



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Office of Marketing and Communications
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Ramapo College Bestows 14 Employees with Presidential Staff Awards

MAHWAH, N.J. – President Peter P. Mercer announced the recipients of the Ramapo College President’s Staff Recognition Awards. The recipients were formally recognized by the College’s Board of Trustees on June 24. Recipients are residents of Oakland, Scotch Plains, Waldwick, Montville, and Rockaway, N.J., and Valley Cottage, N.Y. This is the 11th year of the competitive Awards program.

The President’s Staff Recognition Program issues awards for Staff Excellence in Service and Staff Leadership. “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.”

The 2019 recipients of the Staff Leadership Award are **Damian “DJ” Pinton of Oakland, Valerie Hunter of Scotch Plains, and Fernanda Papalia of Montville**. The award recipients were recognized for assuming a leadership role and successfully effecting positive change.

DJ Pinton, head coach and athletics facilities and budget coordinator, is an alumnus of Ramapo. He was recognized for leadership in leadership in the College’s Commencement-related activities, as well as in his role as head soccer coach, having led the men’s soccer team to its first NCAA tournament appearance. Pinton was commended for his sincere cooperation, initiative, and exceptional willingness to go above and beyond, and was described as a model team player, someone who inspires by doing and by always looking for ways to improve the student experience.

Valerie Hunter, benefits manager, is a member of the Human Resources Department. She was recognized for her leadership of the Benefits and Payroll Units and her assumption of additional responsibilities when the latter unit was short staffed. She was described as both a trusted expert and an exceptionally talented leader whose roll-up-her-sleeves work ethic, positivity, and highly cogent and helpful responses to a range of inquiries regarding payroll and benefits, were commended.

Fernanda Papalia, interim registrar, was recognized as nearly superhuman. A miracle worker with an impenetrable and contagious work ethic, Papalia was commended for her leadership of the Academic Dismissal Process and her assumption of additional responsibilities when the Office of the Registrar was short-staffed. Further, she was praised for her lead-by-example attitude, tireless work ethic, and her intentional and effective efforts to build camaraderie and cohesion among her colleagues and across campus.

The 2019 recipients of the Staff Excellence in Service Award are **Asha Mehta of Waldwick, Joseph “Joe” Niclas of Rockaway**, and the following nine individuals who comprised the College’s Banner 9 Implementation Team: **Arjun Bastola, Mike Bauer, Robert “Bob” Brown, Sandra Cohen, Jeffrey Delos Santos of Valley Cottage, N.Y., Robin Keller, Purvi Parekh of Oakland, Jeffery Rutkowski, and Pratik Surti**. The Excellence in Service Award is presented to individuals and groups who provide exemplary service by fostering cooperation, collaboration and open communication among college constituents.

Joe Niclas, senior admissions counselor, is an alumnus of the College. He is a member of the Admissions Team and, despite being a newly minted father and bringing in the largest incoming class in Ramapo’s history, he was recognized for carving out the time to mentor new employees and serve on College-wide committees. Niclas was lauded for his commitment to superior service and collegiality and was specifically commended his coordination of the Dual Enrollment Program and his service with Commencement. He was praised for fostering relationships with area high schools and growing partnerships with them, as well as for providing thoughtful and detail-oriented analysis of nursing and scholarship applications.

Asha Mehta, nursing advisor, is a member of the Nursing Department. Mehta was recognized for advancing the successes of our nursing students as well as for fostering a sense of belonging on campus among our Asian students and employees. Mehta was commended for her relentless advocacy for students and the close-knit relationships she has generated across campus with a full range of stakeholders. She was also praised for her ability to know each student’s name and story, to adeptly connect students to the appropriate on-campus resources, and to hold students accountable in a way that fosters their growth. In addition, she was lauded for her efforts in bringing together Asian faculty, staff, and students, and others around organized cultural events and programming.

The College’s **Banner 9 Implementation Team**, comprised of nine professionals within the Information Technology Services Department, was recognized for its leadership of implementing the College’s new management information system. The team was commended for its outreach and collaboration among system users across campus. It took meaningful special steps to reduce user anxieties through the design and delivery of one-on-one training sessions, group support sessions, and enhanced accessibility to Implementation Team members. There were two critical outcomes of the Team’s work: 1) the relatively seamless implementation of a massive Management Information System, and 2) the development of a supportive and sustainable community for Banner 9 users. The team included: **Arjun Bastola**, Banner Support Specialist; **Mike Bauer**, Applications Programmer; **Robert “Bob” Brown**, Banner Systems Analyst; **Sandra Cohen**, Data Processing Programmer; **Jeffrey Delos Santos**, Systems Administrator; **Robin Keller**, Director of Applications; **Purvi Parekh**, Systems Analyst; **Jeffery Rutkowski**, Data Processing Programmer; and **Pratik Surti**, Applications Programmer. **Bastola, Cohen, Delos Santos, Keller, Parekh, and Surti** are alumni of the College.

More about the Ramapo College President's Staff Recognition Awards Program is available at www.Ramapo.edu/president

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Ramapo College of New Jersey is the state's premier public liberal arts college and is committed to academic excellence through interdisciplinary and experiential learning, and international and intercultural understanding. The College is ranked #1 among New Jersey public institutions by College Choice, and is recognized as a top college by *U.S. News & World Report*, *Kiplinger's*, Princeton Review and *Money* magazine, among others. Ramapo College is also distinguished as a Career Development College of Distinction by CollegesofDistinction.com, boasts the best campus housing in New Jersey on Niche.com, and is designated a "Military Friendly College" in Victoria Media's *Guide to Military Friendly Schools*.

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.