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Ramapo College Attracts Renowned Educator as New Chief Academic Officer

MAHWAH, NEW JERSEY – Ramapo College of New Jersey has named a renowned educator and scholar as its new chief academic officer, the Mahwah-based college announced.

Dr. Michael J. Middleton will step into the role of Provost and Vice President for Teaching, Learning and Growth with Ramapo College in May. Middleton brings a wealth of experience, perspective, and expertise to the state’s preeminent liberal arts college. He will join Ramapo from Hunter College, City University of New York, where he is the Klara and Larry Silverstein Dean of the School of Education and Professor of Educational Foundations. The recipient of multiple teaching excellence awards, Middleton has also secured millions of dollars in grant support from the National Science Foundation for successful efforts related to student motivation and persistence.

“As Ramapo ascends to serve as a national exemplar for public higher education, it is exciting to bring Dr. Middleton– an inspiring educator, research scientist, and leader– on to our leadership team,” said Cindy Jebb, president of Ramapo College. “We look forward to welcoming Dr. Middleton to Ramapo at such a consequential time as we embark on a bold new strategic plan and as the outcomes of a Ramapo College education grow increasingly synonymous with the development of responsible, ethical, and successful leaders across all sectors.”

Middleton has also enjoyed administrative and faculty roles with the University of Massachusetts Boston, Harvard University, University of New Hampshire, and George Mason University. Throughout his career he has also been tapped by national organizations including the American Psychological Association, the Carnegie Foundation, and the American Educational Research Association. His educational background includes: Ph.D. in Combined Program in Education and Psychology, University of Michigan; Ed.M, Human Development and Psychology, Harvard University; and A.B., Psychology, Cum Laude, Harvard College.

“What most attracted me to Ramapo is the emphasis on leader development, student success, and the liberal arts as an engine for personal, professional, and civic growth,” Middleton said. Co-author of *Motivation to Learn: Transforming Classroom Culture to Support Student Achievement*, Middleton’s

research has focused on cultivating student achievement and teacher effectiveness by leveraging student motivation and learning strategies, and building classroom community. As part of his academic leadership while at Hunter, Middleton helped spearhead the formation of a Center for Social Emotional Learning, initiated programming on race and equity for faculty, staff and students, and advanced a team to secure grant funding as a Hispanic Serving Institute to examine the first year experience for STEM majors.

Middleton joins Ramapo College on the heels of the institution receiving regional and national recognition for affordability, return on investment, quality, and student success. Graduation and retention rates of Ramapo students exceed state and national averages and, as just one of many markers of student success, the superior rates are made possible by the College's provision of impactful mentorship and student well-being supports, award-winning advisement practices, hands-on learning, and a range of opportunities for service and leadership development. Ramapo was recently recognized by *U.S. News and World Report* as a top institution in the Best Regional Universities North category, being named as one of only two New Jersey public institutions listed in the top 10, and ascending several spots to the #28 ranking among all schools in the same region. In addition, Ramapo College is one of only two New Jersey programs among 25 institutions in the Regional Public Universities North category to earn a Best Undergraduate Teaching designation, which acknowledges the College's faculty and administrators' commitment to teaching undergraduate students in a high-quality manner.

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About Ramapo College

Ramapo College of New Jersey (RCNJ) develops ethical leaders who serve as change agents across all sectors. The College's unique interdisciplinary academic structure, its liberal arts core, its size (approximately 5,500 students), and its setting in the foothills of the Ramapo Mountains on the New Jersey/New York border provide an optimal environment for individualized, student-centered learning and leadership development. RCNJ's designation as "New Jersey's Public Liberal Arts College" by the State legislature is the foundation from which the College's commitment to an accessible and transformative undergraduate and graduate education is realized.

Graduation and retention rates of RCNJ students exceed national averages and, as just one of many markers of student success, the superior rates are made possible by the College's provision of impactful mentorship and student well-being supports, hands-on learning, and a range of opportunities for service and leadership development. In fact, Ramapo is ranked #1 among New Jersey public institutions by *College Choice* and is recognized as the State's top college on the list of Best Disability Schools by *Great Value Colleges*. Further commendations include designation as: a "Military Friendly College" in *Viqtory Media's Guide to Military Friendly Schools*, and as a leading college by *U.S. News & World Report*, *Kiplinger's*, *Princeton Review*, and *Money Magazine*, among others.

Established in 1969, *CondeNast Traveler* named Ramapo as one of the 50 Most Beautiful College Campuses in America. The barrier-free campus occupies 300 acres and is home to 52 bachelor's degrees programs spanning the arts, business, data science, humanities, education, nursing, social work, social

sciences, and the sciences. In addition, the College 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. Every degree program is designed and delivered through the collaborative and interdisciplinary efforts of student-centered faculty scholars and staff who are committed to serving the public good through the delivery of an academically rigorous, inclusive, and transformative collegiate experience.

Distinguished as a Career Development College of Distinction by *CollegesofDistinction.com*, every student at Ramapo is enrolled in the College's unique and award-winning Pathways Program which equips and empowers students, across the continuum of their student career, to secure internships, pursue graduate/professional school, and/or enter/re-enter the job market. As a result, Ramapo College's over 40,000 alumni are confident, intellectually curious, self-aware, and humble people who are highly sought after and who make a positive impact at local, national, and global levels. As community leaders, engaged citizens, and professional colleagues, Ramapo College alumni serve as the change agents necessary to innovate, problem solve, and elevate the human condition in NJ and beyond.