



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Office of Marketing and Communications
Press Release
June 12, 2017

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Ramapo College's Peer Facilitation Program Receives National Excellence Award

MAHWAH, N.J. -- Ramapo College's *Peer Facilitation Program* has been selected as the NASPA (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators) Excellence Award Bronze Honoree in the category for Enrollment management, Financial Aid, Orientation, Parents, Persistence, First-year, Other-year, and related. Ramapo's entry was submitted for consideration by Tracey Bender, Student Success Coordinator.

"Under the leadership of Tracey Bender and two student interns, the Peer Facilitation Program has doubled in size to 84 Peer Facilitators who volunteer to serve in pairs across 42 first-year seminar courses," said Joseph Connell, Assistant vice President of Student Success at Ramapo College. "Through a ratio of 12 students to 1 peer facilitator, the Peer Facilitation Program provides the personal mentoring that helps welcome and transition each of our first-year students."

The NASPA Excellence Awards were created to recognize student affairs practitioners who develop transformative, innovative, and data-driven programs at the institutional level.

The *Peer Facilitation Program* was designed to foster a sense of community among first-year students by connecting them with upper-class mentors who were once new to Ramapo themselves. Through exercises in self-reflection, team building, trust and acceptance, peers pass on their knowledge to ease the transition to college life, enhance the first-year experience and immerse students in the Ramapo community. The program provides new students with direction, a sense of what to expect during their first few months and a network of support that extends beyond the classroom.

Peer facilitators are chosen from a pool of applicants with diverse experiences and perspectives who participate in extensive training. They work with First-Year Seminar faculty to forge bonds with and among students in their classes. Through their presence and weekly class facilitation they help new students feel comfortable and provide them with tools to help them excel; in doing so, they expedite three key forms of engagement: Personal, Social, Campus & Civic.

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Ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of the top in the Best Regional Public Universities North category, Ramapo College of New Jersey is sometimes viewed as 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.