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Ramapo College Hosts Symposium on BP Oil Spill April 18, 19
“Spill Effects: Teaching About BP in the Gulf, New Jersey and Beyond”

(MAHWAH, NJ) – Ramapo College of New Jersey will host a two-day symposium on the mid- and long-term effects of the BP Gulf oil spill on April 18 and 19. The College’s Sustainability Studies Program is bringing together national, regional and College experts to discuss the issues.

On April 20, 2010, the Macondo oil well under BP’s Deepwater Horizon platform began to gush oil, in what has come to be known as the biggest oil spill disaster in US history. Some five million barrels of oil leaked from the well before it was successfully capped. By comparison, the Alaskan Exxon Valdez oil spill, which happened in 1989 leaked more than 250,000 barrels of oil. Participants will explore the societal, ecological and human health costs associated with BP’s Deepwater Horizon blow-out.

“Research has shown that climate change, natural disasters, energy needs, political instability and warfare are inextricably connected to the way societies organize their social, economic and political institutions, so it only natural that Ramapo College’s School of Social Science and Human Services is taking up this important issue,” said Dean Samuel J. Rosenberg. “We are honored to have so many distinguished panelists, internal and external, to share their expertise with our students and the greater community.”

The Sustainability Studies Program at Ramapo College is home to New Jersey’s only Master of Art’s in Sustainability Studies, within the School of Social Science and Health Services. The event is made possible by a grant by the College’s Deans Council and it is free and open to the public.

The symposium will be held in the Trustees Pavilion Monday, April 18 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Tuesday, April 19, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The schedule is:

Monday, April 18, 2011

9:30 – 10:00: Welcome and Coffee

10:00 – 10:15: President Peter P. Mercer

10:15 – 10:30: Dean Sam J. Rosenberg

10:30 – 11:00: Keynote Address, Assemblywoman Connie Wagner

11:00 – 12:00: Panel – Ecological Impacts

- Dr. George Crozier, Dauphin Island Sea Lab, Dauphin Island, AL

- Dr. Richard H. Pierce, Mote Marine Laboratory, Sarasota, FL
- Dr. Ashwani Vasishth, Ramapo College

12:00 – 1:00: Lunch

1:00 – 2:00: Panel – Ecological Impacts

- Dr. John H. Paul, University of South Florida, FL
- Dr. Harry Allen & Dr. Mark Sprenger, US EPA Environmental Response Team, NJ
- Dr. Marta Vides Saade, Ramapo College
- Dr. Eric Karlin, Ramapo College

2:00 – 3:00: Panel – Social Impacts

- Marc A. Yaggi, Waterkeeper Alliance, NJ
- Thomas Costanza, Catholic Charities, New Orleans, LA
- Dr. Wayne Hayes, Ramapo College
- Dr. Rita J. Shea-Van Fossen, Ramapo College

3:00 – 3:45: Refreshments

3:45 – 5:15: Gulf Oil Spill, Haiti, Katrina and the Environment: Organizing from Below with Media Activism and Alternative Media

Filmmaker Ghen Zando-Dennis will show short films, including works-in-progress, making connections between the "natural" and "man-made" disasters of the earthquake in Haiti, the hurricane in New Orleans, and the Gulf Oil Spill. Supported with Platinum Series grant

Tuesday, April 19, 2011

11:00 – 12:00: Panel – Historical Perspectives

- Dr. Brian Black, Penn State University, Altoona, PA
Historical Perspectives on Oil, and the Deepwater Horizon Disaster
- Andrew Willner, Andrew J Willner Consultants, Keyport, NJ
- Dr. Howard Horowitz, Ramapo College

12:00 – 1:00 PM: Lunch

1:00 – 2:00: Panel – Media Perspectives

- Charles Schmidt, Journalist
- David Barstow, New York Times
- Thomas Lueck, Ramapo College

2:30 – 4:00: Film

- **Gasland (2010, Josh Fox, U.S.A., 107 minutes, documentary)**
"The largest domestic natural gas drilling boom in history has swept across the United States. The Halliburton-developed drilling technology of "fracking" or hydraulic fracturing has unlocked a "Saudi Arabia of natural gas" just beneath us. But is fracking safe? When filmmaker Josh Fox is asked to lease his land for drilling, he embarks on a cross-country odyssey uncovering a trail of secrets, lies and contamination. A recently drilled nearby Pennsylvania town reports that residents are able to light their drinking water on fire. This is just one of the many absurd and astonishing revelations of a new country called GASLAND. Part verite travelogue, part expose, part mystery, part bluegrass banjo meltdown, part showdown."

Thursday, April 21, 2011

7:45 – 9:30: Film – Cinematheque Presentation

- **Crude (2009, Joe Berliner, U.S.A., 105 minutes, documentary)**
One of the largest and most controversial legal cases on the planet. An inside look at the infamous \$27 billion "Amazon Chernobyl" case, CRUDE is a real-life high stakes legal drama set against a backdrop of the environmental movement, global politics, celebrity activism, human rights advocacy, the media, multinational corporate power, and rapidly-disappearing indigenous cultures. Presenting a complex situation from multiple viewpoints, the film examines a complicated situation from several angles while bringing a story of environmental peril and human suffering into focus.

Members of the media may contact Anna Farneski at 201-864-6844 with inquiries.

Ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as fourth in the Best Regional Universities North category, Ramapo College of New Jersey offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include nursing and social work, and as courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers four graduate programs and articulated programs with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.

Undergraduate students choose to concentrate their studies in one of five schools with more than 700 course offerings and 40 academic programs. Ramapo College boasts an average student/faculty ratio of 18:1 and average class size of 23, affording students the opportunity to develop close ties to the College's exceptional faculty.