

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Anna Farneski; afarnesk@ramapo.edu / (201) 684.6844

October 11, 2012

**Ramapo College Host 12<sup>th</sup> Annual LGBTQA Leadership Conference**

(MAHWAH, NJ)-Ramapo College will host the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual LGBTQA Leadership Conference on Friday, November 2 from 11:30 a.m. through 9 p.m. in SC-219. For the past 11 years, Northern New Jersey has held a regional LGBTQA college leadership conference. This year the conference includes a lecture from Keynote Speaker, Mara Keisling, three workshops, dinner and will end with an equality ball. This conference serves as a one-day educational and leadership development opportunity for college students and the surrounding community.

The theme of the 2012 conference is "Equality: Challenge Accepted." The conference will bring together several hundred participants from across the tri-state area to explore the courage it takes to build a united and inclusive movement for LGBTQA equality. Conference speakers and workshops will challenge paradigms that have traditionally marginalized voices within our community. Attendees will gain new friends for networking and collaboration, learn about equality initiatives taking place at other campuses, and become empowered with tips and tools for challenging injustice.

Keisling is the founding executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality in Washington, D.C. Keisling is a transgender-identified woman, a parent and one of the leading voices for transgender equality in the country. She has appeared on news outlets such as CNN and CSPAN and is regularly quoted in The New York Times, The Washington Post and hundreds of other national and local print and electronic media. Keisling is a graduate of Penn State University and did her graduate work at Harvard University in American Government. She has served on the board of Directors of Common Roads, an LGBTQ Youth Group, and on the steering committee of the Statewide Pennsylvania Rights Coalition.

"I am thrilled that Ramapo has the opportunity to serve as the host campus for this conference. This is a wonderful chance for Ramapo students to hear a nationally recognized keynote speaker, develop their leadership skills and network with other LGBTQA leaders and allies across New Jersey," said Kat McGee, assistant director of the Center for Student Involvement and coordinator of the Women's Center at Ramapo College. "The theme 'Equality: Challenge Accepted' was inspired by an Internet meme popular with college students. The meme depicts various situations where a highly difficult task is presented to someone who chooses to embrace this challenge against all odds. I think this speaks to the courage and unshakable optimism required for any social justice movement. Full equality for LGBTQA citizens is certainly a challenge, but it is one that many of today's college students strive towards enthusiastically."

Admission to the conference is free with online registration at <https://orgsync.com/5737/forms/54493> and if a current high school, college, or university ID is presented the day of the conference. Free online registration will be available until Sunday, October 28. The conference is \$10 without a current school ID. Late registration will be available in-person the day of the conference for a cost of \$10 regardless if a school ID is presented.

For more information please contact Chairperson for the conference, Kat McGee, at [kmcgee@ramapo.edu](mailto:kmcgee@ramapo.edu).

###

Ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as sixth in the Best Regional Universities North category for public institutions, Ramapo College of New Jersey is sometimes mistaken for a private college. This is, in part, due to its unique interdisciplinary academic structure, its size of approximately 6,008 students and its pastoral setting in the foothills of the Ramapo Mountains on the New Jersey/New York border.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College 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. In addition, Ramapo College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers five graduate programs as well as 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.