

## Proposal for a Minor in Climate Change, Policy and Action Michael R. Edelstein, Convenor

### Program Proposal

The Climate Crisis has emerged as perhaps the major global crisis affecting current and future life on earth. Every institution of higher education should be addressing this crisis. But an interdisciplinary institution such as Ramapo should be taking the lead in doing so.

Toward this end, a five-course minor in Climate Change, Policy and Action is proposed. Climate Change has emerged as an existential threat to the health and habitability of the earth, affecting humans and all life on our planet. The resulting Climate Crises can no longer be classified as a future threat---it is very much upon us. With only a decade to address the crisis, we must try to mitigate it to slow it down by reducing the release of greenhouse gasses. But adaptation and resilience are also demanded. There is a fast-emerging interdisciplinary field addressing these challenges that unites the sciences, social sciences and human services with business and diplomacy. And there is a need for graduates with a knowledge of both problem and response to fill emerging positions in business, government and the non-profit-sector and to become thought leaders regarding policy formation and public education. Ramapo College has engaged with this issue for decades, running major conferences and offering courses in multiple programs. It is well positioned to offer a minor program in Climate Change open to students in all majors that will rest on existing courses and primarily on existing sections and faculty.

### Program Impact

The proposed minor will benefit Environmental Studies, Sustainability and Environmental Science by creating a larger audience for existing courses. It will place no additional burdens on any program. It may offer the additional benefit of uniting programs around a common interest.

### Need and Student Opportunity

The proposed minor is both liberal arts and professional in nature. On one hand, a growing number of advanced degrees have emerged that relate to Climate Change---both at the masters and Ph.D. level. The Climate Crisis is a cross-cutting interdisciplinary topic that has implications for virtually every discipline and field. On the other, the climate crisis has emerged as a necessary applied issue for business, governments and communities to address. There will be a growing need for people with a climate background who have other linked areas of expertise to fill emergent niches in all fields.

### Strategic Plan

The proposed minor is very much in line with the innovative, timely and unique curriculum desired under the Strategic Plan. It is a mission-central program in that it is interdisciplinary, global in focus and has experiential components.



