# Task Force on Liberal Arts Curriculum Structures
# Executive Summary of Recommendations | August 2025

The Task Force on Liberal Arts Curriculum Structures proposes six overarching recommendations to strengthen Ramapo College's liberal arts mission by fostering a more equitable, coherent, and flexible academic degree experience that deepens student engagement and broadens access to transformative learning across all programs.

## 1. Reimagine the Ramapo Core: A Unified Liberal Arts Foundation

1a) Revise and rebrand General Education as the "Ramapo Core," a streamlined, student-centered program aligned with the College's liberal arts pillars and mission. The Ramapo Core will deliver a coherent, scaffolded academic experience grounded in the liberal arts, with distinct course categories that convey the importance of their content and equip students for the future. Categories will share a parallel structure and provide menu-based options for 100- and 200-level courses within each discipline.

1b) First-Year Seminar (FYS), as part of the Ramapo Core, should balance the need to orient students to the College's liberal arts curriculum, set academic standards, and provide an opportunity for students to engage in a topic of their choosing. A standing faculty steering committee should be created to guide the ongoing development of the course, ensure alignment with the mission, and provide development and pedagogical support for instructors.

1c) Transfer students face unique challenges acclimating to Ramapo and do not participate in a First-Year Seminar style course. An academic orientation and an additional course were discussed as options to support transfer students who enter Ramapo and do not participate in FYS. The taskforce recognizes the burden an additional course could pose to some students, as well as the challenge of holding an in-person event.

1d) The addition of a Senior Capstone experience would provide a common experience and bookend to FYS and provide students with an opportunity to reflect on their liberal arts experience. Some task force members discussed the challenges of implementing a Capstone course in majors that have required clinical experiences. A 1-credit experience was also discussed. Thus, the task force recommends a Working Group to focus on implementation.

**Implementation Priorities:**

- Collaborate with GECCo to implement "Ramapo Core" with fewer requirements that includes: a consistent menu-based format, 100/200 level classes from all Schools, revised categories that are aligned with mission/pillars (i.e., using existing GE Goals) and are engaging to students.
- Establish a standing First-Year Seminar Steering Group to support the Director of FYS and advance this existing high-impact practice. The Steering Group should consider common

syllabus components, scheduling blocks, teaching rotation of full-time faculty, and assessment to leverage this high-impact practice.
- Form a Capstone Working Group that evaluates the challenges associated with previous iterations of these requirements and opportunities to improve implementation in the future.

## 2. Reinforce Mission and Pillars Across the Curriculum and Assessment

2a) Require all programs (college-wide, majors, minors, graduate, certificates) to align learning outcomes with the mission and pillars.

2b) Include assessment of a program's reflection of the College's liberal arts mission into the 5-Year Program Review process. This change will ensure programs are accountable to the mission and pillars and will provide students with opportunities to achieve interdisciplinary, experiential, international, and intercultural learning outcomes throughout their academic career.

2c) Ensure the liberal arts mission and pillars are clearly and consistently emphasized in campus communications, marketing, and admissions materials.

### Implementation Priorities:

- Revise 5-year Program Review guidelines.
- Require mission/pillar alignment documentation for accredited and non-accredited programs alike.

## 3. Build Engagement Through Co-Curricular Learning

Create a flexible, inclusive, college-wide co-curricular engagement model that invites all students to participate, document, and reflect on meaningful experiences tied to the College's mission and pillars.

### Implementation Priorities:

- Reevaluate and make necessary changes to the approved time blocks to promote event planning and participation.
- Utilize the College's digital student portfolio system (e.g., Canvas Credentials) for easy and transparent advising and management of the requirement. Canvas will aid in tracking and assessment of student engagement using badge systems and reflection prompts.
- Establish a faculty/staff working group to nominate co-curricular experiences.

## 4. Ensure Credit Equity and Expand Interdisciplinary Access

4a) Remove school-specific core requirements to reduce curricular disproportion and promote equal access to a shared liberal arts experience. Convening groups and GECCo will decide if and how to integrate these requirements into the Ramapo Core or major requirements.

4b) Enforce existing major credit limits to promote equity and curricular flexibility, especially for students exploring minors, changing majors, or transferring.

**Implementation Priorities:**

- Revise Policy 300KK to reaffirm the 64-credit major limit, unless explicitly required by accrediting bodies.
- Ensure credit data is documented in all curriculum revisions and reviews to promote transparency and accountability with respect to Policy 300KK.
- Provide support for school/program-level curriculum revision and transition. Some majors may choose to adopt school-core requirements into their majors, which will require support from the Registrar's office and Provost's Office.

## 5. Offer Scaffolded High-Impact Experiential Learning Opportunities for All Students

5a) Deans should conduct an audit of PRICE (Practicum, Research, Internship, Co-op, Externship) experiences across programs in their Schools and work with the faculty and the Cahill Career Center to identify areas for development of additional opportunities if needed.

5b) Revise and standardize the Co-op experience by developing common course elements to ensure consistency in the learning experience.

**Implementation Priorities:**

- Deans audit all programs to identify existing PRICE experiences across programs.
- Deans and faculty should work with Cahill center to standardize and expand experiential learning opportunities and provide industry-aligned, flexible pathways for PRICE experiences.

## 6. Increase Curricular Flexibility Through 2-Credit Courses

Maintain the existing 4-credit structure, and increase the opportunity for 2-credit courses. The potential  expansion will give students options for credit recovery, exploration, and degree completion, especially in modular, 7-week formats that are compatible with the existing day/time schedule or an amended version of it. 3-credit courses are also compatible, though are more complex to schedule. This flexibility is not commonly understood across the college and should be clarified.

**Implementation Priorities:**

- Faculty and Deans should review existing course offerings and major requirements and determine if transitioning to a 2 credit option would be beneficial for students.

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