connected to the major goals of the strategic plan as well as its more specific objectives. This process "closes the assessment loop" whereby assessment of goals and outcomes leads to planning, which leads to funding and implementation and ultimately back to assessment.

As of its creation in 2006, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee reviews budgets and unit plans and uses the budget request and rolling three-year plans to systematically assess the goals and objectives of each unit and inform the President’s Cabinet of the progress being made toward achieving the goals in the strategic plan. In September 2008, the Office of Institutional Research and Planning compiled all unit planning information in a database. An assessment of measurable objectives for Fiscal Year 2009, completed at the end of the fiscal year, was included in unit/division annual reports to be used in the planning and strategic budget requests for the next fiscal year. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee documents its work on an accessible Web site, making the process as transparent as possible. (A fuller discussion of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee appears in Chapter 3.)

Although the current planning process is fairly new, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee is assessing its effectiveness (in addition to assessing the achievement of goals and objectives of each unit). Many improvements have already been made as units were encouraged to critique the process, the forms, and the training from the start (sample unit plans in the Appendix). This feedback led to a change in software, self-guided online training modules, and a greater alignment between annual reports, budget requests, and personnel assessment.

The following sections illustrate some of the ways in which the college community becomes involved in planning, resource allocation, and renewal.

BOARDS OF TRUSTEES

The president consults regularly with the Board of Trustees chair and executive committee. At least once a month, the president and the chair meet in person. Major decisions and issues are reviewed with board members. Before the full board meets to act on a resolution, thorough discussions take place at the appropriate board sub-committee meetings. For example, the Finance Committee reviews the college’s financial statements and budget proposals and makes recommendations to the full board regarding actions or approvals. Board members are often experts in fields, and their expertise is extremely valuable as new plans are discussed.

FACULTY AND STAFF

From the college’s inception, the faculty and staff have been engaged in planning. In fact, some current faculty members helped to create the curriculum from the original planning document written by the founding president.

Curriculum planning occurs in disciplinary and interdisciplinary groups called convening groups. Convening groups consist of all faculty who teach in a particular program. Until recently, faculty in a disciplinary group could be a member of any school within the college. Planning became convoluted, however, when the demands of the school conflicted with the needs of the disciplinary group. The college formed the Academic Structure Exploratory Committee in fall 2003 to analyze academic structure with the purpose of improving efficiency, transparency, and academic excellence. The exploratory committee’s analysis led to a restructuring: majors are now housed in only one school and faculty members limit their involvement to a primary and secondary convening group. Convening groups plan programs and conduct program reviews, which are then reviewed by the appropriate unit council (comprised of all the faculty in one school) and the Academic Review Committee. If needed, the plans may be presented for action to the Faculty Assembly. Separately, the dean of the school reviews actions of the unit councils and convening groups. The dean, in turn, may recommend actions to the provost, who, when appropriate, may forward the recommendations to the President and Board of Trustees.
Planning for new academic programs involves multiple layers of review. Initially, those proposing new programs must justify that the programs fit with the college’s mission and strategic plan. Additionally, market need must be supported and a business case that includes budget projections must be developed. Finally, the appropriate convening group must design and approve curriculum. The school dean reviews these materials and forwards his or her approval to the provost. The provost conducts a feasibility study and forwards the program to the Academic Review Committee for review. The committee presents the program to the Faculty Assembly for its vote. On behalf of the Faculty Assembly, the Academic Review Committee recommends the program to the provost, who brings the program proposal to the Board of Trustees for its approval. If approved by the board, the program is sent to the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education for state approval. Only then can the college begin offering the program.

The Master of Arts in Sustainability Studies is an example of a program that went through this planning process. If approved by the Commission on Higher Education, the degree will be the first of its kind in New Jersey and the region. It aligns well with the guiding principle of the strategic plan, which affirms the college’s “commitment to environment, social, and economic sustainability.” (Since Ramapo’s current mission, as approved by the Commission on Higher Education, does not include a major focus on graduate programs, the commission must approve each new graduate program.) The more than two thousand Ramapo alumni in environmental fields as well as international students are among the target audiences for the program.

Much like planning in Ramapo’s academic units, planning in non-academic units is a multi-layered process. Unit directors meet with their staffs to review current and future goals, budgets, and other resource needs. They engage in extensive discussions about how unit activities relate to the overall mission and strategic plan before final plans are presented to the division vice president, forwarded first to the President’s Cabinet and then to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee for review. Recognizing that Ramapo’s resources are limited, members of the college’s professional staff sit on the college-wide planning committees reviewing requests for positions, space, and budgets. The responsibilities of the Position Review Committee, the Space Allocation Committee, and the Institutional Effectiveness Committee have been described in other sections of this document (Chapters 1 and 3).

The new planning process encourages units to think more about the long term and to consider new activities aligned with the college’s high-priority goals. The process also addresses the need to review current activities to ensure that only those activities that can be tied to the strategic plan are continued and to reallocate resources as appropriate.

STUDENTS

Students are actively involved in most aspects of planning within the college. The college president meets regularly with the president of the Student Government Association and twice a semester with the Student Leaders Coalition. The college president seeks input and encourages open and honest communication on all matters of importance to the students, particularly the college budget. These meetings are lively and often produce excellent ideas for immediate action and future discussions. Students also have a voting member on the Board of Trustees, attend and report at board committee meetings, and serve on most major college committees. Students have easy access to senior administrators, and all major decisions involve input from students.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The Board of Governors of the Ramapo College Foundation, alumni, local leaders, major donors, and others are involved in planning in a variety of ways, most often by consulting with the president or as members of advisory boards.

STANDARD 3: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

The human, financial, technical, and physical facilities and other resources necessary to achieve an institution’s mission and goals are available and accessible. In the context of the institution’s mission, the effective and efficient use of the institution’s resources is analyzed as part of the ongoing outcomes assessment.
In its nearly forty-year history, Ramapo College has acquired the resources necessary to build a campus from scratch and to guide its evolution as a sought-after choice by highly prepared students who want to attend a public liberal arts college. It was not always easy. The “new” college had to compete for resources with other well-established colleges in the state. The college’s mission and innovative structure—with faculty organized in thematic groups rather than by discipline—were not always well understood in the state capital. However, the record of accomplishment by alumni and the ability to attract well-qualified students and an outstanding faculty have helped solidify the college’s reputation as one of the more selective public colleges in New Jersey.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The college’s operating budget for 2009-10 was set at $134 million. The college’s financial resources are derived from tuition (31%), tuition-related fees (12%), auxiliary funding (29%), state allocation (27%) and other revenues (1%). In 1986, public colleges in New Jersey became autonomous, allowing them to set their own tuition and fees. The tuition and fees are subject to approval by the Board of Trustees after a legally mandated open forum, where the public may comment on the proposed budget and tuition charges. In recent years, the state has reduced absolute dollars appropriated to the college, capped fringe benefits on appropriated lines, penalized the college for not charging a 100% differential to out-of-state students, and, for Fiscal Year 2010, imposed restrictions such as a 3% cap on tuition increases.

Despite declining state resources (see Figure 1), the college always presented a balanced budget to the Board of Trustees. Budget development is a year-round process that evaluates the national educational climate, the economic climate in New Jersey, and national and state trends affecting higher education (demographics of high school students). Ramapo’s budget planning process is rooted in the vision and strategic goals of the college, tempered by the state and national economic climate.

FIGURE 1
STATE SUPPORT AS A PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE

![Graph showing state support as a percentage of revenue from 2000 to 2009.]

Source: Budget and Fiscal Planning Report

Over the past ten years, Ramapo’s spending has shifted to support the plan to improve the academic quality of the student body (see Figure 2). A new enrollment plan, “enrollment by design,” initiated by President Scott in
1998, included the construction of more residential facilities, a sports and recreation center, academic space, and additional funds for student scholarships and faculty lines.

Between 2000 and 2007, five new residence halls were built, almost tripling capacity in the halls to just over 3,000. In the past three years the college has taken steps to accommodate the increasing demand for student housing. In two of the newer halls, double rooms have been converted to triple rooms (it should be noted that the rooms were originally designed for three students). In years when demand outpaced campus capacity, the college housed students in local hotels for up to a semester.

In 2005, the college built the Bill Bradley Sports and Recreation Center to meet the need for campus recreation space as well as facilities for intercollegiate and recreational sports. The need for additional academic space also became acute. A $3 million gift spurred the construction of a new academic building to house the business school, nursing-related activities, and the Marge Roukema Center for International Education (named for a former member of Congress from this district). The college spent additional funds over the decade to modernize the campus technology infrastructure.

Although the state of New Jersey provided funding for the original buildings on campus, little state money has been available for capital improvements or new construction since 1988. The college has had to borrow funds to support the cost of building auxiliary facilities for such operations as housing, a student center, and recreation. Colleges in New Jersey make their own decisions regarding the expansion of facilities. Ramapo’s need to build additional facilities to accommodate enrollment growth leaves the college with a high debt ratio. The total yearly debt payment in support of bonds sold for campus projects has risen to $18.6 million in 2009 from $3.97 million in 2000. (Two-thirds of the debt payment is supported by income, such as housing rental fees.) While Moody’s recently (March 2009) upgraded the college’s A3 rating from a negative outlook to a stable outlook, the debt payments do not leave
The college has substantial resources in infrastructure, employees, facilities, and technology and has adopted the following principles of budget development:

1. The planning process will help the college manage resources efficiently, maintain fiscal control, improve services and processes, and allocate resources effectively.

2. The planned use of resources will not exceed estimated resources available.

3. The college is committed to building and maintaining reserves in net assets in order to sustain overall financial health.

The Office of Budget and Fiscal Planning employs National Association of College and University Business Officers best practices and standards. The use of ratio analysis and benchmarking ensures the college presents an accurate picture of its financial health while considering decisions about budget and other resource allocations. These tools allow the college to see progress toward goals and its relationship to similar institutions over time. The college uses five ratios:

1. Primary reserve ratio. Compares total expendable net assets and total expenses to define whether the resources of the college are sufficient and flexible enough to meet current and future operating and capital needs.

2. Viability ratio. Compares total expendable net assets and total long-term debt (project-related) to measure whether debt payments are the appropriate size for the college and whether the operations are strong enough to support the debt issued.

3. Return on net asset ratio. Compares change in net assets and total net assets (beginning of year) to determine whether the college is financially better off than in prior years.

4. Net operating revenue ratio. Compares net operating income and total operating revenues to measure operating surpluses or deficits for the year.

5. Composite Financial Index (CFI). Combines the four core ratios into a single score, thereby allowing a more holistic understanding of the total financial health of the college. In addition, this measure functions as an “affordability index” of the strategic plan. The CFI measures only financial health and must be analyzed with other associated activities and plans in order to measure overall viability. (Data from ratio analysis for 2005-08 available in the Resource Room.)

The Office of Budget and Fiscal Planning continually monitors unit expenditures in a general way. Individual unit directors are expected to closely oversee all spending and to ensure funds are spent in accordance with approved plans. When funds to address an emergency repair/purchase are required, a request is made to the Contingency Review Committee (CRC). (In a recent example, emergency funds were requested after the state required that swimming pools be retrofitted with a special unit to eliminate the possibility of accidental drowning due to suction from the strainer.) The CRC, composed of senior managers, may elect to allocate resources from a collection of funds set aside for such situations; suggest that the needed funds be allocated from accumulated incentive funds (units that do not spend their entire budget in a fiscal year can retain a percentage for future use, allowing them to “save for a rainy day”); or indicate that the request should be reconsidered or resubmitted as part of the annual budgeting process. (Contingency review policies and procedures are in the Appendix.)

Ramapo College, similar to most institutions, must prioritize from the long list of desired actions and initiatives and set an acceptable level of achievement, using the resources available. Planning has been focused on being as efficient as possible, while aggressively seeking to cut costs without negatively impacting quality. Creative actions
over the past five years have achieved significant savings or present the potential of producing revenue or savings, as illustrated by the following examples:

1. Issuing tax-exempt revenue refinancing bonds to reduce future debt service payments. In October 2006, conditions were favorable for refinancing all or portions of certain outstanding bonds. The rule of thumb for determining which bonds to refinance is a targeted savings of 3% of the total amount of the bonds to be refunded. The actual savings was 3.44% and resulted in a net present value savings of $3.5 million. The savings were used to increase current net assets.

2. Establishing a Center for Innovative and Professional Learning (CIPL) in 2007. The center is the locus for programs designed to attract new populations to the college, such as credit-bearing programs designed specifically for high school students, certificate programs for professionals in fields which require continuing education, and programs offered by outsiders who wish to rent space on campus. As of Fiscal Year 2009, CIPL had five different programs with a total of 197 participants.

3. The college has over the past several years taken steps to reduce and/or stabilize its utility costs during a volatile market period. Examples of these initiatives include a three-year agreement with a third-party supplier of electricity, Consolidated Edison Solutions, at the favorable rate of $.1330/kWh, and the utilization of a contract for natural gas from the Hess Corporation at the rate of $1.3095 per therm arranged for by the State of New Jersey’s Division of Purchase and Property.

4. Participating in a demand response program, an energy curtailment plan through CPower, to produce guaranteed monthly revenue. A “curtailment” event requires the college to remove energy use off a PJM overloaded grid to prevent a brownout or blackout (in 13 states) and may occur only between June 1 and September 30. Revenue is consistent and is projected to save the college $39,000 in Fiscal Year 2009 and $49,000 in Fiscal Year 2010.

5. Becoming a signatory to the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment, requiring the college to become carbon neutral. The president appointed a Climate Commitment Task Force and charged it with leading the college in carrying out this objective. In addition to supporting ongoing efforts related to energy savings, recycling, and paperless practices, the task force partnered with students in a senior level environmental course to conduct an inventory of greenhouse gas emissions; initiated the development of an ENERGY STAR policy for purchasing; and instituted a policy for new buildings and renovations to achieve LEED silver standards or better.

6. Going solar. As part of the Sustainability Education Center project, Sharp Corporation, a major benefactor to Ramapo over the years, donated 81 solar panels appropriate for rooftop mounting. The college was successful in soliciting a firm, Pfister Energy Inc. of Paterson, New Jersey, to supply inverters and associated equipment and to install the solar panel system at no initial expense to the college. Under a formal energy services agreement, the college will buy back the electricity generated by the system at the very favorable rate of $0.06/kWh, inflated 1% a year for the next ten years, at which point the system will be turned over to the college.

The college engages a firm to audit its finances and the finances of the Ramapo College Foundation annually. The college administration, the foundation Board of Governors, and the Board of Trustees review the audit. If the management letter suggests necessary changes, they are made quickly. (Copies of audits for the past two years are available in the Resource Room.)

**HUMAN RESOURCES (Integrity)**

The college has approximately 700 full-time employees. It has always been able to attract a highly qualified faculty and staff. In the 1970s, the opportunity to build a college from the ground up was enticing to young PhDs, and the proximity to many first-rate universities, education centers, and New York City continues to be a magnet. Forty years ago, the college was located at the outer edge of suburban development; today, after years of suburban sprawl, Mahwah sits in the middle of a large population of well-educated citizens, many of whom are interested in working at a college. The salary scales for all faculty and most staff (except managers) are set through contract
negotiations conducted centrally in the Governor’s Office for all unions (AFT, CWA, Local 195/IPFTE). While salaries are settled centrally, state allocations for the increases do not cover all of the costs. It is hard to know in any year how much of the salary program the state will fund because the level of funding is based on unreliable projections of state revenues. As a result, the college models its own projections and must be ready to deal with whatever amount it actually receives.

The state has offered a set of benefits for all non-student employees. The cost of benefits has been rising, particularly as health care costs have escalated. (Information on contracts and benefits are available on the Human Resources Web site.) The state budget covered benefits on educational and general positions. In 2009, the state indicated it would cover benefits only for “601 approved” employee lines and that the college would be responsible for paying the cost of benefits for any positions in excess of that number. As a consequence, the college assumed more than $72,000 in benefits costs for eighty-six employees, in addition to the college’s funded benefits for auxiliary related positions.

The Department of Human Resources provides comprehensive services, including assessment for all non-faculty and many services for faculty. (Initial faculty appointment recommendations, reappointments, tenure, promotion, etc., are overseen through the Provost’s Office.) Human Resources makes extensive use of technology to support its activities. For example, all applications for employment are completed online. For almost all professional positions, the process of screening candidates includes a search committee comprised of people who are deemed to have expertise or a special interest in the position being searched. (A student is often included.) Search committee chairs receive training and assistance to ensure that information about available positions reaches the widest possible pool of applicants. The use of technology has increased national interest in Ramapo positions. While the New York metropolitan area is a lure for many, the high cost of living can make it challenging to hire and retain highly qualified faculty and staff.

In recent years, Ramapo saw the retirement of many long-time faculty members who had been at the college since its early years. The retirements have provided flexibility as newer academic specialties could be added to the curriculum. Like other colleges and universities, Ramapo sees fewer “academically and professionally qualified” applicants for faculty positions in high-demand areas such as business, nursing, and science. To determine how to attract the candidates it needs to support certain academic programs, the college consulted national salary surveys and found that, to be competitive, it had to offer salaries that were higher than normal. This has caused some consternation in programs that have an excess of well-qualified applicants.

The college had been able to maintain a stable schedule of faculty promotions and staff reclassifications. In addition, the new Curriculum Enhancement Plan, which revamped the curriculum, provided additional time for faculty scholarship while the college continued funding summer research stipends, faculty travel, career development, and Teaching, Learning, and Technology Roundtable grants. The College committed to adding five tenure-track faculty lines per year, which has resulted in an increase of full-time faculty from 155 in Fiscal Year 1998 to 211 in Fiscal Year 2008. Unfortunately, the budget situation resulted in the suspension of reclassifications for staff in 2009, but faculty-related incentives continue to be funded.

A part of the new planning process and in recognition of the stress on fiscal resources, the college established a Position Review Committee in 2007. The committee reviews every request to fill a new or newly-vacant non-faculty position. In its review, the committee takes a holistic view of the current opening, looking at the strategic plan as well as current operations and conditions. The manager seeking to fill the position must complete a thorough review of the need for the position and present it as part of the application to fill the position. The unit director must then meet with the committee to defend the need for the position. Part of the process includes a frank discussion about the priority of the work to be done by someone in the requested position; the classification of the position (civil service/union) as to salary level; the possibility that the work involved could be redistributed to others at a lower cost; and the availability of others on campus with transferable skills who might be able to serve well in the position (with the concomitant expectation that filling the to-be-vacated position would require review by the Position Review Committee). The committee makes recommendations to the President’s Cabinet. Faculty vacancies are reviewed within the Provost’s Office. No vacancy is automatically filled. A list of priority faculty positions, approved through the Dean’s Council, makes clear in what order new and vacant positions will be filled, thereby allowing for future
planning for programs. (Most professional positions and all faculty hires are approved by the Board of Trustees, although the board has granted the president authority to make offers to all positions below the dean level.) In all cases, once positions are filled, the budget office monitors salary budgets to ensure that all expenditures are within the allocated amounts.

The work of all contract employees is assessed through a set of processes that are well publicized. Some of the processes are designed within the college, while others are outlined in union contracts or civil service regulations. Goals and standards for individual employees are developed in consultation with supervisors and must be directly linked to the mission of the employee’s unit and division and ultimately to the mission and strategic plan of the college. The assessment process for all non-faculty members includes meetings with supervisors in which overall progress toward specific goals is reviewed and “grades” are assigned. Faculty members are assessed for reappointment, tenure, promotion, and career development by their peers and their dean, with recommendations to the provost and president; ultimately, they are approved by the board. (Assessment processes, forms, training schedules for managers, etc., are available on the Human Resources Web site and in the Resource Room.)

FACILITIES

The college is located on a 300-acre campus that was formerly an estate. The estate owner was an accomplished gardener who cared deeply about the plantings around his home. The college has taken care to situate its buildings in ways that respect what existed when the college took over. It has paid special attention to keeping the grounds looking lush and well cared for. With several notable exceptions, all the structures on campus were built within the past forty years. The older buildings include the main house (now known as the Birch Mansion); a carriage house; a caretaker’s cottage (now known as the McBride House); the carriage garage; and the president’s home (known as Havemeyer House), which the college purchased in 2002 (see campus map in the Appendix for a listing of all facilities). The total area of all enclosed facilities on campus is 1,632,837 square feet. All facilities-related planning is done in light of the college’s overall Master Plan, which was most recently updated in 2000. The following major facilities have been added to the campus since the 2000 Middle States Team visit:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Havemeyer House</td>
<td>President’s home/public spaces (replaces former home, which was sold)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackin Hall (formerly Maple)</td>
<td>367-bed residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Overlook</td>
<td>295-bed residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Village</td>
<td>524-bed apartment complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Bradley Sports and Rec Center</td>
<td>General purpose, intercollegiate sports, recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurel Hall</td>
<td>432-bed residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anisfield School of Business</td>
<td>Academic building with separate greenhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turf Field/Track</td>
<td>Replacement of existing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharp Sustainability Education Center</td>
<td>Academic/demonstration center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salameno Spiritual Center</td>
<td>Assembly and meditation space (privately funded)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The planning for any facility includes all constituents, including students. This alerts everyone to the planned enhancements (for which their input is sought) as well as the inevitable inconveniences during construction. The college has been quite successful in managing large construction contracts. The new facilities have helped to transform Ramapo into the high-quality, residential college it is today.

The George T. Potter Library has been through a number of major changes driven by several factors at the college: an increasing number of students, tighter resources, and an effort to balance professional program needs within a liberal arts mission. The library’s overarching principles include reaching the “millennial student;” balancing the role of the traditional vs. the contemporary library; finding its strengths; and establishing meaningful collaboration, both internally and externally. Outcomes from the previous self-study indicated that the college should build and enhance access to the library’s electronic collection to address the projected increase in student population. Several initiatives support the development of this area, including cultivating internal technical expertise and strengthening the connection between library IT and campus IT development. This paralleled several initiatives, including:
1. Developing periodicals and reference book collection in electronic format
2. Developing streaming video collection
3. 24/7 reference support through QandANJ.org, a service of the New Jersey Library Network
4. Online course guides using Web 2.0 format
5. Online tutorials
6. Subject-driven access to more than one hundred periodical and reference databases.

Capital renovations in the library since the last self-study have included a reorganization and upgrade of workspaces, book stacks, and reading areas; improvements to existing systems and acquisition of new systems to support modern library technologies; resolution of humidity, water leakage, and security problems; installation of an additional air handling unit and alterations to the existing air distribution system to allow for better climate control and increased airflow; waterproofing by re-caulking the building exterior, repairing and replacing flashing, and weather stripping doors and windows; and creation of a twenty-seven-seat computer laboratory for bibliographic instruction and other academic uses. The college’s annual capital budget request to the state seeks funding for a new library, recognizing that the possibility is remote, given its estimated $25 million cost, the college’s current high debt load, and other high-priority needs. The request reflects a vision for a new library would affirm, both physically and symbolically, the centrality of learning, teaching and research activities at the college.

Although the college had the luxury of many new facilities, it now has some aging buildings that require maintenance. The college engaged the firm of Hatch Mott MacDonald to assess facilities that have been online for more than ten years. This assessment ensures that the college is aware of the conditions of all its facilities so that it can plan for required repairs and preventative maintenance. The assessment reports were received in draft form in June 2009, with more complete documents to follow. These reports are used for planning purposes and in support of any requests that may accompany a budget request to the state or a funding agency.

The newly imposed Capital Improvements Fee will generate funds to allow the college to proceed with the highest priority maintenance and improvement projects. The lack of capital funding from the state leaves the college with little choice but to pay for what is needed from operational funds in order to protect the integrity of existing facilities and to ensure that the educational facilities and equipment meet the standard for the college’s high-quality academic programs. The replacement of the roofs of the main academic building, the Student Center and Pine Hall (residence hall), and the replacement of the HVAC system in the Student Center are priorities, and the upgrade of the aging science laboratories and associated spaces is most urgent. Plans for all these projects are well under way, and the actual construction will begin as soon as the funding is available. The college has set a goal of 5% of plant value in a capital reserve account for future capital needs. To date, the college has $10 million in its reserves.

With the Board of Trustees’ approval, the college may seek the assistance of the Educational Facilities Authority (EFA), a quasi-public state agency, in selling bonds in support of needed facilities. Almost all capital projects have been funded through the authority. In preparation for a capital request, the college uses means cost data to better understand complex projects. Construction managers who use industry-standard practices provide cost estimates that are as accurate and realistic as possible. They include estimates for a conceptual plan, a schematic design, and 50% completion costs. This enables project managers and administrators to adjust the projects as needed based on overall project costs. The college has worked closely with the Educational Facilities Authority marketing advisors and underwriters to refinance construction bonds at favorable rates. Gross savings from refinancing in the past six years (2003-present) exceeded $5.17 million.

Most matters related to facilities fall under the associate vice president for administration and finance, who reports to the chief planning officer. The 94 employees in the Facilities Department are responsible for all aspects of facilities maintenance. The staff includes plumbers, electricians, housekeepers, general repairers, grounds crew, work order processors, engineers, boiler overseers, painters, etc. All except managers are unionized, and most have civil service protection. Beginning in 2001, some housekeeping tasks were outsourced (Student Center,
Bradley Center, all residence halls, etc.) to save money and gain flexibility. However, recent legislation requires that outsourced workers be paid the prevailing wage, so the amount of savings is less than anticipated. The college also accesses local contractors for work that is outside the expertise of college employees or which can be done more expeditiously or at a lower cost by outsiders. Contracts are publicly bid wherever required and all state regulations are carefully followed.

TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Ramapo College uses the SCT Banner application to drive all back-office processes. It is a proven suite of scalable applications on a single Oracle database. This set of applications helps the college achieve its monitoring and reporting goals. Technology at Ramapo and in many other places has become an end-user process rather than a centralized operation based in an information technology center. Gone are the days when staff members requested reports from an information technology office. College staff members are expected to extract customized data reports from Banner Self-Service modules. Technology is ubiquitous, guiding many aspects of the educational infrastructure. In a typical day, technology runs computerized energy management systems throughout the physical plant and the campus; enables students to select classes, choose a residence hall assignment, or pay bills; remotely links data coming from the Meadowlands observatory (about twenty-six miles away) to a teacher-education classroom on the main campus; and brings real-time stock data to a simulated trading floor in the Anisfield School of Business. The bulk of communication on campus is done electronically. Paycheck stubs have been eliminated; e-mail can be accessed from anywhere in the world; daily announcements arrive by e-mail; and communications with colleagues from anywhere can be done via a voice-over-internet protocol, such as Skype.

In addition to standard software applications, easy-to-use instructional technology is readily available. Examples include Student Response Systems, online instructional access through Luminis or Moodle; online assessment programs, such as Mahara, an e-portfolio program and WEAVEonline, a web-based assessment management system; online grading and assessment programs, such as Turnitin; and access to networking sites and the entire Web. The goal of a wireless campus is fast becoming a reality. Large portions of the campus and public areas of the residence halls are already equipped with Wi-Fi. The use of videoconferencing software and hardware, such as Polycom Viewstation SP512, for example, enables classes to take place virtually between Ramapo and Volgograd State University and St. Petersburg State University in Russia. Access to streaming video is available via Cantasia or Quicktime software.

Demand for technology inside and outside the classroom is increasing. The Instructional Design Center—staffed by an individual recruited from the faculty who is an expert in the use of technology in teaching, as well as other IT professionals—provides ongoing support for users of specific hardware and software; offers workshops and seminars for all community members; tests and reports on new applications as they become available; supports individual faculty in bringing their courses to electronic formats; and generally works to make everyone more comfortable with operating in a technological world. Outside the classroom, students increasingly expect access to whatever is available in the larger world at lightning speeds and at all hours. Throughout the college, staff, faculty and students expect to be able to use technology to advertise their events, conduct surveys, assess programs, and access the latest information in the Potter Library (and elsewhere). Distance learning is becoming a viable option, and summer session enrollments skyrocketed with the availability of online courses.

There is a constant demand for additional technological resources and a constant need for retraining as new technology replaces old. Yet the college must ensure that the significant resources allocated to IT support the strategic plan. To address that challenge, the Office of Information Technology Services produced a Technology Plan in 2008 (available on the visiting team Web site). This plan outlines goals in each of the five main areas within the department: Application Development, Client Services, Infrastructure, Instructional Design and Telecommunications. The plan is simply presented, but complex in its goals. It is realistic about the amount of resources that will be available, yet aggressive in its efforts to be as efficient as possible, so freed-up resources can be reallocated for other priorities.
### FIGURE 3
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES PLAN/2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2-3 Years</th>
<th>3-5 Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Client Services</strong></td>
<td>• Stabilize the organization</td>
<td>• Establish desktop remote process</td>
<td>• Establish Web-based application process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Stabilize reporting system</td>
<td>• Establish an application server process</td>
<td>• Stabilize application server</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Refine imaging process</td>
<td>• Migrate to VM operating system</td>
<td>• Stabilize desktop remote process</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Determine upgrade policy</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>• Expand the wireless network</td>
<td>• Begin to migrate toward a more efficient and effective hardware and disk storage environment with redundant capabilities</td>
<td>• Look toward Linux and more of the open-sourced products for better cost-performance structure</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strengthen security procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increase monitor &amp; alerts</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review server maintenance</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Applications</strong></td>
<td>• Stabilize Banner Phase 1</td>
<td>• Begin to move toward a paperless environment with more online and imaging storage and file sharing</td>
<td>• Establish a more Web-based application presence with more distribution of applications and reporting into end-users areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development**</td>
<td>• Increase Web Applications</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Expand Workflow Process</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop Banner Phase 2 Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Design</strong></td>
<td>• Develop Alternative Learning Process</td>
<td>• Move away from WebCT/Blackboard and into Sakai or Moodle open-sourced environment</td>
<td>• Establish a stronger “best of breed” in the Instructional Design technology applications • Support opening more options for faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduce new Teaching Tools</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Expand E-Portfolio</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review WebCT Long Term</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Telecom</strong></td>
<td>• Review and clean-up open invoice issues</td>
<td>• Begin to migrate the campus to a fully digital network using Voice over Internet Protocol</td>
<td>• Expand the Voice over Internet Protocol to include cell phones and palm devices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review and upgrade security</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Establish cell phone policy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Office of Information Technology Services

### OTHER RESOURCES

The vice president for institutional advancement is the link between the college and the Ramapo College Foundation, a 501(c)(3) corporation. Still, the college president and the foundation’s Board of Governors communicate frequently. The role of the foundation is to provide short- and long-term financial assistance to the college to enhance the academic programs and the overall operation. Its mission is “to provide the resources that make the difference in Ramapo College of New Jersey’s quest for educational excellence.” Priorities for fundraising are set in consultation with the president and Board of Trustees. Members of the Board of Governors are briefed on major issues of the college. They are invited to major college programs, athletic contests, theater presentations, convocations, and commencements. The Board of Governors and the Board of Trustees have a joint meeting.
each year to review the main fundraising needs of the college and to finalize the goals for the upcoming year. The foundation audit is incorporated into the college audit, which is conducted annually. (A copy of the Foundation Annual Report and recent audit are available in the Resource Room.)

The college has experienced strong success with its fundraising efforts despite a most challenging economic period. Completing the second year of the “quiet phase” of a $40 million dollar comprehensive capital campaign, Ramapo has secured just over $21 million. To date, $5.81 million has been raised for capital projects, $518,723 has been secured for restricted gifts, $4.76 million has been received in endowment funds, $9.35 million has been awarded in grants, and $1.03 million has been donated in annual gifts. The college anticipates celebrating the “public phase” of the campaign by May 2010.

Thus far, the campaign has helped to significantly increase the number of endowed student scholarship awards, fund the first endowed dean, endow the first named faculty chair, and support the construction of the Anisfield School of Business, the Sharp Sustainability Education Center, and the Salameno Spiritual Center. During the public phase of the campaign, the college will strive to fund another academic school and complete its endowment goal.

As the current leader among the New Jersey public state colleges and universities for alumni participation, Ramapo College hopes to surpass its campaign goal. Ramapo’s current alumni participation rate is 13.3%—far surpassing the 6.7% national average for public liberal arts colleges. Participation at other New Jersey public colleges ranges from 4% to 11% (Voluntary Support to Education Report, Fiscal Year 2008, available in the Resource Room). The tremendous interest of many newer faculty members in securing national grants is also propelling the growth of the campaign.

FINDINGS OF THE SELF-STUDY

ACHIEVEMENTS

• The college has updated its strategic plan and focused the entire community on its goals and objectives through a new process that closely links planning, budgeting, and assessment.

• The college has increased the allocation of resources to support strategic goals despite very difficult economic times.

• The college has made a substantial commitment to sustainability as evidenced by the inclusion of “sustainability” in the mission statement and strategic plan; the president’s becoming a signatory of the Presidents’ Climate Commitment; the building of the Sharp Sustainability Center (to open in 2010); and substantial actions within the community to practice sustainability on and off campus.

• The college has constructed much-needed new facilities and is developing plans for infrastructure repairs/replacement and the upgrading of aging science labs.

• The college has made a substantial commitment to maintaining the campus grounds.

CHALLENGES

• The inability to accurately predict income from the state legislature hampers the college in its long-term planning, while the lack of funds for capital projects portends more difficulty in keeping aging facilities in good repair.

• The increasing interest in technology as a tool in the classroom and in personal lives will put pressure on the college to keep up with the latest advances as “old” technology ages ever more quickly.

• Difficult budget times inevitably cause stress in a community as it struggles to allocate (and reallocate) resources to ensure that strategic goals remain in focus.
RECOMMENDATIONS

• The already-planned assessment of the new planning process should be continued to correct flaws and implement innovations.

• Budget projections should be carefully monitored as it is likely that the state allocation will not increase significantly in the next few years and future planning will need to be carefully focused.

• Communications about planning and budgeting must continue to improve so all in the community can feel informed and involved.

• Both traditional (e.g., New Jersey Educational Facilities Authority fixed-rate bonds) and creative (e.g., engagement of an energy service company or ESCO; public/private partnership as provided under recently enacted legislation) means of financing high-priority new capital projects, as well as renewal and replacement projects, must continue to be explored.

• Campus morale should be a priority during difficult times. Ramapo’s administration and faculty leadership will have to determine what communications will be needed and what processes should be in place to limit the possibility that the complex times will result in a deterioration of morale.