



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Office of Marketing and Communications
Press Release
November 1, 2018

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Panel Discusses the Supreme Court Post-Kavanaugh

MAHWAH, N.J. – An academic panel discussion on the current and future role of the Supreme Court in the United States focusing on the potential impact of the Judge Kavanaugh appointment and hearings was held on the Ramapo College of New Jersey campus on October 31. Students and faculty were in attendance for the event sponsored by Ramapo’s School of Science and Human Services, Law and Society program and the Center for Student Involvement.

The discussion covered the historical significance of the Kavanaugh appointment and hearings, the role of the Senate in the confirmation process, and how the U.S. Constitution might endure through such a tumultuous process.

Panelists described an era where ideology and partisanship have come closer together and that the process for placing people in these critical roles is fraught with more predictable outcomes. According to the panelists, the impact of the “Me Too” movement, for example, was witnessed in the careful wording that a number of senators used in describing their decision-making, as reflected in statements where senators found the information about a violent attack to be credible yet planned to vote for Judge Kavanaugh. It is an important historical outcome that the alleged victim(s) was not directly contradicted in a time where it is objectionable to not believe or blame a victim, noted the panelists.

Additional topics that might surface in the future under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court included the most current challenge to the 14th Amendment that states that children born in the U.S. are automatically U.S. citizens regardless of the parents’ country of origin. “History is repeating itself with just a new group being focused on,” said several panelists.

Societal expectations imposed on different genders and how these expectations affect how individuals may be interpreted and judged was also discussed following a rhetorical

question about whether a woman would be described as hysterical versus defending herself if she had presented herself as Kavanaugh did during the hearing.

Attendees were educated about the significant power held by Supreme Court clerks. “They screen what cases will be heard, pull the research reviewed by Supreme Court justices, and write opinions that are considered by the justices when reaching their decisions,” said Assistant Professor of Law & Society, Jeffrey Ellsworth.

Panelists included Jeffrey Ellsworth, Assistant Professor of Law & Society; Sarah Martinho, senior Law & Society major, Kat McGee, Director of Title IX, ADA and Compliance Training, Nicole Morgan-Agard, Chief Equity and Diversity Officer/Director of Employee Relations; and Michael Unger, Associate Professor of Political Science.

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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*, *Kiplinger’s*, Princeton Review, *Money* magazine, 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 master’s degrees in Accounting, Business Administration, Educational Technology, Educational Leadership, Nursing, Social Work and Special Education.