



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
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Ramapo College Dean of Students Melissa Van Der Wall Honored by YWCA of Northern New Jersey

MAHWAH, N.J. – Ramapo College’s dean of students Melissa Van Der Wall was among those honored recently by the YWCA of Northern New Jersey during its annual Tribute to Women of Influence ceremony.

“I am honored to be included in this cohort of amazing women. I accept this award as a symbol of the important work of my colleagues and the many people at Ramapo who have shared in our vision to mobilize meaning around some of the College’s, the nation’s and the world’s most important social issues,” said Van Der Wall. “I am lucky to be a part of this empowering and positive energy.”

Van Der Wall has served as dean of students at the College since 2015. She is responsible for creating and maintaining a safe, healthy and supportive campus environment for the College’s 6,000-plus students. As second in charge of the Division of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, she is a campus leader and mentor to students and staff alike. She has developed a vibrant, resourceful and inclusive community within her direct areas of supervision, which include Residence Life, Student Conduct, Specialized Services, Violence Prevention, Health and Counseling Services, and the Center for Student Involvement, which includes Student Activities, the Women’s Center and LGBTQ Services, Civic Engagement, Fraternity and Sorority Life, Commuter Affairs and Faith and Spirituality Services.

At present, Van Der Wall co-chairs the Culture of Respect Collective and, as a member, the College continues to affirm its commitment to addressing campus sexual violence. The undertaking is an ambitious two-year self-assessment aimed at targeted organizational change to assess and make recommendations to enhance the College’s efforts toward eradicating sexual violence.

“Melissa's work as Ramapo College's dean of students and previously as our director of affirmative action has always centered around doing what is right and just. In particular, her leadership of programs aimed at sexual violence prevention, advancing an inclusive campus climate, and fostering student leadership continue to be impressive,” said Ramapo College President Peter P. Mercer. “Add to all of this Melissa's incredible work ethic, expertise, and unwavering dry sense of humor, and you have a truly compelling woman of influence.”

Van Der Wall earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice with a minor in sociology and a master's degree in public administration, both from Seton Hall University. She is a doctoral candidate at Rowan University.

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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, data science, 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, Data Science, Educational Technology, Educational Leadership, Nursing, Social Work and Special Education.