

**RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**Office of Communications and Public Affairs**

**Press Release**

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## **Les Paul Foundation Bestows Generous Grant on Ramapo College**

*Gift will fund innovative music production studio unique in region*

**(MAHWAH, NJ) – November 11, 2013** ... Following the lead of music legend Les Paul, Ramapo College of New Jersey will build a state-of-the-art music studio that will educate the musical luminaries of the future in a hybrid facility that bridges the worlds of analog and digital sound.

The generous financial gift was announced today by the Les Paul Foundation and the Foundation of Ramapo College of New Jersey. Paul, who pushed boundaries as a performer and technologist, lived in Mahwah. Michael Braunstein, Executive Director of the Les Paul Foundation and Rusty Paul, Les' son, made the presentation to

Dr. Peter Phillip Mercer, President of Ramapo College, represented by a customized Ramapo and Les Paul Foundation Gibson Les Paul guitar along with a presentation check.

“Les Paul would be honored to see how his life will now influence so many students of tomorrow,” said Michael Braunstein, Executive Director, Les Paul Foundation. “He was always inventing, creating and looking to the future in everything he did. We know that this grant from the Les Paul Foundation will foster Les Paul’s legacy through the advancement of technology at Ramapo.”

“This generous gift from the Les Paul Foundation will provide our students with a broad historical foundation of industry standard analog technologies while taking advantage of tremendous developments in digital technology,” said Ramapo President Peter P. Mercer. “It presents the best of both worlds.”

The College’s current studio was built more than 30 years ago; it already attracts a blend of students who are pushing aside limitations to create new visions of what music can be.

“We concentrate, in the tradition of Les Paul, on the whole musician,” said Assistant Professor of Music Seth Cluett. “We teach audio engineering, live sound engineering and music production to people who are themselves singer songwriters, pop musicians, hip hop producers and DJs.”

The centerpiece of the new studio will be a hybrid digital/analog console that will allow the teaching of classic, historical, and foundational mixing techniques in an environment that takes advantage of contemporary computer control and recording practices. Directly in line with the Les Paul Foundation mission, the studio will emphasize Paul's early experimentation by including technologies such as reel-to-reel tape and analog reverberation, but modernized with state-of-the-art digital control. The studio will offer exposure to industry standard microphones common to all recording, and sound design and production facilities.

The College's music curriculum emphasizes Paul as a guitarist, innovator and entrepreneur. Students will be visiting the Les Paul exhibit at the Mahwah Museum which houses a unique collection of artifacts that illustrate Les Paul's achievements, most of which are on loan from the Les Paul Foundation.

Paul is introduced to students as an inventor of multi-track recording. His departures with electric guitars and echo chambers help to teach how the electric guitar and amplification developed and changed guitar-playing techniques and performance practices and expanded his own artistic expression, as well as that of others.

In music production courses, invention, innovation, and experimentation are emphasized as elements in the development of personal style. Concepts of combining performer and technician are developed with Paul and other artists as models of ideal practice.

Since 2011, the College's music program and the Mahwah Museum have co-hosted an annual Les Paul Tribute Festival to celebrate his legacy through education and performance. Students, faculty, staff, and the local community have attended these events, which have included guest lectures, master classes, and concerts in the Berrie Center's Sharp Theater. The next festival will be held February 5 through 8, 2014. Lectures and hands-on master classes in music performance courses will continue in Les Paul's honor.

For more information about the Les Paul Foundation, click here: [www.lespaulfoundation.org](http://www.lespaulfoundation.org)

#### **About the Les Paul Foundation:**

Les Paul formed his foundation to encourage young people to pursue their curiosity and innovation about music, sound and engineering. Recent grants from the Les Paul Foundation include funding to multiple music education programs and to museums that tell the Les Paul story. The foundation's comprehensive website at [www.lespaulfoundation.org](http://www.lespaulfoundation.org) connects viewers to numerous resources. The mission of the Les Paul Foundation is to honor and share the life, spirit and legacy of Les Paul by supporting music education, engineering and innovation as well as medical research. The foundation is based in New York. Follow the Les Paul Foundation at [www.facebook.com/lespaulfoundation](https://www.facebook.com/lespaulfoundation).

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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 six graduate programs as well as articulated programs with Rutgers, The State University 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.