



**RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY**

**Office of Marketing and Communications**

**Press Release**

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## **Ramapo College Bestows 17 Employees with Presidential Staff Awards**

Residents of Mount Olive, Pompton Plains, and Waldwick recognized

MAHWAH, N.J. - President Peter P. Mercer announced the recipients of the Ramapo College President's Staff Recognition Awards on June 2, 2017. The recipients were formally recognized by the College's Board of Trustees on June 26.

The President's Staff Recognition Program consists of three award categories: Staff Excellence in Service, Staff Leadership, and the Team Project Award.

The 2017 recipients of the Staff Excellence in Service Award are Rajesh Adhikari and Deirdre Lynch. The Award is presented to individuals that provided exemplary service by fostering cooperation, collaboration and open communication among college constituents.

Rajesh Adhikari, Associate Director of International Student and Scholar Services, was recognized for his expertise, professionalism, compassion and contributions to fostering a safe and supportive environment for work and study. Adhikari, of Mount Olive, N.J., was commended for going above and beyond his role to ensure international students at Ramapo find the campus to be comfortable and inclusive. One nominator wrote, "As an international student who has traveled 7,857 miles from Bangladesh to Ramapo, one would be bound to feel some homesickness. However, I have never felt alone or without guidance at Ramapo. Raj has always been there for me, and every other international student at Ramapo." Adhikari's empathy and advocacy for international students and scholars at the College were also lauded.

Deirdre Lynch, Unit Secretary in the Anisfield School of Business, was recognized for her consistent professionalism and stability during a time of transition at the College. Lynch's expertise and compassion when trouble shooting issues with students, as well as her steady sense of humor and good cheer, were also commended. One nomination noted,

“Deirdre frankly has more on her plate than most; but you'd never know it. Her organizational skills are exceptional, her institutional and task-related knowledge extraordinary, and her people skills seemingly so intuitive as to be empathetic. Deirdre sets a positive tone and teamwork norm that is contagious.” Lynch was further described as a “critical problem solver” and an “amazing student advocate.”

The 2017 recipients of the Staff Leadership Award are Beth Foster of Pompton Plains, Ray Fallon of Waldwick, and Paul Pittman. The recipients were recognized for assuming a leadership role and successfully effecting positive change.

Beth Foster, Associate Registrar, was recognized for her expertise, can-do attitude, and her overwhelming commitment and dedication to the College as a supervisor, as a member of the Office of the Registrar, as an essential resource to the College's five deans, and as co-chair of the Commencement Planning Committee. One nominator noted, “(She) reminds those that have the pleasure of working with her of the dedication she brings on a daily basis. As a supervisor, she provides an environment that ‘fosters’ learning, technological growth and innovation.” In addition, others praised Foster for her ceaseless professionalism, patience and optimism, adding that “her job has many, many challenges and she just keeps pecking away until all the problems are solved.”

Ray Fallon, Microcomputer Applications Developer, was recognized for his leadership in overseeing a comprehensive upgrade of Moodle, the College's learning management system. He was also noted for resolving a recurring system problem and developing training workshops for faculty. One nominator noted, “Ray's proactive approach to the college's Learning Management System has led to numerous improvements to Moodle and other resources that we use on campus. His self-direction in this area has led to changes and enhancements in our Moodle system, including new training workshops for Moodle gradebook, clarification of Moodle forum approaches, hands-on support for Moodle exams and test banks, and an enhanced student experience.” Fallon was further lauded for his poise, expertise and team management.

Paul Pittman, Contemporary Arts Facilities Manager, was recognized for his industry expertise and commitment to staying current in his field, to his reliability and professionalism, and to his role as a mentor to students from populations who are traditionally underrepresented in studio and production careers. One nominator wrote, “The explosion of Music enrollment (200+ students) alone probably doubled Paul's workload as facilities, studios and equipment needs expanded. Paul must consistently update his knowledge of equipment and technology changes for these fields. Beyond this necessary but hardly sufficient skill set, however, Paul's job also requires him to be a masterful interpersonal communicator, interacting daily with faculty, conveners, and administrators.” Others commended Pittman for his commitment to mentoring students in the areas of studio and field production and ensuring that students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds have access to careers in the industry.

The Team Project Award is awarded to a group of employees who achieved a significant outcome or completed a significant project. It is further focused on recognizing collaboration across the College's units/departments. The Team Project Award was

presented to 12 employees comprising the Wellness Coalition. The Wellness Coalition was praised for fostering a healthy, inclusive and supportive environment on campus. Through collaboration and collegiality, it delivered innovative programs focused on mental, physical, emotional and academic wellness. Two events, “Wellness Wednesdays” and the declaration of Ramapo College as a stigma free campus, are examples of the Coalition’s significant outcomes. Coalition members included: Abbe Benowitz, Marianne Dunn, Francine Quintano, Rachel Marko, Megan Kearney, Melissa Lewis, Susan Auger, Peter Shalit, Sarah Dwyer, Ebony Jackson, Hilary Westgate and Tara Sager.

“It brings many of us tremendous satisfaction and joy when we are recognized for doing excellent work, for going above and beyond the call of duty, for exceeding expectations or for motivating a colleague,” said President Mercer, “Ramapo College is fortunate to be home to many talented and compassionate personnel whose extra efforts and exemplary service make the College a great place to work and study.”

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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.