

Task Force on Conveners and Convening Groups

Charge Date: April 15, 2024

Background: The Comprehensive Academic Plan (CAP) for Ramapo College has an objective to 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. One way this objective can be realized is to examine and revise the convening group and convener model. This task force is established to review and report recommendations to the Provost on convening group purpose as an organizational structure, program leadership, convener and faculty responsibilities for program maintenance and leadership. The task force may decide to provide suggestions for criteria for compensation and a review process for regular re-evaluation of the proposed model. The insights gained from this work will help inform decisions and aims at optimizing the effectiveness of our program structure.

Charge: The task force on Conveners and Convening groups is charged with the following responsibilities:

1. Review existing documents and data (e.g., CAP task force meeting notes, 2007 definition of conveners, etc.) to inform the committee's work.
2. Convening Group Landscape: Review the current structure of convening groups at Ramapo, including the number of convening groups, their sizes, the distribution across disciplines and Schools. Assess the rationale behind the current configuration and its alignment with the college's mission and strategic goal.
3. Conveners Role and Responsibilities. Examine the roles and responsibilities of conveners in academic programs and leadership. Evaluate the extent to which conveners contribute to the overall success of the academic programs and the college as a whole.
4. Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Investigate opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and the potential benefits of restructuring or realigning convening groups to enhance interdisciplinary initiatives or to create an alternate structure

for oversight of interdisciplinary programs. Consider best practices from other institutions in promoting collaboration across disciplines.

5. Leadership Development: Assess the existing mechanism for leadership development and succession planning for conveners. Propose strategies to ensure a pipeline of effective leaders capable of advancing the college's academic mission.
6. Role of Faculty Service in Convening Groups: Examine faculty service distribution within convening groups and evaluate the allocation of resources to determine the balance of responsibilities for conveners and for faculty. Identify any imbalances or inefficiencies and propose recommendations for optimizing faculty resources to enhance academic experience.
7. Student Experience and Success: Aligning with other areas of the CAP, investigate the impact of convening group structure on the student experience, academic success and overall satisfaction. Consider how other strategies detailed in the CAP can be implemented to improve coordination and communication within and between convening groups to enhance the Ramapo experience.
8. Stakeholder Input: Seek input from faculty, students, staff and relevant stakeholders through surveys, focus groups, or town hall meetings to ensure a comprehensive understanding of perspectives on the current convening group structure.
9. Benchmarking and Best Practice: Conduct benchmarking analysis to compare our convening group structure with departmental structure of peer institutions. Identify best practice and innovations in organization to inform potential recommendations.

Timeline: The Task Force is expected to complete its work by November 1, 2024 with regular progress reports and consultation with the Provost. The committee should plan to meet every other week throughout the faculty contract period to move the work forward.

Reporting. Submit a final report detailing the findings, recommendations and implementation plan to the Provost.

Members:

Co-Chair: Dean Susan Hangen – HGS

Co-Chair: Tim Haase – ASB

Ann LePore – CA

Kokila Kota – TAS

Emily Leskinen – SSHS

Tae Kwak – HGS

Jessica Steinheimer – Office of Student Success

Jenn Hicks-McGowan – POER