

FACULTY ASSEMBLY

MAY 25, 2021



Faculty Assembly
May 25, 2021, 2:00 pm
WEBEX Meeting
Closed session with invited guests

FAEC Moderators: Naseem Choudhury (President, SSHS), Donna Flynn (Councilor-at-Large under 11, TAS), Ed Shannon (HGS)

Kim Lorber (Secretary)

Guests: Dr. Cindy Jebb, Incoming President, Susan Vallario, Chair, Board of Trustees
Ex Officio Members of FA (Provost, Deans, & Director of Library)

Presenters: Ashwani Vasishth (on behalf of Stephen Rice, ARC Chair); Sarah Carberry (GECCo, Chair); Jeff Ellsworth (WAC, Chair); Ruma Sen, Kathy Zeno, Virginia Gonsalves-Domond (Diversity); Ken McMurdy, Rikki Abzug (Shared Governance); Ed Shannon, Katie Cohen (Liberal Arts)

Meeting began at 2:02pm.
134 Attendees

SPECIAL MEETING WITH PRESIDENT-ELECT DR. CINDY JEBB

Warm Welcome: Faculty Assembly President, Dr. Naseem Choudhury welcomed incoming President Dr. Cindy Jebb and Board of Trustees Chair, Susan Vallario. A warm welcome was given on behalf of the faculty to Dr. Jebb who was attending her first Faculty Assembly. A brief overview of its function and roles of members was given. Inclusivity was emphasized.

Introduction of FA Committees: The three standing Faculty Assembly committees were introduced. These are ARC (explained by Dr. Ashwani Vasishth on behalf of Dr. Stephen Rice, Chair), GECCo (explained by Dr. Sarah Carberry, Chair); and Writing Across The Curriculum (WAC, explained by Dr. Jeff Ellsworth, Chair).

Faculty Priorities for This Meeting: A brief survey (*attached in Appendix D*) was completed by the faculty, which highlighted its top three concerns. These are: shared governance, diversity, and a commitment to the Liberal Arts.

Full reports are found in Appendices

Shared Governance (Appendix A): Dr. Kenneth McMurdy and Dr. Rikki Abzug shared a brief history of efforts to sustain this.

Diversity & Inclusion at Ramapo College (Appendix B): Dr. Kathy Zeno, Dr. Ruma Sen and Dr. Virginia Gonsalves-Domond spoke on behalf of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Liberal Arts Education (Appendix C): Librarian Katie Cohen and Dr. Ed Shannon spoke on behalf of the Liberal Arts working group, highlighting the college's role as New Jersey's Public Liberal Arts College, as well as the importance and relevance of the new Learning Commons. The committee members are: Jeff Ellsworth (WAC, Chair), Lisa Lutter (FAEC, CA Representative), Katie Cohen (Interlibrary Loan, Reference & Instruction Librarian), Dr. Michael Bitz (Director of the Instructional Design Center), and Dr. Stephen Rice (ARC, Chair), Tammi Redd (Director of FRC)

Dr. Jebb's Thoughts: Dr. Jebb shared her commitment to the Liberal Arts. How can we have increased congeniality? Who should promote the Liberal Arts? Dr. Jebb said she will lead and hopes to include our community partners as we move into a strategic planning process.

Welcome Back to Campus: Dr. Jebb asked for our thoughts about what on-campus needs will be. Dr. Michael Bitz said the in-person, remote and hybrid platforms will continue to be used. Students and faculty will need emotional and other support during the summer.

Faculty Assembly President's Closing Comments: We will be discussing more with Dr. Jebb regarding sustainability and the fiscal health of the College. Thank you, Dr. Jebb, for being an active listener. This is an invaluable role in a Liberal Arts college.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:52pm.

Appendix A

SHARED GOVERNANCE

Facilitated by: **Dr. Ken McMurdy, Dr. Rikki Abzug**

(1) Introduction: Naseem asked me to lead this session on shared governance at Ramapo because I was the chair of the TFSG, which produced its final report in December of 2017. This report:

- (1) set forth a collection of principles
- (2) formalized a framework for shared decision-making
- (3) gave practical recommendations for improving shared governance at the College.

Our goal for today's session is not to give a recap of that report, but instead to provide a top-level view of where we are with shared governance at Ramapo and where we are trying to go. I'm hoping that you are intrigued and will dig into the report on your own, and I would personally be excited to go through it with you in more detail at some future date.

My first point about the TFSG report is that it should not be viewed as a discrete, standalone event - but rather as a milestone or turning point in an ongoing community-wide push for better shared governance that began in the early 2010's.

What's remarkable, historically, is that Ramapo came into its own, found its niche, and thrived for decades without formalizing shared governance. Why? Because Ramapo was a relatively small, close-knit community, interdisciplinary and collaborative, and (most importantly) with a strong set of shared principles and values. High levels of trust, transparency, collegiality, and cooperation were sustained naturally and organically. When I arrived in 2007, I could feel right away that this was the case, and many other faculty have said the same thing.

When I arrived, however, Ramapo was in the process of growing and evolving in response to the changing landscape of higher ed, budget concerns, and evolving needs of our students. Pace and scope of the changes were greater, and this put a strain on the informal system. The *community* began to recognize that we needed to be more proactive in setting up a shared governance framework that would enable us to adapt and evolve while maintaining cohesion and holding onto our core values.

So, again, this is my first main point: that the TFSG was a response to a *community-wide* recognition that we needed to get better and stronger in this area. Moreover, the task force involved the community in the process, and ultimately the whole community endorsed it. So, the report represents a shared vision to which the Ramapo *community* is committed.

Themes/Takeaways from the Report:

(1) Principles such as trust, transparency, collegiality, mutual respect are the foundation for healthy shared governance. We recognized that this had been the case at Ramapo, and we sort of “doubled down” on that, looking to reaffirm and support those principles rather than retreat into legalism as a poor substitute.

Principle 2: Trust and Transparency

- All stakeholders have a responsibility to proactively cultivate trust.
- Trust is best fostered by the maximal appropriate level of transparency.
- Communication is most effective when it is multi-directional and timely.

Question (for President Jebb): What can we do as a community to proactively cultivate trust?

(2) Inclusive Vision of Shared Governance through Stakeholder Representation

When we began our exercise, we were more focused on bilateral cooperation between Faculty and Administration, but this view evolved significantly. We wanted to formally recognize and give standing to as many members of the community as possible. Practically speaking, this necessitates representative mechanisms for the various stakeholder groups. “Who speaks for that group?”

Faculty	FA
Administration	Cabinet
Students	SGA
Staff	RSA

Here I will echo the need for reliable multi-directional communication, across and within stakeholder groups. Several practical recommendations in the TFSG report are about building up those essential lines of communication.

(3) Getting Out in Front of Important Shared Decisions

Prior to the TFSG, a common concern was that we were making rushed decisions and being more reactive than proactive. “Emergency mode” is the enemy of good shared governance. Rather than enumerate every possible decision, the task force developed a Dynamic Protocol for shared decision-making, specifically for larger “transformational” decisions.

Protocol Considerations:

- Timeline
- Essential Data
- Appropriate Channels of Communication
- Relative Levels of responsibility (Roughly speaking, Primary has the final decision, while Secondary must be formally and meaningfully consulted.)

Advantages of following the protocol should be clear: transparency, buy-in, optimal decision. Note: The protocol has been employed more than once, and the decision-making plans were posted to the SG website.

Conclusion: Hopefully, you are intrigued about the report, but also this gives you a sense of where we are as a community in this movement to strengthen shared governance at Ramapo. We have momentum and a fresh vision. From the faculty perspective, it's important that we take advantage of that vision and momentum, diving right back in and continuing to build upon the foundation.

Appendix B

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Facilitated by: **Dr. Kathy Zeno, Dr. Ruma Sen, & Dr. Virginia Gonsalves-Domond**

Part 1: We are here today to discuss issues and more importantly opportunities regarding Diversity and inclusion at Ramapo College. While we do not represent all the faculty, we do hope to represent major themes and insights gleaned from a recent faculty survey, previous climate surveys, college data, and discussions from Minority Faculty and Staff meetings. Core themes that will be discussed include:

- The need for a cultural shift whereby Diversity and Inclusion is a part of everyone's responsibility, led and modeled by college leadership, guided by the Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion
- An understanding that a shift and change is a long-term process, but there are several near term and real time initiatives where this process can begin.
- Much has been done, but we can be more intentional in considering Diversity and Inclusion before implementing a process or procedure, while implementing a process and after in the assessment of that process.

The topics for this meeting of Shared Governance, Diversity and Liberal Arts Education are not mutually exclusive but perhaps represent an inter-related approach and part of the blueprint for Ramapo's evolution. Now I will turn it over to Professor Ruma Sen who will discuss some of the opportunities.

Part 2: We have indeed achieved much through the sustained initiatives of the Diversity Action Committee and the Minority Faculty Staff Association, however resource-challenged we may have been at times. Moving forward, we must ensure that instead of simply checking the pulse of the community from time to time via such committee-driven initiatives or the campus climate survey, we invest in changing our campus culture itself.

Today, we wish to highlight the need for this cultural shift where the focus of the campus community is diversity, such that it is not just integral to the college's recruitment/ retention initiatives for students, staff and faculty. That, it is also infused through our curricular engagement by bridging inclusively-designed pedagogy across silos. In addition, we must create a template whereby every single unit or entity within the college finds a way to integrate the Diversity Equity Inclusion discourse into their identity.

This intentional, multidimensional approach to Diversity Equity and Inclusion will ensure that it is no longer the exclusive responsibility of the Equity Diversity Inclusion Compliance (EDIC) office. We need the administration's commitment to embed it into our policies along with our practices, in how we engage in difficult conversations both inside and outside the classrooms, and in creating partnerships and collaborations across campus so that we build DEI as an invaluable community asset (rather than let any single office or entity shoulder the responsibility).

In allocating resources to such initiatives, the college will be showing its commitment toward building a more authentic community. This will also serve to emphasize the deep connection between a truly liberal arts college and its commitment to DEI.

Part 3: Fully comprehending that this space to discuss a core concept is limited by time realities, what we proffer here are parts of a wider aperture which have two central overarching characteristics. I may parenthetically assert that these characteristics integrate plural voices, modelling notions of inclusivity, and are simultaneously aspirational.

As a working group, we will initially advance an additional three elements of a paradigm shift model of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI); they are:

1. Being intentional about recruiting and inviting more voices around decision-making tables (e.g. convening groups, schools, cabinet, and Board of Trustees membership). Attached to intentionality is avoiding threats to catalyzing innovation by combating groupthink.
2. In order to increase the footprint of underrepresented faculty, staff, and students, it is advantageous to gain clarity on our current demographics to assess alignment or mapping with our college's pillars and mission statements.
3. We offer concrete support for EDIC's initiative in the creation of a dedicated, safe space-the Multicultural Center. This dovetails with intentionality of resource allocation, and the working group views this fulsome exercise as isomorphically connecting with other salient issues of governance and active promotion of our liberal arts tradition.

In the *Pointer View*, August 25, 2016, Dr. Jebb stated that "[I]t is important to inculcate a culture of improvement because curriculum change is evolutionary" We concur with that statement, and welcome your leaning in on curricula reforms.

We concur with you, Dr. Jebb in your published statement that "Diversity enhances the mission." Again we support its more affirmative implementation here at Ramapo. I conclude here with Dr. King's eloquent statement in his 1963 letter from the Birmingham city jail, "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

Appendix C

LIBERAL ARTS

Facilitated by: **Dr. Ed Shannon, & Katie Cohen**

Faculty at Ramapo College strive to support the college's role as New Jersey's Public Liberal Arts College, preparing students to be critical thinkers and lifelong learners. The general education program draws on the rich traditions of a liberal arts education by encouraging students to see connections in our increasingly global world. The liberal arts are a topic that is important to many faculty at Ramapo.

The Faculty Assembly Executive Council's recent survey reached out to the faculty in preparation for this visit looking for guidance for this introduction. As you know, asking any faculty to speak in one voice is a challenge. However, our survey managed to cohere around at least a few veins of discursive ore for us to mine. Ramapo—or any college—is by nature a community of communities and teaches a curriculum of curricula: students may see college only as list of majors and future jobs to choose from, but Ramapo is composed of schools, divisions, and convening groups engaging students through general education, school cores, minors, concentrations, study abroad, and —of course—the majors. But our faculty recognized and reaffirmed Ramapo's identity as New Jersey's Liberal Arts college as our central core. This is who we are.

Being an engaged and enthusiastic faculty, even as we are united in our dedication to the College's Liberal Arts legacy, we identified diverse points of engagement that we encourage you to explore in the coming year.

We are thrilled to see the new library and learning commons emerge over the past year—we hope its first year of new life will see the library take its place as a key part of our liberal arts mission. We are curious and excited to see how you will work with us to make that happen. Over the course of the year, we will ask how you see working with librarians to determine what resources the library will need, especially now that we have a new space that brings in various departments from across campus. And we will be asking how you envision the library and learning commons serving the Ramapo community and its liberal arts mission? We anticipate an adjustment period—but we look forward to growth and the opportunities the new space presents.

Perhaps the library will serve as a hub of the interdisciplinarity that—since its founding—the college has identified as a pillar. Hardly a year has passed at Ramapo without spirited agreement, disagreement, collaboration and conversation about what exactly constitutes interdisciplinarity. However, it remains the cornerstone of our General Education program, a defining characteristic of many of our majors and the spirit driving many new courses and campus projects.

So, we anticipate we will be asking how the spirit of interdisciplinary can be harnessed to preserve and strengthen these liberal arts majors. Many incoming students and families do not clearly see liberal arts majors as oriented toward a particular career. We know they lead to careers and fulfilling lives. We know you know that. Together we need to answer the question of how we communicate that to the community at large. We will be asking, under your leadership, how will Ramapo College promote itself as "the liberal arts college of NJ" and how

will your presidency reinvigorate the core liberal arts programs. We are looking forward to the challenge.

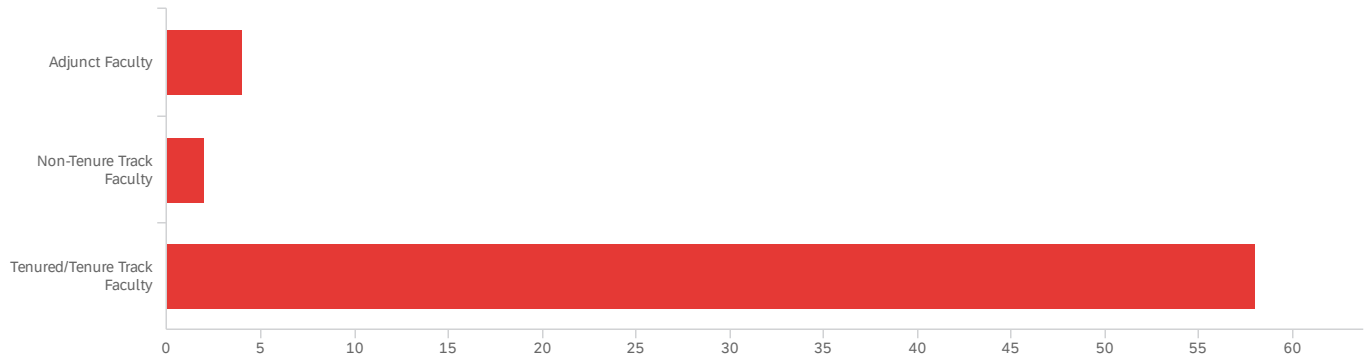
Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today and to let us outline what we see as both challenges and opportunities the next years will bring.

What are your thoughts on these topics, particularly about your vision for the liberal arts and interdisciplinarity at Ramapo College, and your experiences with them at West Point? We are excited for engaging conversations with you on these topics.

Appendix D

**Results of FAEC Survey of Faculty
Following Page:**

1 - Please indicate your faculty status.

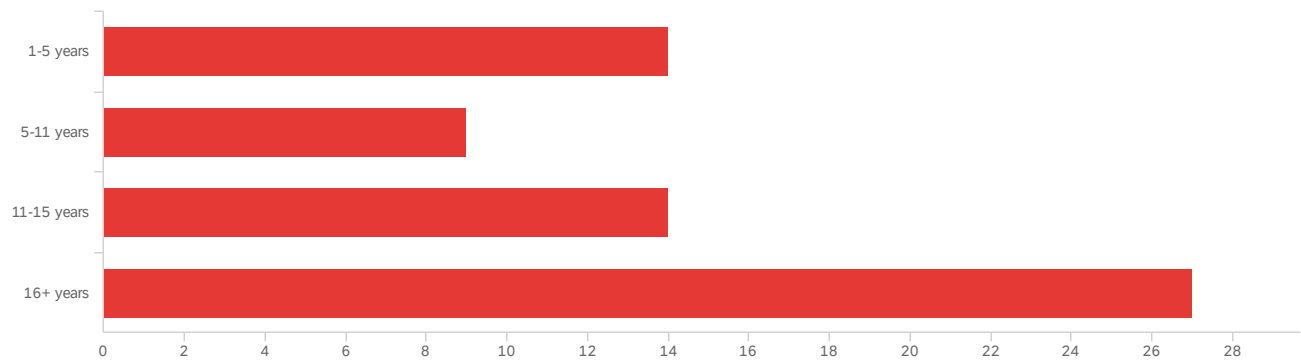


#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Please indicate your faculty status.	4.00	6.00	5.84	0.51	0.26	64

#	Field	Choice Count
4	Adjunct Faculty	6.25% 4
5	Non-Tenure Track Faculty	3.13% 2
6	Tenured/Tenure Track Faculty	90.63% 58
		64

Showing rows 1 - 4 of 4

2 - Year of service at Ramapo College.



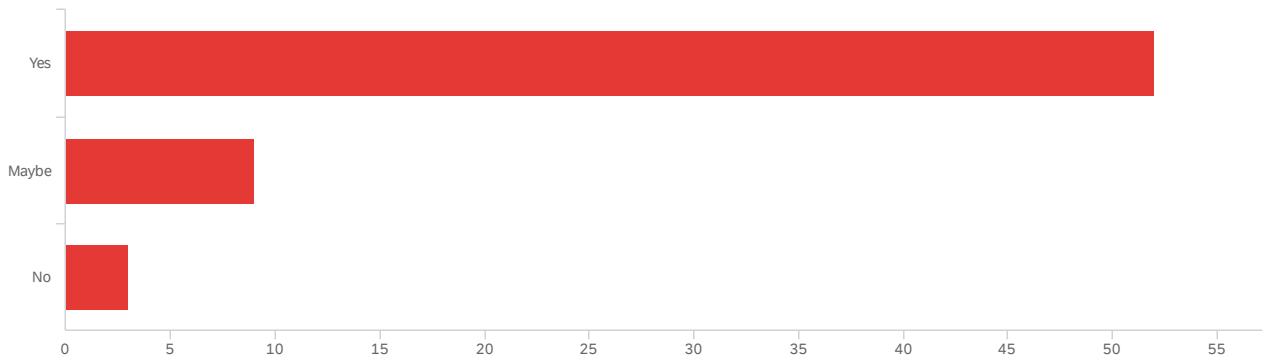
#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Year of service at Ramapo College.	1.00	4.00	2.84	1.19	1.41	64

#	Field	Choice Count
1	1-5 years	21.88% 14
2	5-11 years	14.06% 9
3	11-15 years	21.88% 14
4	16+ years	42.19% 27

64

Showing rows 1 - 5 of 5

3 - I intend to attend the Faculty Assembly on Tuesday 05/25/2021 at 2pm.



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	I intend to attend the Faculty Assembly on Tuesday 05/25/2021 at 2pm.	4.00	6.00	4.23	0.52	0.27	64

#	Field	Choice Count
4	Yes	81.25% 52
5	Maybe	14.06% 9
6	No	4.69% 3
		64

Showing rows 1 - 4 of 4

5 - Topic 1

Topic 1

How she plans to address Ramapo's future fiscal health given the continuing drop in birth rates.

Definition of shared governance

Diversity: We don't actively recruit students of color or students from urban schools. Our applications reflect that. We need non-white faculty. Funds have not been made available for posting jobs widely via industry sites instead of free ones.

Vision and alignment with diversity - infusing diversity in curriculum. Needs faculty expertise to implement. Current EDIC is dysfunctional - lacks vision and intention. Limited to co-curricular programming and inconsequential training.

Reinstating pre-pandemic (and before) budgets as soon as possible

Removing the current cabinet

Shared governance.

(lack of) ITS support for faculty during remote teaching

Strengthening shared governance moving forward, specifically addressing the difficult relationship between the faculty and the student enrollment part of the administration.

The strengths/advantages of Ramapo College for students: personalized education, small class-size, student-faculty research, innovative teaching, authentic learning experiences.

How is Ramapo being represented through open houses, marketing, etc? Many of the accomplishments by faculty and student remain invisible to most of campus and all potential students and general NJ audience.

The implementation of 3+1 without the support of the faculty.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion -- how the role of the President can contribute to and support the excellent work that is already being done on campus in these areas. How our College can become more of a leader in these areas.

I really think we should just use the chance to give a warm welcome and encouragement, then to follow up with staged meetings over the first 6 months on the range of topics most dear to us. I see no reason to needle someone who is not yet in the door

Stabilization of academic practices/outlook in the form of a permanent Provost. Strongly recommending Dr. Susan Gaulden.

How shared governance will be enacted from the start?

Plans for low enrolled programs in the humanities

Shared governance

Funding for higher education

Topic 1

Commitment to continue using what we have learned over the pandemic year (flexibility, multiple modes of course delivery, Webex meetings and office hours, etc.) as we go forward to more efficiently meet the needs of all students and faculty

What will it mean for a Liberal Arts College to transition more and more towards a virtual mode of course delivery? How do we maintain the "Arts" in the Liberal Arts?

The new learning commons, and how Dr. Jebb intends to support the library.

Shared governance/communication and morale (interconnected). I would like for this to be positively toned- an opportunity to express our commitment to the success of our institution and to assert our willingness to engage in healthy collaboration.

How we can market our strengths, expand the view of what a liberal arts education can be in the 21st century, and not try to be something we are not.

Dr. Jebb comes from a very radically distinct institutional culture than that of Ramapo. They could, in fact, not be more different. This can bring strengths and refreshing changes, it could also lead to misunderstandings. Let's discuss this openly.

Her plans to ensure the financial sustainability of the college in light of current challenges.

What direction does she see the college moving?

Her views on Shared Governance

How to make Ramapo's core mission of interdisciplinarity center again.

Long-term vision for financial stability

shared governance

How much we love our Provost. Academic Affairs is mostly in decent shape. Priorities for new President should be outreach to external stakeholders and especially fundraising (tapping into wealthy Bergen County businesses and individuals).

Elaborate on her ideas to expand and diversify revenue streams.

retention and support of contingent faculty

Role of Provost/academic affairs/faculty vs. other functional areas

Revitalization of the core areas of the liberal arts (humanities, social sciences, and the arts) and a return to truly valuing interdisciplinary endeavors rather than just paying lip service to them.

3+1 at Ramapo and pedagogical/financial concerns

The transition back to campus post COVID.

6 - Topic 2

Topic 2

Persistent lack of resources allocated to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. e.g., need to address underrepresentation of and lack of support for faculty of color. EDIC by itself isn't doing enough (nor should it be held solely accountable)

Strategies around equity and diversity

PR: We are a "secret gem". Hiding is not to our benefit- whether for events, relationships, fundraising, or recruitment. We need a long-term PR plan which includes academic programs instead of only our gym and luxury dorms.

Role and Centrality of Academic Affairs -- being intentional in resource allocation. Value of EMSA hinges on the success of AA. Related & overdue: School structure reorganization - needs streamlining/ deliberating along with interdisciplinary goals.

(Already stated: Reinforcing the college's commitment to the Liberal Arts)

Her point of view about requiring vaccines and plan to get us all back on campus Spring 2022

Approach to making changes, specifically regarding the Provost and anything else. Hopefully, she will be very transparent; we have not had this under the Mercer reign.

size of classes--caps --during remote teaching

Recommitting to a liberal arts curriculum and developing our identity and niche as a liberal arts school.

Delivering on the pillars of the college mission.

As a follow-up: In the past, companies have been hired to conduct big marketing campaigns but not always efficient. Perhaps a working group could get together to reflect on college identity, the interdisciplinary nature of schools, etc.

Financial status and morale at the college -- I think often we hear dire financial information (of course, part of that was due to COVID, but even before it). Is there a way to make this more positive/discuss the opportunities/engage us more?

We would like a more empowered faculty and less upper admin bloat...

Outlining "return to normal" protocol.

Thoughts on moving the College forward in this COVID period.

Support for Languages and International Studies

transparent communication

Professional Staff support

Better and more transparent communication between administration and faculty

The faculty has felt side-lined by the Administration for the last number of years. As if we are just servers of a product to paying customers. What will you do to alleviate this?

Bringing a childcare center back to campus for faculty, staff and students raising families/caring for young children. This would be beneficial for all these groups, as well as an opportunity for education majors to get experience working with kids.

What we see as our priorities for success (collaboration across constituencies, commitment to diversity and underserved students, lifting morale, building community, supporting faculty development in all areas)

Idea for improved communication across divisions. Too much separation between AA and other divisions - results in unnecessary misunderstanding and questioning of motives - detracting from what we promote ourselves as (small College feel).

How does Dr Jebb understand the notion of Shared governance as set forth in AAUP standards?

Plans for marketing new programs and minors.

The extent to which sustainability (Campus and Academic) is a priority to her. Will she consider establishing an Office of Sustainability, with one Sustainability Officer running the campus part of it.

How to make Sustainability an operating principle for every aspect of the college going forward.

Research

how to support faculty research

Reclaiming Ramapo's mantle as an environmental sustainability pioneer/innovator. Working with Bergen County/State of New Jersey on Sustainable Development Goals through curricular and partnership/extracurricular formats.

Elaborate on her plans for wellness across students and faculty.

support of humanities and literature instruction

Leadership style and practice/process for formulating vision and strategies for the College's future

Creating a campus and academic curriculum that engages diversity in a meaningful way by pushing everyone to participate in promoting it and recruiting more diverse faculty and students.

The outsized role of EMSA, esp. WRT the CRW terminations, marketing of programs, and general diminishment of the academic unit

The changing needs of students attending Ramapo.

End of Report