

Strategic Plan 2018-2021:

Fulfilling Our Promise



September 24, 2018



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INTRODUCTORY LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Students, Colleagues, and Friends:

The College has annually assessed its progress toward the goals in Strategic Plan 2014-2018. While this ongoing assessment has revealed much progress, the nature of the goals, as well as rapid change in the external environment, suggest that there is room for continued focus on academic excellence, student success and engagement, the cultivation and support of diversity and inclusiveness, and financial strength.

Background

Strategic Plan 2014-2018 was completed by a Task Force of twenty-five members including students, faculty, staff, administrators and members of the Board of Trustees.

The planning process was characterized by thoughtful deliberation, iterative communication and revision, and input from a broad array of community members. Taking almost two years to complete, the starting point was to rewrite the College mission with the new revised version serving as the guide to the Plan's goals and objectives. This living document guided the work of the College across the past five years and the annual assessments of the plan have helped shape and prioritize decisions about programming, planning, and resource allocation across all Divisions.

Revitalization

In Spring of 2018, the Cabinet evaluated the progress made by the College in achieving its strategic goals and concluded, with the support and input of the Board of Trustees, the President of the Faculty Assembly, and the President of the Student Government Association, that substantial progress continue under a revitalization of the 2014-2018 Plan.

As a result, following the protocols established by the College's 2017 Shared Governance Task Force, in February 2018, I formally engaged the President of Faculty Assembly and the President of the Student Government Association in a discussion on revitalizing and extending the 2014-2018 Plan. Together, we advanced the establishment of a Task Force on Extending the 2014-2018 Strategic Plan, and partnered to determine its membership, timeline, and deliverables.

The findings and recommendations of the Task Force were furnished in Summer 2018 and are largely reflected in the pages that follow. Additional decisions were made to strengthen the revitalized Plan, these largely include recognizing "innovation" as an institutional priority and, in turn, the establishment of a new goal to advance innovation. In addition, a visual mapping of the Plan's associated metrics can be found in the supplemental *Dashboard 2021*.

The Future

Looking forward, Ramapo College will be reviewed for reaffirmation of accreditation by the Middle States Commission of Higher Education during the 2019-2020 academic year. In preparation for this review, the College will complete a self-study including examination of the strengths and weaknesses within all programs (academic and non-academic), policies and processes, compliance with external regulations, governance, and operations of the College. The results of the self-study will provide the foundation for setting the strategic direction of the College through 2021-2026.

Thank you to the Task Force on Extending the Strategic Plan 2014-2018. I look forward to the continued progress and success of Ramapo College as the State of New Jersey's designated public liberal arts college.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter P. Mercer", enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Peter P. Mercer
President

OUR MISSION

Ramapo College is New Jersey's Public Liberal Arts College, dedicated to providing students a strong foundation for a lifetime of achievement. The College is committed to academic excellence through interdisciplinary and experiential learning, and international and intercultural understanding. Ramapo College emphasizes teaching and individual attention to all students. We promote diversity, inclusiveness, sustainability, student engagement, and community involvement.

OUR VISION

As the region's premier public liberal arts college, Ramapo College of New Jersey prepares students to be successful leaders for a changing world through its distinctive commitments to hands-on learning and faculty-student mentoring.

OUR VALUES

Ramapo College is the Public Liberal Arts College of the state of New Jersey. The work of the College and its members is conducted with integrity. Our values are:

- Teaching, learning, and mentoring—we are actively engaged in and out of the classroom.
- Developing the whole person—we are scholars, we are creators, we are local and global citizens, and we are individuals.
- Respecting each other and our environment—we are an open, inclusive, supportive, and sustainable community.

OUR GOALS

- Increase Student Success and Student Engagement
- Cultivate and Support Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion
- Advance Innovation as the College's Promise and Obligation to its Students, Community, and the State of New Jersey
- Improve Long-Term Financial Strength

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Consistency with Mission and Vision

All strategic goals and objectives must be consistent with the College mission and vision and the primacy of facilitating student learning while also taking into account the needs and interests of a diverse faculty, staff, alumni, and local, state, and global communities.

Assessment, Accountability, and Analysis

All strategic goals and objectives must be defined to champion accountability, bestow measurements for assessment, and conclude in analysis.

Collaboration and Transparency

All strategic goals and objectives must be defined and pursued with transparency, consultation and open communication.

Institutional Health and Solvency

All strategic goals and objectives must consider the long-term health of the College and be pursued efficiently.

GOAL 1

INCREASE STUDENT SUCCESS AND

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The purpose of our work is student success. At Ramapo College, student success is defined across four dimensions: access, engagement, completion, and employment. Our highly engaged faculty teach and mentor in small classes that enable students to be well-versed in the liberal arts. Ramapo College advances academic excellence and student engagement in the undergraduate experience through its General Education Program and major and minor programs, continued focus on interdisciplinary and experiential learning, and international and intercultural understanding.

Objective 1.1: To enroll diverse students who actively contribute to campus life.

Objective 1.2: To increase the enrollment of residential first year students.

Objective 1.3: To increase the number of students transferring from partner institutions.

Outcome 1a:

Ramapo College strategically manages student enrollment in line with the College mission, program capacities, and budget and demographic projections.

Objective 1.4: To increase the four-year graduation rate.

Objective 1.5: To increase the six-year graduation rate.

Objective 1.6: To increase its first year retention rate.

Outcome 1b:

Ramapo College's student retention and graduation rates meet or exceed state and national averages.

Objective 1.7: To support and develop a diverse, highly qualified, engaged, and accessible faculty through activities centered on teaching, learning, and advising; scholarship and creative work; and service and college governance.

Outcome 1c:

Ramapo College faculty are diverse, highly qualified, accessible, and engaged in teaching and learning, advising, scholarship and creative work, and service and college governance.

Objective 1.8: To facilitate student success, in terms of completion and employment, via experiential learning.

Outcome 1d:

Ramapo College students increase their participation in experiential learning opportunities.

Objective 1.9: To demonstrate the value of a Ramapo College degree through metrics associated with employment and educational attainment

Outcome 1e:

Robust data on the employment and/or education pursuits and achievements of Ramapo College graduates is available.

Objective 1.10: To increase students' academic, personal, social, and civic engagement through enhanced curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programming.

Outcome 1f:

Ramapo College students demonstrate increased engagement.

GOAL 2

CULTIVATE AND SUPPORT EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

Diversity encourages the examination of different perspectives and values, enriches the learning experience, and prepares individuals to be more effective members of society. The College thus seeks to create an inclusive and supportive environment characterized by a diverse student population and increased rates of retention; providing curricula and programming that encompass equity and diversity in all its forms; and attracting, developing and retaining faculty and staff who reflect and are committed to diversity and inclusiveness.

Objective 2.1: To deliver and promote curricular, co-curricular, extra-curricular, and development programs that strive to eliminate stereotypes and negative biases, demonstrate a commitment to diversity and promote self-awareness, an examination of multiple perspectives, and respect for others.

Outcome 2a:

Ramapo College students demonstrate self-awareness, respect for others, an understanding of the value of diversity, and can examine societal issues from multiple perspectives.

Outcome 2b:

Ramapo College employees are knowledgeable about issues of equity, diversity, inclusion and compliance and appropriate forms of dispute resolution.

Objective 2.2: To close the achievement gap by increasing retention and graduation rates of students by student type and race/ethnicity.

Outcome 2c:

Ramapo College enrolls a diverse student population and the retention and graduation rates for these students increase.

Objective 2.3: To recruit employees who reflect and are committed to diversity and inclusiveness.

Objective 2.4: To foster collegiality and collaboration by advancing recommendations of the 2017 Report of the Task Force on Shared Governance.

Outcome 2d:

Ramapo College is an inclusive, diverse, and supportive work environment.



GOAL 3

ADVANCE INNOVATION AS THE COLLEGE'S PROMISE AND OBLIGATION TO ITS STUDENTS, COMMUNITY, AND THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Questions regarding the value of higher education, slow income growth, high government and household debt, rising college tuition, and growing competition from online and the for-profit higher education sector, pose major threats to public higher education. Ramapo College must be innovative in finding ways to perform its uniquely valuable functions, allowing it to remain mission-centered and responsive to the needs of learners.

Objective 3.1: To facilitate curricular innovation and to ensure that curriculum remains founded in the liberal arts, relevant, attuned to students' needs, and responsive to the economic environment.

Outcome 3a:

New academic programs and modes of delivery are evaluated and offered, as appropriate.

Outcome 3b:

A systematic approach is used to review and, when appropriate, re-envision academic programs and modes of delivery.

Objective 3.2: To strengthen mutually beneficial partnerships with alumni, parents, friends, business, professional organizations, as well as community and government agencies.

Outcome 3c:

Ramapo College's visibility and reputation is advanced through communication and partnerships with external constituents.

Outcome 3d:

Opportunities to expand continuing education and credential offerings are evaluated and advanced, as appropriate.

Objective 3.3: To optimize technology and software to automate functions and expand the capacity of existing systems for reporting and assessment.

Outcome 3e:

Work processes will be more efficient.

Outcome 3f:

There will be more time for analysis of data and data-informed decision making.

Outcome 3g:

Enhanced reporting will track unit-level indicators and foster unit-level assessment.

Objective 3.4: To cultivate the next generation of higher education leaders through the delivery of an internal Leadership, Development and Performance (LDP) program.

Outcome 3h:

Ramapo College employees grow their abilities and skills and a culture of continuous improvement is cultivated.



GOAL 4

IMPROVE LONG-TERM FINANCIAL STRENGTH

Ramapo College understands that, without financial stability, no other goal or priority can be achieved. Through revenue generation, reallocation of resources, expense reduction, capital stewardship, space optimization, fundraising, and sustainable practices, the College seeks to become more financially robust in support of the College's mission and vision.

Objective 4.1: To address systemic long-term deficits created by the reliance on State funding and practical limitations of increasing tuition.

Outcome 4a:

Ramapo College will implement a multi-year financial plan.

Outcome 4b:

Decisions are made in consideration of their long-term financial impact and resources are focused on mission-critical endeavors that support the fiscal health of the College.

Objective 4.2: To strengthen the College's presence in Trenton to ensure it receives due consideration in decisions affecting higher education.

Outcome 4c:

Ramapo College receives equitable support from the State.

Objective 4.3: To address space allocation, its optimization, and deferred maintenance, in light of enrollment and economic trends.

Outcome 4d:

College resources are allocated to ensure the long-term security and safety of its assets and the effective use of space.

Outcome 4e:

The Learning Commons fosters connectivity, innovation, creation of knowledge, community, and collaboration (Seal, 2014).

Objective 4.4: To publicly position the College through advocacy, marketing and public relations as the premier public college in the region.

Objective 4.5: To leverage relationships with alumni, parents, corporations and friends to advance the College's visibility.

Objective 4.6: To enhance financial strength through increasing support from the Foundation.

Outcome 4f:

Ramapo College's reputation and visibility is strengthened across key constituent groups.

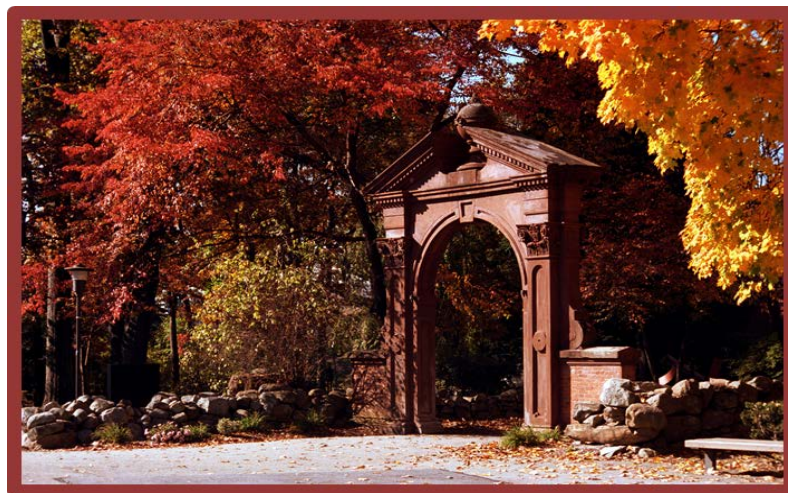
Objective 4.7: To align fundraising efforts for capital, operations, student access, and grant initiatives with annual College priorities.

Outcome 4g:

Funds raised for the College reflect the established priorities.

Outcome 4h:

Additional awards and funds are available for student scholarships to help defray the cost of attendance.



THE STRATEGIC PLAN REVITALIZATION PROCESS

Charge

The Task Force on Extending Strategic Plan 2014-2018 was charged with making recommendations on adding, continuing, modifying, or closing out individual objectives and outcomes within the current Strategic Plan so that the goals might be extended for three years (2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021).

Membership

- Aaron Lorenz, Task Force Chair, Dean of the School of Social Science and Human Services
- Anthony Dovi, Associate Director of Adult and Graduate Admissions
- Dorothy Echols-Tobe, Chief Planning Officer
- Donna Flynn, Assistant Professor of Nursing
- Susan Gluchanicz, Foundation Budget Analyst
- Melissa Horvath-Plyman , Assistant Vice President of Marketing and Communications
- Gurvinder Khaneja, Director of Institutional Research
- Nick Lapiska, Student Government Association
- Erin McKenna, Student Government Association
- Nicole Morgan Agard, Chief Equity and Diversity Officer/Director of Employee Relations
- Stephen Rice, Professor of American Studies
- Nicholas Salter, Associate Professor of Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Director of the Faculty Resource Center
- Beth Walkley, Director of Budget and Fiscal Planning
- Brittany A. Williams-Goldstein, Chief of Staff and Board Liaison
- Deyu Xu, Database Program Analyst

Recommendations

The Task Force issued a series of recommendations which are largely reflected in *Strategic Plan 2018-2021: Fulfilling Our Promise*. These recommendations were advanced and shaped by an assessment of our progress on the 2014-2018 Plan and the Task Force's appreciation of six key drivers which represent the regional and national context within which the College must operate to continue to be successful:

1. Remaining Competitive and Defining our Distinctiveness
2. The Increase in Diversity among Students, Faculty and Staff
3. Public Sentiment regarding the Value of the Liberal Arts and Calls for Evidence
4. The Changing and Shrinking Enrollment Demographics and Shifting Market
5. The Financial Realities of a Structural Deficit and Political Influence
6. The Need to Innovate while Maintaining Mission

The foci of the Task Force's recommendations included:

- Adding, continuing, modifying, combining or closing out of various objectives to address vital issues facing the College;
- Adding baseline data to assist in developing more concrete measurement tools and in ensuring compliance with Middles States assessment standards;
- Using consistent language throughout the Plan with respect to timelines and definitions; and
- Maintaining a glossary of key ideas and definitions.

GLOSSARY OF KEY IDEAS AND DEFINITIONS

Community Involvement

The collaboration between Ramapo College and its larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) exists for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. Such community involvement may be characterized by the development of students' citizenship skills, the forging of effective partnerships, and the development of shared resources in support of the community and the College's curricular, extra-curricular, and operational needs.

Diversity

Human diversity includes, but is not limited to age, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, physical or mental abilities and disabilities, socio-economic status, viewpoint differences (e.g., political), sexual orientation, gender identity, and national origin. In promoting and celebrating diversity, Ramapo College pledges to respect and value personal uniqueness and differences, to seek to attract diverse faculty, staff and students that reflect the changing demographics in the region and beyond, to seek and acknowledge common ground, to challenge stereotyping, and to promote sensitivity and inclusion.

Experiential

Experiential learning is a purposeful process of engaged, active learning in which the student constructs knowledge, skills, or values by means of direct experiences in authentic, real-world contexts.

Experiential learning often includes the following components:

- Hands-on or minds-on engagement
- Facilitated, guided practice
- Multidimensional growth/development
- Reflection
- Application of theory/classroom knowledge
- Student learning goals, assessments, and documentation
- Service to a larger community

*Experiential learning goes beyond the conventional “comfort zone” of college course activities such as reading texts, doing homework, writing papers, performing studio or lab work, etc.

Source: Provost’s Pillars Task Force Report; 06-07
ww2.ramapo.edu/libfiles/Provost2/Experiential_report_0607.pdf

Inclusion

The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity—in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect—in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathetic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.

Source: AAC&U http://www.aacu.org/compass/inclusive_excellence.cfm

Intercultural Understanding/Competence

Intercultural Understanding is both an approach and an outcome of the learning process. It promotes critical sensitivity to cultural differences among peoples within nations as well as across nations. This approach promotes equal value in all human life and prepares students for effective participation in a diverse and pluralistic community.

Interdisciplinary

Interdisciplinary education is the interaction, integration, or syntheses of knowledge and learning across disciplines. This is accomplished at all levels of the college curriculum, from individual courses, to majors and minors, to school core requirements, to the General Education program.

Source: Adapted from Provost’s Pillars Task Force Report; 06-07
ww2.ramapo.edu/libfiles/Provost2/interdisciplinary%20final%20report%200607.pdf

International Understanding

International Understanding involves a comprehensive approach to learning that intentionally prepares students to be active and engaged participants in a world that transcends boundaries and embraces cultural differences.

International understanding may include any of the following:

- Concrete focus on international experiences and learning
- Competence in languages other than one's own, or extensive foreign language training
- Creating a multicultural community on-campus and off-campus
- Internationalizing the curriculum

Student Engagement

Student engagement is the result of the time and effort students devote to activities empirically linked to the intended outcomes of college and what institutions do to both provide these activities and induce students to participate in them. Student engagement is characterized by critical examination, analysis, reflection, and problem solving.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a holistic approach to ecological action, one that takes a balanced and ethical account of people (society), planet (ecology), and prosperity (economics), within the frame of intergenerational equity—that is to say, promoting a high quality of life for all without curtailing the ability of future generations to also enjoy a high quality of life.