



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Office of Institutional Advancement
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State Awards \$283K to Ramapo College to Enhance Inclusive Learning

MAHWAH, N.J. – Fostering inclusive learning environments will be the priority as Ramapo College embarks on new initiatives at the start of its new academic year. The State awarded Ramapo \$283,000 through its new Opportunity Meets Innovation Challenge (OMIC), a grant program aimed at bolstering the long-term resiliency of colleges and universities, especially those affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to a press release by New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy and Secretary of Higher Education Brian Bridges, institutions who receive funding will “implement vetted best practices that increase college completion, address barriers to student success, and develop sustainable systemic reforms.”

The funding awarded to Ramapo is earmarked for initiatives that support the priorities of the [State Plan for Higher Education](#) and advance the College’s efforts to grow and sustain a diverse and inclusive community. “This grant program was thoughtfully launched by the state to help address the challenges confronting many of our traditionally underrepresented and first generation students,” said Ramapo College President Cindy Jebb. “With this funding, Ramapo College is positioned to cultivate an increasingly inclusive learning environment that, founded on empathy, provides our students with supports and services that take into account their unique and varied lived experiences.”

The grant funds will support the public College’s establishment of a multicultural center, expansion of counseling supports, and enhancements to trainings, programs, and resources designed to foster an inclusive learning environment. Ramapo’s Chief Equity and Diversity Officer, Nicole Morgan Agard, shared, “I am excited about the additional programs and initiatives that will be implemented with the funds from the OMIC grant. I am proud of the

College's commitment to diversity and inclusion on campus and for continuing to acknowledge and embrace all individuals for their unique contributions and perspectives."

Ramapo's awarded initiatives include the following:

Establishment of a Multicultural Center

The College will establish a multicultural center on its campus. The newly established Multicultural Center Committee, comprised of students, faculty, staff, and representatives from the College's Roukema Center for International Education and the Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Compliance, will work in tandem with student clubs and organizations to create and facilitate multicultural programming. Funding from the grant will be used to attract guest presenters and performers, and to support related student activities.

Expand Counseling Supports

The College will employ an additional mental health professional staff member, whose energies will focus on supporting first-generation and underrepresented minority students. In addition, Ramapo's Counseling Center staff will undergo training related to counseling and supports for transgender students.

Celebrate Traditionally Underrepresented Students

Through inclusive campaigns, the College's marketing team will celebrate underrepresented minority, LGBTQ+, and first-generation students, as well as promote the programs and initiatives implemented by the College to support these students. Similar efforts will be advanced to create customized, relevant, and targeted virtual orientation content for student groups including those enrolled in Ramapo's 3+1 academic program options at several New Jersey community colleges.

Enhance Training

Enhancements to the College's diversity and cultural competence training will be advanced for all first-year students.

Facilitate Inclusive Reporting

The College will upgrade its information records system to include non-binary gender options. The upgrade will allow Ramapo to convert all current records and to build new records to reflect different personal options, as needed.

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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; is recognized as the state's top

college on the list of Best Disability Schools by *Great Value Colleges*; was named one of the 50 Most Beautiful College Campuses in America by *CondeNast Traveler*; 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, Creative Music Technology, Data Science, Educational Technology, Educational Leadership, Nursing, Social Work and Special Education, as well as a post-master's Doctor of Nursing Practice.