I. Approval of March 10, 2021 Minutes

President Mercer introduced the minutes. He asked if there were any needed revisions. There were none. D. Sacristan moved and J. Ferraro seconded approval of the minutes. The minutes were approved.

II. President’s Report

President Mercer introduced the presentation and discussion, noting that in recent months, he has been pleased to see greater engagement from PAC members on a range of topics.

III. Presentation and Discussion: "The Competitive Landscape Impacting Ramapo College: Market Factors, State Policy, and Trends in HE" (S. Gaulden, P. O’Connor, C. Romano)

President Mercer, S. Gaulden, C. Romano and P. O’Connor led discussion noting that competition in the higher education sector continues to grow more fierce. COVID-19 has exacerbated this reality.

Market factors impacting enrollment across the sector include slowed growth and decline in the number of US High School graduates (particularly in the Northeast), the continued outmigration of NJ students who pursue higher education in other states, and a notable amount of students who are choosing to take a gap year or a semester or two off until campus life “returns to normal.” Significant troubling declines in community college enrollment have also been realized.

State policy for higher education is also placing heightened pressure on the sector and on Ramapo. Outcomes based funding allocation models are largely volume driven which is not advantageous for a smaller college like Ramapo. The Garden State Guarantee, a newly proposed program for FY ‘22 which would provide “free tuition” for two years to students whose income is < $65K and choose to attend a four-year public institution, requires a freeze of the four-year tuition rate for the student once enrolled. Known as cohort pricing, this exerts additional pressure on Ramapo’s resources and will exponentially increase the price of education for future students unless significant increases in State support are provided.

In addition, a range of unfunded mandates and regulatory restrictions continue to impose pressure on the sector as do new processes for program approvals. Approval processes now require analysis of duplication with comparable programs in the state and an expectation to collaborate across institutions for program delivery. In anticipation of these changes, the College hosted a special meeting of the Board to approve two new academic programs.

The more prolific programmatic trends in higher education include a focus on shorter time to completion, scaffolding structures/offerings, enterprise-based workforce training, competency-
based education, hybrid learning permanency, and growing demand for online education. It was noted that how Ramapo prepares for and embraces or navigates these market factors, public policies, and trends, will play a large part in its capacity to survive or thrive in the coming decade.

Discussion ensued among PAC members regarding the impacts of these factors, policies, and trends. Members specifically commented on such concepts as year-round program design, initiatives that partner with employers, and the permanent infusion of hybrid and varied learning modalities.

IV. Roundtable: Overview of the Presidential Transition Team

Note: PAC members on the Transition Team include: N. Choudhury, J. Ferraro, A. Patel, P. O’Connor, B. Williams-Goldstein

The Presidential Transition Team, comprised of students, faculty, staff, trustees, and administration is responsible for collaborating to develop a draft 12-month calendar inclusive of a series of thoughtful and strategic orientations and opportunities for President-elect Jebb (and her family, as appropriate); and with providing support in managing President Mercer and Dr. Ehler-Mercer’s departure. Updates on the Team’s work can be accessed at [www.ramapo.edu/president-elect/transition-team/](http://www.ramapo.edu/president-elect/transition-team/). A survey will be distributed in April to solicit input from the campus at large.

V. PAC Annual Self-Assessment (please complete by April 9)

PAC members were reminded to complete the self-assessment.

VI. New Business

There was no new business.