

RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

# COMPREHENSIVE ACADEMIC PLAN



2023-2029



RAMAPO  
COLLEGE  
OF NEW JERSEY

# Ramapo College Comprehensive Academic Plan

---

2023-2029

## Executive Summary

Under Pres. Cindy Jebb's leadership, the Ramapo community came together during 2021-23 to form the **Boldly Ascending** strategic plan. Based on the core principles of this plan, a primarily faculty task force was charged with creating a Comprehensive Academic Plan for the College to strengthen the central mission of Teaching and Learning with support across the community. Whereas academic units across campus are frequently involved in their own plans for self-improvement including 5 year reviews, the CAP moves the Campus forward by serving as a holistic plan to advance teaching, learning, research, scholarship and creative activity and meet the promise of Boldly Ascending. With innovation at its core, and in consideration of our resources as a public institution, the plan provides a high-level overview of guiding principles that then filter into objectives and tasks that guide future action. As such, a budget process must be developed to ensure resources are allocated in support of initiatives reflective of the outlined values and goals of the CAP to both invest in new initiatives and sustain funding to support Teaching and Learning Core fully functioning. Furthermore, the plan leverages Ramapo's commitment to shared governance as we work collaboratively to meet our mission. In other words, this is a plan that is formed from ideas across the Teaching and Learning Core and its success is dependent on faculty and staff committing to its enactment and its future evolution.

## Background and Mission

Ramapo College is designated as "New Jersey's Public Liberal Arts College" with responsibility for ensuring access and affordability to a liberal arts education for the citizens of the state. This includes the unique, comprehensive nature of the academic offerings of the College, in which professional programs, drawing on the Liberal Arts foundation, play an important role, and current and future graduate programs that build upon this tradition. Since its inception, Ramapo has focused on interdisciplinary, intercultural, global and experiential education as its core. From the beginning, the faculty-student relationship has been centered by offering tutorial classes, a commitment to small class size, valuing faculty-student research, which is why, for over 50 years, the core learning principles and primacy of the faculty-student relationship in the learning process have shaped the student experience at Ramapo.

With recent shifts in demographics, resources, technology and competition in higher education, maintaining a commitment to the Ramapo Experience necessitates thoughtful, shared planning. In Fall 2022, following the completion of Ramapo's strategic plan Boldly Ascending, Interim Provost Susan Gauden charged a Task Force to develop an Academic Master Plan, subsequently renamed Comprehensive Academic Plan (CAP). Her charge stated:

**The AMPTF is charged to undertake a data informed, disciplined, inclusive, and deliberative process in order to draft the College's Academic Master Plan, which must align with Ramapo's Mission and Values Statements.**

The overarching goal of the Academic Master Plan is to serve as an actionable blueprint for optimally aligning and delivering Ramapo's existing and to-be-developed academic programs and courses, the Teaching & Learning Core's administrative structure and organization, and resource allocation within the Core with our values, priorities, and vision for the future. Recommendations put forth by the AMPTF must be compatible with the College's Strategic Plan and the Facilities Master Plan and align with the College's mission and values, as well as the Ramapo College experience promised to prospective and current students.

# Process

Embedded in the process of forming Boldly Ascending was faculty participation and thoughtful partnering across the College. Building on that commitment to widespread participation as a crucial aspect of the CAP development process, here we describe the collaborative and iterative process that has led to this plan.

Beginning with the charge cited above, the CAP Task Force engaged faculty in a series of robust discussions to distill, through a process of feedback and revision, our essential core values. This process reaffirmed our collective value of a **liberal arts education** delivered through both an undergraduate and graduate curriculum that supports experiential, intercultural, global, and interdisciplinary learning grounded in **the faculty-student relationship**. The report was also developed mindful of the institutional strategic plan **Boldly Ascending** and the mission statements of other areas of the College that support student development through **equity, diversity and inclusion, co-curricular activities, residential life, student success** and **well-being** and to inform the forthcoming facilities master plan. The CAP Task Force used the ideas and visions presented to them to draft an initial plan that was shared with faculty in April 2023 for further feedback leading to the current plan.

In assuming the role of Provost in Spring 2023, Michael Middleton reaffirmed the College's commitment to a Comprehensive Academic Plan. In working closely with faculty representatives and members of the task force to review the plan's draft and input from across the College, he affirmed:



*Building on our Boldly Ascending strategic plan for Ramapo College, this Comprehensive Academic Plan (CAP) embraces the transformative power of a liberal arts education as rooted in our history and as a roadmap for our future. We base this plan on our conception of the Ramapo Experience – our commitment to a shared set of values and structures that drive curriculum and promote the exposure to and integration of knowledge across disciplines in order to prepare our students for life and career in a rapidly evolving world. We do this by cultivating their intellectual curiosity, critical thinking skills and capacity for interdisciplinary engagement. Grounded in our shared belief that education should transcend disciplinary boundaries, our comprehensive academic plan is rooted in the principles of liberal arts, experiential learning, and interdisciplinarity. Through an innovative and inclusive curriculum, enriched by diverse perspectives and immersive experiences, we empower our students to become agile, empathic leaders who can navigate complex local and global challenges and shape a brighter future for themselves and society. This plan outlines a student experience that anchors their learning through a supported, exploratory first year, a concentrated focus from which to experience the liberal arts, and a capstone experience as well as the structural and organizational changes needed to support that distinctive experience.*

**-- Provost Michael Middleton**

With this affirmation of the purpose and process of their work, the CAP Task Force has used the information provided in campus-wide discussions and the crucial input of our faculty engaged in both undergraduate and graduate programs during the process to draft and develop this plan for our community.

The plan starts with an overview of the key terms that structure the committee's findings and recommendations for action.

# Structure of the CAP

**Core Values.** Core Values are value statements that identify important goals of the academic mission of our college and serve as fundamental features of our organizational design. They are touch points for our reference as we make organizational decisions, and drive direct action through our objectives. The CAP Task Force focused on four Core Values to guide the recommended actions resulting from this plan.

**Strategic Goals.** Based on a Core Value, a strategic goal is the outcome we seek to achieve at the end of the CAP's timeline.

**Objectives.** For each Core Value, we have created corresponding objectives that move the shared value and strategic goal into action. We hope that each objective will help us understand and challenge existing assumptions and practices, define challenges and lead to solutions and innovation. While we have paired the objectives with a Core Value, we realize that the objectives may serve multiple Core Values.

**Tasks.** While our Core Values provide a path for a shared vision and objectives define problems and solutions, the tasks we recommend are the specific actions that serve to implement the plan. As with objectives, our tasks are aligned with a Core Value and objective but pragmatically serve several purposes when looking at the plan as a whole.

**Executing the Plan.** We recognize the importance of this document to be a dynamic plan for the academic affairs of the College. An Implementation Team will be created and small groups will be responsible for advancing each task, naming the governance process or decision-maker, and estimating a timeline for the work and completion of the task, the plan can be used as an on-going guide or reference for our shared work.



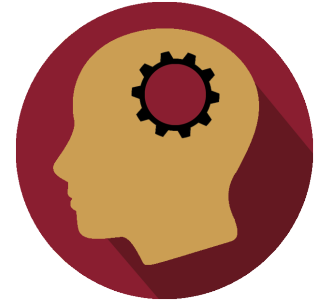
## Core Values

Core Values are value statements that identify important goals of the academic mission.



## Strategic Goals

Based on a Core Value, a strategic goal is the outcome we seek to achieve at the end of the CAP's timeline.



## Objectives

For each Core Value, we have created corresponding objectives that move the shared value and strategic goal into action.

# Thank You

This process was only possible with the meaningful work of the Comprehensive Academic Plan Task Force.

## Task Force Co-Chairs

**Stephanie Sarabia**, Associate Professor Social Work

**Ken Goldstein**, Dean of Contemporary Arts

## Task Force Members:

**Raj Adhikari**, Associate Director of International Students' and Scholars' Services

**Bibhu Bhatta**, Student Government Association Representative

**Kathy Burke**, Assistant Dean of Nursing

**Juan Cabrera**, Associate Professor of Finance

**Kelly Dolak**, Associate Professor of Television Production

**Jeff Ellsworth**, Assistant Professor of Law and Society

**Cathy Hajo**, Editor and Director of Jane Addams Papers Project

**Susan Hangen**, Dean of Humanities and Global Studies

**Emily Leskinen**, Associate Professor of Social Science

**Sam Mustafa**, Professor of History

**David Oh**, Professor of Communication Arts

**Thierry Rakotobe-Joel**, Associate Professor of Management

**Ruma Sen**, Professor of Communication

**Liz Siecke**, Librarian

**Osei Tweneboah**, Assistant Professor of Data Science



# Comprehensive Academic Plan Outline

## Core Value 1:

### Center the Shared Work of Faculty and Students.

**Strategic Goal:** To strengthen and support the work of faculty and students as the center of teaching and learning at Ramapo, based on faculty expertise and actively unlocking the potential of instruction and mentoring.

**Objective 1.A.** Advance a defined, shared academic experience for Ramapo students that is intentionally sequenced to move learning from exploration to integration and broad mastery of knowledge.

**Objective 1.B:** Affirm our liberal arts mission by embedding experiences and knowledge that enact core values of interdisciplinary, intercultural, global, and experiential learning.

**Objective 1.C.:** Update General Education program, including courses, category outcomes and course alignment within each category to align with the vision of the CAP.

**Objective 1.D.:** Promote student autonomy and motivation for interdisciplinary exploration





## Core Value 2:

### Diversity and Inclusion Integration.

**Strategic Goal:** To develop a campus culture inclusive of, and enriched by, people of diverse backgrounds and identities who bring their experiences and perspectives.

**Objective 2.A.:** Actively create curricular and co-curricular programs that develop and nurture inclusivity and an appreciation for the diversity of lived experiences, identities, and voices in our community.

**Objective 2.B.:** Create academic experiences that remove barriers to access for all community members.

**Objective 2.C.:** Cultivate a faculty and staff that reflect the diversity of our student body, the communities we serve, and the evolving demographics of New Jersey.

**Objective 2.D.:** Adapt the daily academic schedule to serve the needs and well-being of our diverse community

## Core Value 3:

**Academic structures and programs that evolve but continue to reflect our identity as a Liberal Arts College and prioritizes the greater good of our community.**

**Strategic Goals:** Better serve our students by providing a dynamic, responsive academic program that reflects our capacity for partnership and collaboration, adapts to disciplinary advances, increasing competition, changing social and technological circumstances in the world, optimizes the use of our public resources, and meets the evolving needs of our local and global communities.

**Objective 3.A.:** Revise academic programs, structures and processes to be in service of students' Ramapo Experience – supporting teaching and learning, faculty research, scholarship and creative activity, curricular innovation -- and to maintain the sustainability of the college through efficiency, transparency, entrepreneurship, and nimbleness.

**Objective 3.B.:** Create organizational structures that are nimble and responsive to the shifts in our disciplines, to our knowledge of teaching and learning, to the challenges facing society and to our need to work effectively together.

**Objective 3.C.:** Embed and integrate Ramapo College as the state's public liberal arts college into the continuum of public education in New Jersey from grades K-12 through undergraduate, graduate, and professional education programs to better serve the public good.





## Core Value 4:

### Be a culture of continuous learning.

**Strategic Goal:** Cultivate an approach to our work that enriches the faculty-student experience through continuous reflection and growth, in alignment with this plan and Boldly Ascending.

**Objective 4.A.:** Support faculty professional development, including instruction, curriculum development, research, scholarship and creative activity, and service.

**Objective 4.B.:** Ensure professional development is advancing the goals of Boldly Ascending and CAP.

**Objective 4.C.:** Support Academic Programs and faculty in the necessary adjustments needed to meet the evolving needs of students.

