



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

Office of Marketing and Communications

Press Release

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College's Peer Facilitation Program Celebrates 25 Years

MAHWAH, N.J. -- The Center for Student Success at Ramapo College celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Peer Facilitation Program during the annual Peer Appreciation dinner on December 13. Current and past peers were present at the event as well as members of the administration, faculty and staff.

Over its 25 years, the program has helped nearly 17,000 students make a successful transition during their first year at the College.

"The work of this Program as part of larger student success efforts contributes to Ramapo's outstanding first-year student retention rates that exceed national averages by over 10 percentage points," said Joseph Connell, Assistant Vice President of Student Success.

Ramapo President Peter P. Mercer presented a plaque to the program, honoring its history and work on behalf of Ramapo students.

"Twenty-five years ago, the College was in a very introspective period. At the time, in the early and mid-1990s, there was a considerable reduction in funding and a lot of discussion about whether Ramapo and some other colleges would continue or be conglomerated together into a larger entity," President Mercer said. "Over that 25-year period of peer facilitation we have surmounted a lot of obstacles as a college. There is no doubt that Ramapo College is a vibrant place, recognized for its excellence and recognized for its collective spirit and moral. For that, I want to thank you."

Over the last 10 years, the Peer Facilitation Program has received commendations from Middle States and NASPA (the leading student affairs association in higher education), which awarded Ramapo this year with the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education 2017 Excellence Award.

Peer facilitators consistently rank the highest when first-year students are surveyed at the end of the year, according to Tracey Bender, Assistant Director of Student Success at Ramapo,

noting that nearly 98 percent agree or strongly agree that their peer facilitator helped them adjust to college life, learn about campus resources and establish connections with peers.

Current and former peer leaders honored this year are: Stevie Rand '13, Donna Elazar '15, Uma Joshi '16, Jaclyn Bishopp '16, Christine DePope '16, Kimberly Simunovich '17, Jessica Drimones '18, Stephen Geerlof '18, Lea Sallustio '18, Taylor Ann Winkler '19.

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Ramapo College of New Jersey is the state's premier public liberal arts college. Ranked among the top colleges in the region by College Choice and recognized by, among others, U.S. News & World Report, Princeton Review, Colleges of Distinction and, also designated by Victory Media as a "Military Friendly College," Ramapo College is committed to academic excellence through interdisciplinary and experiential learning, and international and intercultural understanding.

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 business, education, nursing and social work. In addition, the College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels, and offers graduate programs leading to degrees in Accounting, Business Administration, Educational Technology, Educational Leadership, Nursing, Social Work and Special Education.