



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Office of Marketing and Communications
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Ramapo College Student Takes Top News Writing Award in State Press Contest

MAHWAH, N.J. – Ramapo College student Kimberlee Bongard '20 received the first-place award in the Best News Writing category in the 2019-2020 New Jersey College Newspaper Contest held annually by the New Jersey Collegiate Press Association. The contest, sponsored by the New Jersey Press Foundation, is open to all four-year college and university student-run newspapers in the state.

Kimberlee's article, "Students reflect on violence following hate crime in Jersey City," was published in the campus newspaper, *The Ramapo News*, on December 11, 2019. Second place in the News Writing category went to a student at Princeton University.

"It's an honor to be recognized by the New Jersey Press Foundation," said Kimberlee, who serves as editor-in-chief of *The Ramapo News*. "And I'm honored that my article received a first-place award by a team of judges made up of professional New Jersey reporters and editors who have worked in the field."

Kimberlee is majoring in communication arts with a concentration in journalism and a minor in music. She chose the topic of her article after the much-publicized hate crime shooting that targeted Jewish members of the Hudson County city, resulting in four deaths including a Jersey City police officer.

"Knowing that hate crimes against religious communities are often under-covered in the media, and that the Jersey City shooting was in such close proximity to Ramapo College made *The Ramapo News* believe it was an important story to cover," Kimberlee said. "The story I wrote differs from other media coverage because it focuses on the perspective of college students who are living in a world where gun violence is so prevalent."

Ramapo professor of journalism Edna Negrón said she has taught Kimberlee in several courses. “Kimberlee is an enterprising reporter who understands the importance of community journalism and its role in keeping the public informed and engaged about what is happening in the world. She reports on social issues and underreported groups, and makes the news relevant to young readers,” Negrón said.

Kimberlee added that she was thankful for the guidance from the newspaper’s technical advisor Dan Sforza when this article was published. “In advising our work, he encourages our staff to write articles that localize major news events to the Ramapo College community. With this mindset, the quality of journalism we produce is relevant and valuable to our readers,” she said.

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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.