



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Office of Institutional Advancement
Press Release
April 22, 2022

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Ramapo College student awarded prestigious Boren Fellowship to study Bahasa Indonesian language

MAHWAH, N.J. – After tossing his cap at graduation in a few weeks, Ramapo College student Patrick Centeno will be embarking on a multi-leg journey that will take him first to the Midwest and then halfway around the globe to further his studies with the goal of pursuing a career in U.S. Department of State.

Patrick, an International Studies major, received a prestigious [Boren Fellowship](#) and will be a participant of the Indonesia Flagship Language Initiative (IFLI), administered by the American Councils for International Education. He is the first Ramapo College student to receive the award.

“Patrick’s Boren Award to Indonesia is so exciting, particularly in an era of growing strategic and economic vitality of the Indo-Pacific region,” said Dean Chen, Professor of Political Science at Ramapo. “We are really proud of his achievement in receiving this prestigious recognition.”

Patrick will study the Indonesian language – Bahasa Indonesia – this summer at the University of Wisconsin-Madison with the Southeast Asian Studies Institute. Then, from mid-August through December, he will be immersed in the language and culture of the country at the University of Malang, in Indonesia.

“It is one thing to learn about a culture and its language, but another thing to fully experience the culture and practice the language in the home country,” said

Patrick, who also is earning a minor in Anthropology. “This will certainly be a transformative experience for me as well as a chance to do some real field work.”

Boren Awards, funded by the National Security Education Program (NSEP) as part of the U.S. Department of Defense, focus on geographic areas, languages and fields of study deemed critical to U.S. national security. There are awards available to support current undergraduate students (scholarships) and graduate students (fellowships). The awards bear the name of former Oklahoma politician David L. Boren, primary author of the legislation that created the NSEP. Preference is given to students who are studying less commonly taught languages, or who plan to study in world regions that are usually underrepresented in study abroad and are critical to U.S. foreign interests. IFLI is a special initiative of the Boren Awards. Participants in the program also fulfill a [public service requirement](#).

In November 2021, Patrick was among a select group of student delegates who attended the 72nd Student Conference on U.S. Affairs, held at West Point Military Academy. Last summer, he held an internship position with NESAs (Near East South Asia) Center at the U.S. Department of Defense regional center in Fort McNair, Washington, D.C. NESAs focus on enhancing security cooperation between the United States and the Near East and South Asia region.

Patrick said he is planning to incorporate his collective experiences to pursue a “mission-based career” in an international setting. “I feel this is the direction for me,” he said. Currently he serves as President of Sigma Iota Rho (Honor Society for International Studies), and is Treasurer of Phi Kappa Sigma, Delta Omicron Chapter at Ramapo. He also served as the SGA Liaison with the Roukema Center for International Education.

Students can learn about undergraduate and post-graduation prestigious awards and scholarships through contact with the College’s [Office of Prestigious Awards and Scholarships](#) or the [Roukema Center for International Education](#).

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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, Applied Mathematics, Business Administration, Contemporary Instructional Design, Computer Science, Creative Music Technology, Data Science, Educational Leadership, Nursing, Social Work and Special Education, as well as a Doctor of Nursing Practice.