



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
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Three Ramapo College Students Recognized for Outstanding Work in Japanese Studies

MAHWAH, N.J. -- Three Ramapo College students are receiving the 2021 Japanese Language and Culture Study Award for their outstanding work during the course of their studies with Ramapo Adjunct Instructor of Japanese Kei Sakayama. The award, which is sponsored by the New Jersey Association of Teachers of Japanese (NJATJ), will be presented virtually to Spencer Love '21, Lena Leroy '23, and Elly Raisch '25.

Sakayama (called Sensei) nominated the three students for the award for their “consistent efforts, good grades and deep interests” in Japanese language and culture. “I selected Elly and Lena, who both have impressive work quality, and Spencer for his extra effort to challenge higher levels of language and interests of culture. They are the most reliable students, even in virtual-only classes,” she said. “I am very proud of the recipients and wish their continued success in college and beyond. Omedeto (Congratulations).”

Japanese is among the World Language programs offered in Ramapo College’s School of Humanities and Global Studies.

About the recipients:

Spencer Love '21, majoring in International Studies with minors in East Asian Studies and International Business, said he chose Japanese because of his study abroad experiences in Japan. “I wanted to further build my skills in the language,” he said. After college, Spencer said he hopes to work in International Logistics, perhaps in importing/exporting from and to Japan and East Asia. “Sakayama Sensei is incredible. I never thought a language course would be virtual-friendly but she works incredibly hard to make the language accessible and enjoyable to learn.”

Elly Raisch, who will be a freshman at Ramapo this fall, also plans to major in International Studies. She studied Japanese the past two semesters as a non-degree student and said that

her experience in the course is part of what led her to apply to Ramapo full-time. “I chose Japanese because it’s a fun and challenging language to learn. Learning kanji characters, in particular, is very exciting. The most difficult aspect of learning is improvised conversation, but everyone was determined to speak more fluently even during our virtual classes. Sakayama Sensei is patient with everyone, and encourages every student to do their best. After college, I hope to do work in translation or illustration.”

Lena Leroy said that, as an Asian adoptee to an American mother and Haitian father, she has always been interested in learning more about Asian culture. “What better way to learn about a culture than through learning the language. I also find that speaking ‘on the spot’ is difficult because the way sentences are formed in Japanese isn't the same as in English.” Lena, who also is majoring in International Studies, said she hopes to pursue a career that will positively impact people's lives. “As an adoptee, I have thought about working with or in adoptions. It would also be pretty cool to work at the United Nations.”

For information about the World Language programs at Ramapo College, visit www.ramapo.edu/hgs/worldlanguages/overview/

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Ramapo College of New Jersey is the state’s premier public liberal arts college and is committed to academic excellence through interdisciplinary and experiential learning, and international and intercultural understanding. The College is ranked #1 among New Jersey public institutions by College Choice, has been named one of the 50 Most Beautiful College Campuses in America by *CondéNast Traveler*, and is recognized as a top college by *U.S. News & World Report*, *Kiplinger’s*, Princeton Review and *Money* magazine, among others. Ramapo College is also distinguished as a Career Development College of Distinction by CollegesofDistinction.com, boasts the best campus housing in New Jersey on Niche.com, and is designated a “Military Friendly College” in Victoria Media’s *Guide to Military Friendly Schools*.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor’s degrees in the arts, business, data science, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include business, education, nursing and social work. In addition, the College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels, and offers graduate programs leading to master’s degrees in Accounting, Business Administration, Creative Music Technology, Data Science, Educational Technology, Educational Leadership, Nursing, Social Work and Special Education, as well as a post-master’s Doctor of Nursing Practice.