



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 3, 2023

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Ramapo College Awarded \$1.3 Million in Federal Funding to Support Underrepresented Students



MAHWAH, N.J. – Ramapo College of New Jersey has been awarded the prestigious Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement (McNair) grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The \$1.3 million in federal funding, distributed over five years, will go toward readying 25 academically talented low-income, first-generation and underrepresented minority STEM students in pursuit of a doctoral degree.

The McNair program at Ramapo College will provide one-on-one academic counseling, faculty-guided peer tutoring, research and internship opportunities, and support in the application process for post-baccalaureate programs, which includes workshops for the graduate school application process, standardized test preparation, and graduate program tours. "The McNair grant is the missing piece of our outreach programs. The Ramapo STEM Center supports programs for math and science students, the college, and the community. This grant helps bridge the achievement gap for STEM students from the time they are in high school all the way through their Ph.D.," shared Dr. Sandra Suarez, director of the Ramapo College STEM Center, [Upward Bound Math Science](#), and who will also direct the McNair program at Ramapo.

The grant enables Ramapo to expand existing support for economically disadvantaged and underrepresented students. In 2022, the College opened the [First-Generation Student Center](#), which, in part, supports students in navigating and accessing resources to alleviate institutional barriers. This fall, the College enrolled its most diverse class in history. More than 46% of first-year students identified as first-generation and 48% as non-White students.

"We are thrilled to receive the McNair grant, as it reflects the dedication of our faculty, staff and students to inclusive excellence. Ramapo has a long-standing tradition of providing opportunities for all students to excel academically and pursue their dreams," said Ramapo



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College Provost and Vice President of Teaching and Learning Dr. Michael Middleton. “The grant will allow us to build on that legacy and empower even more students to reach their full potential.”

Ramapo College is one of fewer than 200 institutions nationwide to be part of the McNair program. McNair is one of a cluster of eight federal programs collectively known as TRIO that are designed primarily to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, with the ultimate goal of helping them to overcome economic, social, academic and cultural barriers to higher education. In addition to McNair, Ramapo is also a participant in two other TRIO programs: Upward Bound Math Science and Student Support Services, creating a pipeline of support for students from high school into college, and preparing them for success beyond graduation.

The McNair program is named after Ronald E. McNair, who was an American astronaut and physicist. He was the second Black astronaut to fly in space, and perished with his heroic flight crew in the 1986 space shuttle Challenger explosion.

To learn more about Ramapo College, visit ramapo.edu.

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ABOUT RAMAPO COLLEGE

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 comprehensive college is situated among the beautiful Ramapo Mountains, is within commuting distance to New York City, was named one of the 50 Most Beautiful College Campuses in America by *CondéNast Traveler*, and boasts the best on-campus housing in New Jersey per Niche.com. 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.