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**SCOPE OF REVIEW**

**TASK.** In December 2014, the President and Board of Trustees asked me to review the policies and practices related to public safety at Ramapo College of New Jersey. The primary question raised was how to prevent incidents of sexual assault on campus. Since it would be impossible to divorce sexual assault and other serious campus offenses from alcohol consumption, I have also reviewed policies and practices related to alcohol consumption on campus.

Ramapo College also retained D. Stafford & Associates to review Ramapo’s obligations under Title IX. ¹ Because of this, my report will not address Title IX issues. I also do not cover in depth the disciplinary processes used in sexual assault cases, because I strongly agree with D. Stafford’s recommendation to discontinue the current practice of using disciplinary review boards in sex assault matters. I support D. Stafford’s recommendation that a single, trained administrator be appointed to handle sexual assault allegations. ²

This report will focus on the three areas that I have identified as having the greatest need for reform:

I. Residence Life and Campus Culture
II. The Public Safety Department
III. Policies, Sanctions, and Discipline

**BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS.** In the course of my review I have examined the following information:

- 2014-2015 Student Handbook
- College policies and procedures related to sexual assault, public safety, resident life, and discipline
- Data on disciplinary procedures
- Data on violations of school policies by offense and residence hall
- Case files involving allegations of sexual misconduct
- Information on bystander training
- Fines and punishment structure related to violations of campus policies
- Information on Greek life
- The Stafford Report

I have conducted interviews with the following stakeholders in campus life:

- Students (a resident assistant, a member of student government, and a member of the school disciplinary review board)
- Dean of Students

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² Stafford Report, Recommendation One: Title IX Infrastructure, Student Conduct Process.
Throughout my interactions with Ramapo and its constituents, I have been deeply impressed by the commitment of the entire college community to providing a safe campus for its students. Indeed, the President of Ramapo reached out to me and to D. Stafford to review existing policies and practices and to make recommendations for improvement. This outreach came shortly after a serious sexual assault occurred on campus in November 2014. The seriousness with which the administration at Ramapo has taken this matter has been evident in the level of access that I have been provided. At all times throughout my review I have been given complete and full access to both people and information.

When reviews such as this occur, a temptation exists to focus only on the areas in need of further reform. Here, I would encourage a focus on the positive: it is unusual for a college to take such a deep and searching lens to itself to figure out how to do better. This, above all, should be encouraged and seen in the spirit for improvement with which it has come.

Moreover, since last fall Ramapo has undertaken a series of important and positive steps to improve campus safety. Though more needs to be done, there should be no question that the College has moved aggressively and thoughtfully to enhance student safety.

Ramapo presently has in place a number of strong policies and procedures to limit excessive student drinking, incentivize bystander intervention, and provide disciplinary mechanisms for student misconduct. The College also provides both sexual assault prevention and alcohol awareness programs. The safety and well-being of its students is clearly of paramount concern.

The primary goals of Ramapo’s policies and practices with respect to alcohol use, sexual assault awareness, and bystander intervention are threefold:

- Educate students
- Maximize campus safety
- Safeguard student health and well-being

These goals translate into policies and practices designed to:

- Prevent underage drinking
- Prevent excessive drinking by of-age students
- Promote a positive sense of community
- Provide a safe and secure campus
Supply housing for students to live on campus and interact respectfully and responsibly with one another

Provide public safety officers on campus

Process and adjudicate student infractions and misconduct

Ramapo is doing many things right. The leadership of Ramapo has demonstrated a commitment to taking the necessary steps to improve student safety and well-being on campus. Moreover, Ramapo is certainly not alone in facing these issues. Colleges and universities across the country have been evaluating their policies in light of numerous high profile news stories about sexual assault on campus.

Ramapo’s goals and the aims of its policies are commendable. In terms of written policies, Ramapo’s rules regarding alcohol consumption and student safety may be described as strict. Indeed, the majority of Ramapo’s students comply with these rules, thus enhancing the safety and security of the campus. Yet, the practices of the College, a number of which have arisen over the course of many years, are not fully aligned with its stated goals.

The safety of students on campus is affected not only by the letter of the College’s written policies, but also by how those are implemented through its public safety officers, resident assistant, disciplinary board members, and administration. The central challenge currently facing Ramapo is that, in practice, a campus culture has developed wherein large, alcohol-based parties are held in and around Ramapo’s residence halls. Although campus rules prohibit alcohol consumption by minors as well as large parties, the practice seems quite different, particularly in its “wet dorms” and especially in the housing complex known as the Village. There also appears to be a significant challenge surrounding Greek life on and off campus.

My review and recommendations below outline a number of areas to be considered for reform so that Ramapo can achieve its worthy goals in a consistent and effective manner. I recommend that the President, administrators, deans, public safety officials, and students meet to discuss and consider my review and recommendations. By realigning some of its practices with its policies and stated goals, Ramapo has an opportunity to improve student safety and well-being.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. RESIDENCE LIFE AND CAMPUS CULTURE

A. Dormitories

Many Ramapo students live on campus and the College allows alcohol in school residences for students 21 years old and over who reside with others of legal age. Consequently, on-campus alcohol consumption is permitted by the school.

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3 Ramapo College of New Jersey, Policy on Alcohol and Other Drugs, section on Alcohol in College Residence Halls (“Alcohol Policy”).
Two dormitories are designated “wet” for this purpose. These dormitories – Laurel and the Village – differ in at least two relevant ways. First, Laurel has only two floors on which alcohol is permitted, while alcohol is permitted throughout the Village.

Second, the dormitories have significantly different physical layouts. Laurel has a traditional dorm structure with a single point of entry. The Village, in contrast, is an open layout apartment community containing 22 three-story buildings with exterior stair and elevator access and enclosing three large, open outdoor quad spaces. As a result, it is very difficult to monitor alcohol consumption in the Village.

Parties at the Village often occur in dorm rooms and in the outdoor quad areas and, by many accounts, can involve 50-100 students. Because of its many points of access, underage students can easily attend the large parties that take place there. Presently, parties are not registered with the College and hosts are not required to sign anything affirming that alcohol will be dispensed in accordance with Ramapo’s policies. As a result, the College lacks information that would enable it to determine in advance how many public safety officers and resident assistant should be on duty. It also does not have the ability to direct enforcement efforts to the locations where parties are known to be occurring.

The Village’s physical layout presents a major challenge to controlling on-campus parties and underage alcohol consumption. Due to the limited number of officers on duty during evening hours, Public Safety generally does not intervene unless there is a problem. This means that written policies against large parties and underage and excessive drinking are infrequently and inconsistently enforced. Moreover, in practice, when a problem arises and public safety officers do intervene, students report inconsistent outcomes. At times they are allowed – by resident assistants or public safety officers – to leave a party with only a warning, while at other times all of the students present are written up for a disciplinary violation. Based on a policy at Ramapo that prohibits underage students from being in the “presence” of alcohol, underage students who attend a party where alcohol is being consumed can be disciplined, regardless of whether they are drinking.

Without significant changes, the College will struggle to deter underage, unlawful, and excessive drinking and large parties at the Village. Moreover, while the Village is unique in

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4 See Section II, below.
5 The school’s alcohol policy contains this “presence of alcohol” restriction in two places: “Presence in any living unit (room, suite or apartment) where an alcohol violation is taking place, even if not actually in possession of or consuming alcoholic beverages, will result in disciplinary action being taken” and “Persons who are present, within College Housing, where alcohol is being consumed by those over or under the age of 21 will be presumed to have been drinking or in possession of alcohol if Public Safety, OCAs, RAs or CAs are called to the scene,” Alcohol Policy, Alcohol in College Residence Halls.
6 Recent data provided by the Chief of Staff to the President of Ramapo, upon my request, on the number of alcohol violations and sexual assaults on campus in wet vs. dry dorms highlights this issue:
   - Laurel: 109 alcohol violations and two alleged sex assaults
   - The Village: 167 alcohol violations and one alleged sex assault
   - Pine: 129 alcohol violations and one alleged sex assault
many ways, many of the problems that exist there – such as an insufficient level of staffing of public safety officers and the limited role and time commitment of resident assistants – also exist in other student dormitories.

One important reform that Ramapo has already enacted is a change to its historic practice of not scheduling classes on Wednesday and Friday mornings, resulting in Tuesday and Thursday being significant “party” nights for students. The College has recently changed part of this practice and, beginning fall 2015, courses will be held on Wednesday mornings. While Thursday night will likely still present significant challenges, this change may alter the ingrained campus culture of students holding large parties on Tuesday nights.

**Recommendations | Dormitories**

- The College should seriously consider removing the designation of “wet” dormitory from the Village and establishing “wet” housing for of-age students in other on-campus residences that have single entrance points and, thus, the opportunity for greater monitoring of alcohol consumption and student activity.

- If the Village is maintained as a “wet” facility, a number of significant reforms to current practices must occur, including increasing levels of public safety officer staffing; requiring consistent enforcement of college policies against underage drinking, excessive drinking, and large parties; enforcing the prohibition against parties being held in the quad areas; requiring resident assistants to work additional hours and to conduct inspections of dormitories at random intervals during the night; requiring pre-registration of parties; and considering whether the physical location can be altered to allow for true enforcement of Ramapo policies.

- Install staff members from the Public Safety Department or Residence Life to monitor the front entrance points of the wet dorms on Tuesday and Thursday evenings or any other relevant times the College identifies from its data on alcohol violations.

- Require students to register parties where alcohol will be served. As part of the registration process, students should sign an understanding of the rules governing such gatherings (ending time is 11:00pm, food must be served, no underage drinking, party is subject to random checks by RAs, Public Safety, or other campus officials, etc.). Failure to register should be a serious offense for all residents of the room who are present during the party. Keeping a record of the party registrations will provide the College with an additional method to track who does, and does not, follow campus rules. Those who have not followed the policies and procedures should not be allowed to register for parties for a certain amount of time and until they’ve complied with additional requirements, as determined by the College.

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- Mackin (until this year the freshman dorm): 76 alcohol violations and three alleged sex assaults

Source: Alcohol Violations by Location May 1, 2013-May 6, 2015, Ramapo College of New Jersey.
B. Resident Assistants

Resident Assistants (RAs) play an important role on campus and have been designated as “first responders” for problems in student housing. This presents obvious challenges since RAs are simultaneously tasked with supporting peer students and with enforcing discipline against them.

Resident assistants are technically on call until 8:00am; however, numerous individuals indicated that, in practice, RAs cease monitoring the dormitories at midnight. The current practice is for RAs to conduct a final round at 11:00pm to enforce quiet hours. This presents challenges, as students know when the RAs will be coming around (and thus could temporarily cease prohibited activities for a short time at 11:00pm).

Because there are so few public safety officers on duty at night, when most campus parties take place, the responsibility for policing student behavior in the first instance has shifted to RAs. This first responder role isn’t always a natural fit, given that the primary purpose of the RA is to provide support to students living in on-campus housing.

Recommendations | Resident Assistants

In order to be effective in their roles, I recommend the following with respect to RAs:

- Define the separation of responsibility between RAs and the Public Safety Department and establish clear rules as to when Public Safety should be the first responder.
- Extend resident assistants’ active duty hours to coincide with the typical late night timing of student parties. Rather than doing an expected final round at 11:00pm – which students can alter their behavior to “pass” – require RAs to conduct rounds randomly between 10:00pm and 2:00 or 3:00am to monitor dormitory gatherings.
- Provide RAs with additional training in de-escalation and crisis intervention.
- Consider increasing the number of RAs in dorms where the most disciplinary issues arise.

C. Sexual Assault and Bystander Intervention Training

Currently, Ramapo provides two types of formal sexual assault prevention training to incoming students, one on bystander intervention and one on sexual assault awareness and prevention. Ramapo should continue its training efforts, but evaluate a variety of training models to ensure that the most effective, evidence-based curriculum is in place.

Green Dot Bystander Training. The Green Dot bystander training program, which consists of lectures, scenarios, and audience participation and was developed to increase intervention in sexual assaults in communities, is provided to first year students. Because

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7 Ramapo College of New Jersey, Office of Residence Life, “Guide to Community Living” (2013-2014) at 21 (quiet hours in effect Sunday through Thursday from 11:00pm to 8:00am).
the Green Dot program was neither designed for nor targeted to college students, there may be stronger bystander training curriculums available that focus specifically on issues and challenges faced by college students. Ramapo should seek to identify an alternative evidence-based curriculum created for colleges and require that training annually for all students.

Moreover, Ramapo places a great deal of responsibility on individual students to intercede when they witness problematic or criminal behavior. This presents challenges both because research has shown that many bystanders will not intervene (even when they are adults and not college-aged individuals) and, second, because Ramapo lacks a quick, easy, and confidential method of notifying administrators (resident assistants or Public Safety) when a problem exists.  

**Sexual Assault Training.** Ramapo distributes its sexual assault policy to students twice each year via email. First year students are also required to participate in Haven: Understanding Sexual Assault™, a 45-minute online educational program that contains key definitions and statistics about sexual assault as well as education about healthy relationships. Although the College does sponsor programs associated with Violence Awareness Week (Walk a Mile in Her Shoes, The Clothesline Project, Take Back the Night), it does not appear that Ramapo offers in-person sexual assault training at this time.

Ramapo should identify the best potential curriculum for in-person training of students on sexual assault awareness and prevention. As with the bystander training program, the sexual assault training program used should be evidence-based, effective specifically in the college environment, and appropriate for college age students.

Because the victim in sexual assault cases is so often blamed and/or considered responsible for the attack, it is vitally important that Ramapo adopt a curriculum that is sensitive to victims’ rights.

**Recommendations | Sexual Assault and Bystander Intervention Training**

- Review bystander intervention and sexual assault training programs available nationally to determine which evidence-based model would be the best fit for the college campus environment and student trainees. The College should consider whether peer-to-peer training could be an effective part of training on these issues.

- Provide bystander intervention and sexual assault training in person to all students annually.

- Ensure that sexual assault awareness and prevention training include these ideals:
  - An understanding of issues of consent;

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8 Students may not be aware of the College’s Good Samaritan policy for reporting medical emergencies related to alcohol or drug use or, if they are, they may not understand the parameters under which that policy grants amnesty. Ramapo College of New Jersey, Good Samaritan Policy. (See Section III.C., below, for a fuller discussion.)

- An emphasis on the inability of students who are intoxicated to give valid consent;
- A clear message that even if consent is initially given to some sexual contact, a victim may later withdraw consent; and
- An understanding that a victim of sexual assault is never to blame, no matter the circumstances surrounding the assault.

D. Student Engagement

The College’s relatively isolated geographic location is one factor that has likely led to the prevalence of large on-campus parties. The campus is far from a downtown or city with other avenues for student entertainment and enrichment.

On-Campus Entertainment Options. Approximately 500 students live in the Village and they need places to gather. The more options students have for fun, safe, and interesting socializing on campus, the less likely they are to congregate for alcohol-based parties. I commend Ramapo’s current efforts to increase and encourage on-campus social interactions as an alternative to alcohol-related parties in the dormitories, such as its creation of an on-campus café and Tuesday Night Live! entertainment program.

Off-Campus Activities. In addition to increasing potential for on-campus socialization, Ramapo should continue its efforts to support safe student activities off campus, such as its shuttle buses to nearby towns where restaurants, movies, and bars are available. Such “real world” entertainment not only provides an alternative to on-campus parties, it also may help students learn to socialize in a more responsible and adult manner with the community at large.

Ramapo should continue to brainstorm and implement ideas like these to support the education and enrichment of the whole student and so that on-campus partying does not appear to be the only outlet for entertainment.

Recommendations | Student Engagement

- Increase opportunities for students to gather on campus for non-alcohol based socializing, such as the on-campus café and Tuesday Night Live! series.
- Expand students’ ability to visit nearby towns for safe off-campus entertainment, such as through the existing shuttle buses.

E. Greek Life

Greek life is overseen by the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life, which is within the Center for Student Involvement, which, in turn, reports up to the Dean of Students. The head of the Office will soon be titled the Coordinator of Fraternity and Sorority Life.
While the College does not recognize Greek housing on or off campus, it does acknowledge approximately 650 undergraduate students as members of 23 social and five professional fraternities and sororities, out of a total enrollment of 6008 students. Greek pledge recruitment is governed by the College’s Hazing Policy which, on its face, is quite strict.\textsuperscript{10}

In addition to parties held in dormitories, a significant number of large parties, with excessive alcohol consumption, appear to be hosted by campus fraternities. Over the past ten years, there have been 23 incidents logged involving 11 Greek Life organizations, including large parties, hazing, and failure to follow recruitment/membership protocols. These incidents have resulted in temporary (some still ongoing) suspensions of four fraternities over that time period.

Moreover, other student infractions may be related to Greek life: many students attend Greek parties, on and off campus, prior to returning to their dormitories. It does not appear that Ramapo tracks this information. However, there is some indicia that this has been an issue; most notably, the fall 2014 sexual assault involved students who had been drinking at a fraternity prior to returning to a dormitory, where the sexual assault occurred.

**Recommendations | Greek Life**

- Ramapo should consider creating the position of Dean or Assistant Dean of Greek Life to oversee and engage with Greek organizations on campus.
- The College should review existing regulations related to Greek life and their enforcement to determine if those regulations should be strengthened or if their application needs to be stricter and more consistent.

**II. The Public Safety Department**

The campus Public Safety Department is a small, unsworn security force with 32 employees. In addition to their public safety role, public safety officers perform many non-public safety duties, such as conveying people around the campus, opening locked doors, and the like. Only one public safety officer is designated as a ‘community’ officer who interacts with students on non-law enforcement issues.

Investigators in the department work Monday-Friday during the day; no investigators work the night shift as a matter of course. Five officers staff overnight shifts on a campus with up to 2,835 residential students spanning eight residential halls. Once officers have been deployed to established, required duties, only two public safety officers remain to conduct campus patrols and handle problems that arise.

\textsuperscript{10} Ramapo College of New Jersey, Student Handbook, Fraternity and Sorority Life: Hazing Policy (prohibiting as part of the pledge recruitment process exercise regimens, forced exclusion from social contact, public shaming, ingestion of substances, prolonged exposure to the elements, degrading acts, etc., regardless of pledge consent).
The level and nature of Public Safety Department staffing has made it difficult, if not impossible, for the department to monitor and respond to problems on campus, particularly large parties where alcohol is present. Most problems occur overnight, when there are few officers patrolling the entire campus and no investigators on active duty.

In practice, because of understaffing and inconsistent enforcement, alcohol and other violations (underage drinking, large gatherings) are often ignored, unless a problem occurs, in which case all students present are either (i) asked to leave; or (ii) written up regardless of alcohol consumption. When students are written up, nearly half of those write-ups are later dismissed.

To students, this inconsistent enforcement is seen as unfair; it deeply affects the legitimacy of the Public Safety Department. This is borne out by the results of the write-ups. In recent years, 40% of all alcohol citations have been dismissed. So while large numbers of students are frequently being written up for violations of campus alcohol policies, the Office of Student Conduct is issuing “not responsible” findings to dismiss nearly half those citations. While it is not clear why so many citations are being dismissed, the result is certain: students see a lack of consistent enforcement and an arbitrary use of the power of the College. This creates a challenge as Public Safety is perceived as unfair.

Moreover, there seems to be no formalized feedback loop between the Office of Student Conduct and Public Safety regarding disciplinary actions. No member of the College could explain the reason for the high percentage of dismissals. This raises a key question: Are too many citations being written without merit or is the College failing to sustain a large percentage of offenses that should be sustained?

**Recommendations | Public Safety**

The research is clear that people will obey rules when they respect the authority of a law enforcement entity that acts equitably. My recommendations in this area are designed to improve the training, consistency, and legitimacy of the Public Safety Department:

- **Staffing**
  - **Full Staffing.** According to senior Ramapo administrators, a previous staffing study indicated that the College should have 34 public safety officers. At present there are 31.5 officers, which is below the recommended staffing level. Ramapo should hire additional public safety officers to be staffed for a campus of its size.
  - **Focus on Public Safety.** The public safety force is small, yet has too many non-public safety related duties. Tasks unrelated to public safety should be handled by other departments, such as maintenance or facilities management.

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11 Ramapo College of New Jersey, Office of Judicial Affairs, Disciplinary Statistics: July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011 (of 902 alcohol-related offenses charged, 542 were sustained) and Ramapo College of New Jersey, Office of Judicial Affairs, Disciplinary Statistics: July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012 (of 450 alcohol-related offenses charged, 279 were sustained).

- **Increased Training on Community Interaction.** Rather than having a single dedicated public safety officer with community liaison duties, all public safety officers should be trained on community interaction with students and take on this role in order to humanize the student/enforcement relationship. Officers should be evaluated, in part, on their ability to positively engage with the student community.

- **Increased Night Staffing.** Ramapo should increase the number of public safety officers on duty on the nights when most alcohol-related problems occur on campus, so that gatherings may be monitored and discipline issued consistently.

- **Night-Duty Investigators.** Investigators must be available on campus to respond immediately to criminal activity after hours and on weekends, which is when the overwhelming majority of problems occur. This is important for all incidents, but trained investigators are especially vital for complex, serious cases such as sexual assault. At a minimum, investigators should be on duty on those evenings (Tuesdays, Thursdays, possibly weekends) when Ramapo’s data shows that the most serious incidents tend to occur.

- **Consolidation.** I strongly support the move the College is engaged in to place the Public Safety Department under the Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Division, which includes the Dean of Students, the Director of Residence Life, the Director of Student Conduct and the Director of Public Safety. There is a need for coordination between Student Life, Residence Life, Student Conduct, and Public Safety. The Vice President should set meaningful metrics and regularly collect and analyze data from all three areas to make certain that the College is meeting its goals. The College should also receive regular feedback from students.

  ➢ **Investigations**

  - **Investigation Training.** All officers who perform active public safety work and respond to disciplinary violations on campus should receive training on how to respond to incidents and conduct high quality, professional investigations into violations of campus policy.

### III. **Policies, Sanctions, and Discipline**

#### A. Alcohol and Party Policies

On their face, Ramapo’s policies regarding alcohol on campus are strict. This is particularly true of the policy that prohibits underage students from being in the “presence of alcohol.” However, the evidence suggests that Ramapo’s policies regarding student alcohol consumption are not being routinely and uniformly enforced. Thus, it is clear that large parties, with underage drinking, occur on campus.

Ramapo should continue to review its alcohol policies with an eye to what rules and sanctions will be effective in modifying student behavior and then ensure that these rules are consistently, fairly, and swiftly applied to all students.
Below, I review the primary rules regarding alcohol use on campus and the discipline associated with them:

**Distilled Liquor (commonly referred to as hard liquor).** Currently, Ramapo prohibits consumption of many types of alcohol (no grain alcohol, open container restrictions, no beer balls, no games that “encourage excessive drinking,” no public intoxication, etc.) on campus. However, at this time Ramapo does not prohibit the consumption of hard alcohol. Many of the more problematic incidents that have occurred on campus during the past few years have involved the consumption of hard alcoholic drinks and shots of hard liquor.

The College can and should set limits on alcohol consumption by students who are of lawful age, particularly when problematic conduct is associated with excessive drinking. Here, there is a clear connection between hard liquor and serious incidents on campus.

**In the “Presence” of Alcohol Rule.** Ramapo policies allow resident assistants and public safety officers to write up underage students who are in the “presence” of alcohol, even if they are not personally consuming it. The presence rule lumps students together no matter their level of conduct and is perceived by them as unfair and overly harsh. There is also no evidence that this strict rule has changed student behavior around drinking.

**Outdoor Parties.** Large parties and open containers outside of designated “wet” living areas are prohibited on campus but, because public safety officers are unable to enforce this rule consistently, students appear to be unaware of the ban or choose to ignore it. The ban has not had the effect of changing student behavior, as the frequent outdoor gatherings at the Village attest.

**Alumni Guests on Campus.** Some college alumni return to Ramapo on weekends to attend parties at the Village and other dormitories. These alumni are not subject to the discipline of the College.

**Recommendations | Alcohol and Party Policies**

- As previously noted, the College should seriously consider whether to keep the Village as a wet dorm. If the College chooses to keep the Village as a wet dorm, the prior suggestions for reform should be implemented. The College should also ban distilled spirits (often referred to as hard liquor) on campus.
- The College should rescind the “in the presence of alcohol” rule.

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13 Alcohol Policy, section on Alcohol in College Residence Halls (“Alcohol Policy”).
14 Id.
15 Id., para. 7.
16 See Section I.A., Dormitory Recommendations, above.
➢ The College should consistently and actively enforce its prohibition against large parties, and should also require registration of all parties where alcohol will be served.\(^{17}\)

➢ The College should consider whether to ban alumni from attending student parties in dormitories.

B. Sanctions for Alcohol Violations

Ramapo currently uses the following sanctions to discipline students who receive alcohol violations: fines, referral to an online course on alcohol consumption, and/or immediate suspension from on-campus housing (in the case of party hosts).

**Fines.** Ramapo relies heavily on fines for violations of its policies,\(^{18}\) collecting, on average, over $70,000 from students. The effectiveness of a fine as punishment, however, is heavily dependent on a student’s ability to pay. For some students, the punishment will be severe, while for those with the financial capacity to pay, the fine may be viewed as a mere nuisance. Fines can be an unequal form of punishment and thus lack effectiveness as a means of modifying student behavior.

**e-CHUG (the Alcohol eCHECKUP TO GO) and Innerview™.** Students found in violation of campus alcohol rules are frequently required to complete one of two online courses about alcohol consumption.

e-CHUG was developed by San Diego State University as an online prevention intervention for alcohol usage. Innerview is a similar online assessment that asks students to respond to a number of questions related to their drinking behaviors and then provides confidential feedback to help them “reflect on their own drinking behaviors in the context of the average, or usual, drinking patterns of other students.”\(^{19}\)

These tests are completely self-guided and students seem to consider them merely a hoop to jump through, rather than an opportunity to reflect seriously on their alcohol use.

**Immediate Suspension of Party Hosts from On-Campus Housing.** Ramapo recently implemented a new rule to immediately suspend hosts of parties from on-campus housing when serious college rules (such as underage drinking) have been broken. This rule has led to the suspension of several students and, by many accounts, has helped to reduce the number of large parties being hosted on campus.

Recommendations | Sanctions for Alcohol Violations

➢ The College has a responsibility to assess punishments fairly and equally and with an eye to the ultimate goal of modifying student behavior. As such, Ramapo should

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\(^{17}\) *Id.*

\(^{18}\) See, e.g., Alcohol Policy, Minimum Recommended Sanctions for Alcohol Violations (e.g., 1\(^{st}\) violation - $100 fine, 2\(^{nd}\) violation - $200 fine, 3\(^{rd}\) violation - $400 fine).

\(^{19}\) Innerview FAQs, [http://www.alcoholinnerview.com/faq.html#section4item1](http://www.alcoholinnerview.com/faq.html#section4item1)
replace fines with non-financial conditions of punishment, such as community or campus service hours (e.g., campus beautification or dining hall work in lieu of a cash payment). Such service should be paired with training and appropriate alcohol interventions aimed at assisting students to modify behavior.

- Evaluate whether more effective, evidence-based alcohol education interventions exist than e-CHUG and Innerview.
- Continue to enforce the rule removing party hosts who have disregarded College alcohol policies from on-campus housing, which seems to have been effective. This rule must be implemented swiftly and consistently so that students understand that a violation of campus rules will result in the loss of a meaningful privilege – that of on-campus housing. It is a severe penalty that denotes the seriousness with which Ramapo takes its alcohol rules and student safety.

C. Sexual Assault Reporting and Investigation

**Good Samaritan Policy.** Ramapo’s Good Samaritan policy provides students with some immunity to encourage them to report emergencies involving alcohol or drug use on campus.\(^\text{20}\) In practice, however, the policy is underutilized by students. Because of this, I would encourage Ramapo to do more outreach and education to students about the purpose and scope of the Good Samaritan policy. This education should make clear that Ramapo understands the difficulty students have as bystanders reporting crimes or other problem issues. Students are naturally hesitant to report identifying information when they also have possibly violated campus rules. Studies show that even adults frequently act as passive bystanders to crime, failing to intervene or report.

Even with this increased awareness and understanding of its purpose, because the current Good Samaritan policy is limited, students who are already intoxicated may still be hesitant to come forward. Thus, I also recommend that the College create a completely anonymous method for students to report problems and crime on campus, such as a confidential text message line or web-based application that students can easily access and use without fear of consequences.

**Policy on Reporting Crimes (outside of sexual assault).** In all college matters involving serious victim offenses other than conduct proscribed by Title IX and the Clery Act, the police should be called immediately. If the student calls someone else at the College first –

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\(^{20}\) The policy grants full amnesty when students are seeking medical attention for themselves or another intoxicated individual, but only for violations of the Student Code of Conduct involving alcohol consumption, party hosting, or party attendance. Students reporting under the policy can still be issued interim suspensions, which are not considered part of their disciplinary records, and there is no amnesty for Code of Conduct violations related to threats of harm to self/others, damage to College property, hazing, or sexual victimization. The Good Samaritan policy also appears to be essentially a one-time pass: “In most cases, the Good Samaritan Policy will be applied once – either to the intoxicated student, those that have served alcohol or other drugs, or those attending social gatherings. . . . [R]epeat offenders may have their cases referred to the Office of Student Conduct for a formal disciplinary review.”
Public Safety, an RA, an administrator – those individuals should contact the police prior to an investigation being conducted by local college officials. The victim should continue to be provided with campus services and assistance, but the investigation into the alleged offense should be conducted by law enforcement whenever possible.

**Sexual Assault Investigations.** Sexual assault is a serious criminal offense and should be investigated by trained law enforcement professionals with an eye toward future prosecution of the perpetrator should the victim decide to cooperate with law enforcement. In criminal matters, the first 48 hours of an investigation are critical. This is particularly true for sexual assault cases, where the ability to gather evidence, take statements, review campus video footage, monitor social media communications, and conduct interviews can make all the difference in determining what happened and holding individuals who have violated the law accountable.

The Stafford Report recommends that sexual assault investigations be handled by specified Title IX staff and the Clery Act makes the involvement of law enforcement a choice for the student. Many colleges and universities, however, are not well-equipped to handle these types of serious, complex investigations. Ramapo has an opportunity to be at the forefront of colleges in this area by making it a college-wide priority to encourage students to report sexual assault crimes to police.

**Recommendations | Confidential Text Messaging, Sexual Assault Reporting, and Investigations**

- To encourage reporting of problematic incidents on campus, Ramapo should supplement its Good Samaritan policy with a text message number or web-based application that allows students to confidentially report problematic or concerning behavior in real time without providing identifying information. These texts should be forwarded to Public Safety for response. Any potential for abuse of a confidential reporting process is far outweighed by the ease of monitoring the situations in question for false alarms and the benefits of being able to quickly intervene when required. While bystander training can be helpful in some situations, it places the responsibility on students to personally intervene and stop problematic behavior, which many students may be hesitant to do. If the College provides this simple, anonymous way for students to report problems, students may be more willing to report problematic behavior in real time.

- College protocol should be to call law enforcement in all cases (while complying with the Clery Act and Title IX) where there is serious criminal conduct involving victims. This policy should be clearly communicated campus wide.

- All those who provide victim support should be trained to inform students of the benefits of reporting sexual assault offenses to law enforcement.

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21 Stafford Report, Recommendation One: Title IX Infrastructure, at 17.
CONCLUSION

Since the sexual assault last fall, Ramapo College has taken significant steps to prevent sexual assault and control alcohol consumption on campus. Ramapo has many strong policies in place that, with consistent, fair, and even enforcement, can provide a safe, positive campus experience for all students, the vast majority of whom already consistently observe college rules.

With a serious look at changes to public safety, residence life, and policies on sexual assault and alcohol on campus, Ramapo can better align its policies to attain its stated goal of being on “the forefront of sexual assault prevention and alcohol awareness education,”22 thus assuring a safe, educational, engaging, and enriching campus experience for all its students.

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22 Peter Mercer, “President’s Post #72: Official Message from the President” (Ramapo College, November 18, 2014) http://www.ramapo.edu/pres-post