



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
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Ramapo Receives Prestigious Grant to Advance Student Success through Use of Information Technology

MAHWAH, N.J. – Ramapo College of New Jersey is one of only 24 recipients nationwide – and the only one in New Jersey – of a grant from EDUCAUSE, a nonprofit association whose mission is to advance higher education through the use of information technology.

The EDUCAUSE program, Integrated Planning & Advising for Student Success (iPASS) in higher education, awarded Ramapo \$225,000 over three years. Ramapo’s award is earmarked for its Connect Program, which provides an early warning system to identify students at risk of academic difficulty as well as other functions to promote student success. The Connect project is a joint effort between Enrollment Management, the Center for Student Success, the Office of the Provost, Institutional Research and Information Technology Services.

“Over the last five years, Ramapo has undertaken significant initiatives to enhance academic advisement and student success,” said President Peter P. Mercer. “The receipt of the iPASS grant will allow us to further our efforts across the three key areas identified by iPASS: education planning, coaching and counseling and targeting risk and intervention.”

Created with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust, the initiative will help two- and four-year higher education institutions launch comprehensive iPASS technologies by 2018.

This new integrative approach to student success promotes shared ownership for educational progress among students, faculty and staff, encompassing services that help students formulate and advance toward educational goals. iPASS includes tech-enabled advising, counseling, progress tracking, and academic early alerts.

“Institutions of higher education are facing greater challenges than ever before; many are working to decrease costs while delivering high-quality programs to a growing and increasingly diverse student body,” EDUCAUSE President and CEO John O’Brien said.

Over the course of their three-year projects, grantee institutions aim for at least a 10 percentage point increase in year-to-year student retention. Program results will be shared broadly to accelerate adoption of iPASS systems.

“We believe that through faculty and staff partnerships, and our overall commitment to student success, Ramapo can continue to provide high quality experiences while increasing retention and graduation rates of targeted populations,” said President Mercer. “I am proud to say that Ramapo currently has a retention rate of 86.3 percent and this grant will continue to help us advance our goal of increasing graduation rates among underrepresented groups, transfer students and international students.”

Grantees also will receive access to technology vendors and consultants in technology integration and business process redesign. Their plans will undergo rigorous third-party analysis of student outcomes and return on investment, led by the Community College Research Center at Teachers College of Columbia University, a partner in this initiative.

Successful applicants were expected to have rolled out at least part of their iPASS system(s) prior to applying for funding and will now focus on deploying each of the following broad, student-facing functions that improve on current technology and services in three areas:

- **Education planning:** Guiding students to select courses and programs of study that are most efficient and relevant to completing a degree or credential that meets their academic and career goals
- **Counseling and coaching:** Connecting students to on- and off-campus resources and allowing students and advisors to monitor progress, provide ongoing feedback and create personalized action plans for educational success
- **Targeting risk and intervention:** Providing faculty, advisors, students, and administrators with the ability to better predict course failure and program stop-out, in order to support timely and effective interventions

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Ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as fifth in the Best Regional Public Universities North category, 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 6,000 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 eight 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.