OVERVIEW

Guided by RIT’s vision to “lead higher education in preparing students for innovative, creative and successful careers in a global society”, in the spring of 2009, the Provost and Vice President for Student Affairs constituted a Project Team of faculty, staff and students to attend the AAC&U Greater Expectations Institute held in Burlington, VT, June 17-21, 2009. The Team was asked to discuss and recommend ways to increase the campus capacity to bridge and strengthen academic, co-curricular, and residential experiences to provide students with clarity of purpose and direction for their undergraduate education experience. The goal is to design a University model of intentional support to maximize student learning and student success with a focus on personal and professional development.

THE GREATER EXPECTATIONS INSTITUTE

The Greater Expectations Institute mission is to help campus teams develop strategies and plans to strengthen campus learning environments. In particular, the Institute provides support to help guide and align specific projects to each institution’s mission, clarify desired outcomes, create a comprehensive vision for change, refine planning and processes, and build a culture of high expectations that fosters student and institutional learning. At this year’s Institute, the focus of session presentations and discussions included:

- institutional capacity for change;
- aligning leadership and resources to deepen student learning and engagement;
- liberal education for the new global century;
- teaching, learning, and assessment;
- underserved student achievement

Presentations and facilitated discussions were led by AAC&U faculty experts. Most of the team project work of the RIT Team took place over a half-day period on the third day and a full day meeting on the fourth day of the conference, well into the evening. Throughout, there were opportunities to get pointed, directed feedback and input from the AAC&U faculty, which benefitted our efforts in brainstorming and strategic planning. In particular, conference faculty provided critical feedback on our progress and on the quality of ideas and plans for change.

In total, there were twenty-three university teams, each of which designed their own set
of proposals for change in their respective campus learning environments. All proposals were presented at the culmination of the conference in both written and oral form. Critiques of oral presentations were provided by AAC&U faculty experts and “sister” university partners. RIT was paired with a team of six faculty/administrators from the United States Air Force Academy, which provided very supportive commentary on the quality of our recommendations. More information about the institute can be found at:

http://www.aacu.org/meetings/gexinstitute/index.cfm

RIT GREATER EXPECTATIONS TEAM

The RIT Greater Expectations team consisted of eight faculty, three Student Affairs staff and two students. The team was selected by the Provost and the VP for Student Affairs using a nomination process and a small committee from Academic Senate and Student Affairs. It was important to select individuals who had creative ideas and the ability to effectively communicate conference outcomes and recommendations once they returned to campus.

• Dick Doolittle (COS) – Co-Project Leader
• Nicole Boulais (Student Affairs) – Co-Project Leader
• Stephanie Bauschard (Student Affairs)
• Lisa Bodenstedt (Student Affairs)
• Teraisa Chloros (2nd year student, Medical Informatics/Student Government)
• Mike Eastman (CAST)
• Eileen Feeney Bushnell (CIAS/Academic Senate)
• Joe Geigel (GCCIS)
• Neil Hair (EPSCOB)
• Lisa Hermsen (COLA)
• Christine Kray (COLA)
• Jacque Mozrall (KGCOE)
• David Mullaney (3rd-year student, Information Technology/Student Government)
• Linda Rubel (NTID)

RIT GE PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

The Project Team was charged specifically to devise a cohesive framework and plan to maximize student learning through the systemic, cohesive and intentional integration of RIT’s general education outcomes and curriculum, first year experience, summer reading book, learning communities, writing expectations, and innovation curriculum with the primary fields of study. Effective outcomes will only be realized through collaborative and thoughtful discussions within and across the Divisions of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs.

Specifically, the goals of the project were to:
1. Integrate in a systemic, cohesive and intentional manner the programs listed above that support student learning and engagement;
2. Provide students with clarity of purpose, **intentionality**, and direction for the undergraduate education experience; and

3. Establish a unique and excellent undergraduate experience in keeping with RIT’s vision of an **innovation** university.

These three overarching goals were considered within the context and spirit of **community and flexibility**. So, in developing recommendations, the Team thought it was important to:

- allow students to develop a strong affinity with the RIT **community** through unifying University-based experiences, while also maintaining the valuable College-based experiences
- provide students with the **flexibility** to take advantage of the wide array of opportunities at RIT in order to develop their own path

**PRIOR TO THE INSTITUTE: PREPARATION**

Over the course of two meetings, the Team, with leadership from the Provost and VP for Student Affairs, reviewed its charge and outlined its method of approach to the take advantage of Conference proceedings. Over an extended session, the Team also received a thorough briefing of the current status of general education reform, first year experience, innovation curriculum, learning communities, undergraduate research, and summer programming. The briefing also included substantial background materials related to each area the team would consider from NSSE and Noel-Levitz reports, recommendations from the Student Success Tiger Teams and Innovation Working Group, and evaluation of the Summer Reading Program, the Learning Community Program Review (by an external consultant), and the latest from the General Education learning outcomes and curriculum working groups.

**RIT GE CONFERENCE PLAN OF APPROACH**

Initially, the GE Team felt it necessary to identify characteristics most desirable for the graduating RIT student and that this exercise would make it possible, then, to move from the end through to the beginning of the path a RIT student might take as part of their “RIT Experience”

In so doing, we could identify and evaluate the curricular, co-curricular, and student life elements of impact and opportunity. In the end, the Team wanted to be able to walk through a case study example (“Michele”) of what we would hope for students as they moved from pre-first year summer through to completion of degree requirements. We began a series of discussions about all facets of the student experience outside of their primary field of study, consistent with our original charge. Our goal was to provide clarity of purpose and direction in undergraduate education experience with a focus on **integration**, **innovation**, and **intentionality** in the spirit of flexibility and community. Because of its critical role in establishing a student’s connection and future path through the University, the Team felt it necessary to reevaluate the students’ “first 15 minutes” of their RIT tenure through review of the Summer Reading Activity and First-Year Experience.
Summer Reading Book/First-Year Enrichment

Summer Exploration: *Experience RIT* replaces Summer Book

There were several references made by AAC&U faculty to the importance of understanding the culture and nature of incoming students unique to each university. It seems clear that most students choose RIT based on its brand as an institution that offers a hands-on, career-focused, innovative education. During one of the information sessions, the GE Team learned to appreciate the significance of the initial introduction — what they called "the first 15 minutes," has in shaping a new student’s level of engagement with the campus community. We strongly believed that this initial point of contact is critical and asked the question: “Does it have to be a book?” What if it was an overall *EXPERIENCE* about being a RIT student? What if this *experience* involved a riddle or puzzle or some combination of a variety of problems to be solved? Perhaps, adding a social networking component such as Twitter or Facebook would effectively connect new students with program faculty, Student Affairs staff, and fellow students in a friendly and informative manner. Emphasizing the ‘technology’ in RIT is also appropriate, for instance include activities from within RIT’s Second Life Island such as virtual tours of library resources, business park, and meeting other incoming students online. The Team felt that this *experience* could be designed to be academically rigorous enough to be extended into the fall quarter courses. Moreover, this new approach to a summer, pre-first year “*Experience RIT***” can provide students a fun context to understand RIT, its culture, values, and community, as well as being an intellectually stimulating, educational engagement.

**Proposed Team Recommendation**

Investigate the feasibility of replacing the summer reading book with a new, summer program for incoming students entitled “*Experience RIT***”.

*Experience RIT* should:

- Include an exploration activity that reflects RIT’s vision for innovation and creativity
- Introduce students to what makes RIT unique
- Be hands on / interactive
- Be fun and engaging
- Include an opportunity for students to make use of social networking to communicate with other students, faculty and future Student Affairs coach
- Be an integral part of academic activities/ discussions within the new “*Discovery***” and “*Innovation***” courses (formally FYE)
- Incorporate college or program specific aspects as well a more generalized RIT activities
- Incorporate a final element to be revealed at Orientation and/or during the *Discovery* course
- First-Year Enrichment (FYE) Expanded to courses in “Discovery” and “Innovation”

The GE Team viewed the first-year experience as a central starting point to set the course for students’ future path through RIT. First-year programming should begin before students arrive on campus with Experience RIT, followed by new course offerings in Discovery (fall) and Innovation (winter) to replace pre-existing courses in FYE I and II. These linked experiences will become the foundation for building relationships with faculty, providing knowledge about program of study and possible careers, developing professional and personal skills through innovative projects, gaining knowledge of campus support and resources, and helping each student shape their own educational/experiential pathway. In both courses, curricular content would be delivered through collaborative effort shared by Student Affairs and program faculty in each College/Department. The first quarter (Discovery) would group students in sections according to major. In contrast, during the second quarter (Innovation) students would be placed in multidisciplinary sections by intentional design. The GE Team valued keeping some of the current structure and content of the First-Year Enrichment classes while making efforts to include rigor and academic challenge consistent with select General Education Learning Outcomes. Additionally, the GE Team agreed that students would benefit from making personal connections to faculty, Student Affairs staff/coach, and upper-class students through experiences in the Discovery and Innovation courses.

In summary, it is the shared opinion across the GE Team that the first-year experience is critical in shaping the future direction for RIT students. It is in these short 20 weeks that students will define an individual pathway for their RIT education, form deep connections to their program of study and the RIT community, and internalize the habits and mindset that are characteristic of the RIT graduate.

• Possible additional recommendation: RIT should consider offering the summer reading book in the (rising) sophomore year when students will better understand its educational purpose and intent
Proposed Team Recommendation

The GE Team recommends development of a plan to change the fall quarter offering of FYE I to a course in “Discovery” as part of each students’ first-year experience to include academic rigor and co-curricular elements designed to connect students with program major and RIT, at-large.

Details are included in the following suggestions:

• First-Year Enrichment renamed Discovery and offered fall quarter (1 credit) with sections organized by major

• Collaborative instruction provided by student affairs professional and program-level faculty

• Curriculum constructed with academic rigor and designed to meet General Education learning outcomes

• Curriculum to include:
  ▪ Understanding of programmatic/institutional policies
  ▪ Introduction to General Education and RIT culture; components include writing, reading and critical thinking as extension of Experience RIT
  ▪ Promote and guide students through initial development of personal ePortfolio very common on college campuses now—-which students can use to showcase their creative work, projects, and writing samples from the curricular and co-curricular activities of their RIT Pathway.
  ▪ Introduction to academic competencies, knowledge of campus resources and experiential programs such as: Academic Support Center, AIM program, Study Abroad and RIT Leadership Institute

• Maintain coaching component: one-on-one meeting with Student Affairs professional to ease students’ transition to RIT and develop a preliminary Pathway through their RIT experience (students’ mode of thinking as to future involvement in curricular, co-curricular, student life opportunities). This pathway would be further refined in discussions with faculty, academic advisors, and other guides throughout a student’s tenure at RIT.
Proposed Team Recommendation

The GE Team recommends a thorough review of a plan to change winter quarter offering during the students’ first-year experience (FYE II) to a newly designed course in “Innovation”. Initially, there would be a need to constitute an Innovation Council (a mixture of faculty, staff from Student Affairs, student representatives, and possibly external industrial partners) that would be charged with design and ultimate implementation of the curricular content.

• Class sections organized in heterogeneous groups (students, faculty and Student Affairs professionals)

• Experiential, project-based curriculum as introduction to methodologies in innovation and project design

• Collaborative instruction by faculty and Student Affairs professionals as well as peer mentors (students already working in the Student Innovation Center or conducting undergraduate research)

• Some classes meet and select aspects of project design occur in the RIT Center for Student Innovation

• Evaluation and dissemination of project outcomes e.g., spring quarter display, project outcomes featured at ImagineRIT, etc.)

• Continued support for student transition, knowledge of RIT culture, resources and programs

• Ongoing coaching with Student Affairs professional. Continued development of personal Pathway

General Education
In approaching the General Education curriculum, the Greater Expectations team took to heart the notion that education should be "intentional." Such intentionality should be two-fold: a) the program should be designed so as to best achieve its desired outcomes, and b) its purposes should be clearly and persuasively communicated to students and their advisors. Further, the team wanted to maximize student interest and motivation, faculty engagement, and integration of learning across the student's pathway at RIT.

Proposed Team Recommendations:
Name change from "General Education" to "University Arts and Sciences"
Liberal Arts and Sciences core curriculum be based on broad categories of knowledge instead of disciplines
Courses within themes of contemporary global importance that cross-cut the Arts and Sciences categories could be highlighted as optional for students.
The first recommendation of the team is that the name be changed from "General Education" to "University Arts and Sciences." The phrase "General Education" is vague and might seem to imply that anything not in the major counts as "general education." In contrast, the "Arts and Sciences" part of the new term points to the content intended by the New York State Department of Education, which is that it should give students a strong foundation in mathematics, physical sciences, humanities, and social sciences. Such clarity of expression would help students understand why they take a certain selection of courses, regardless of major. The first part of the suggested new term---the "University" part of "University Arts and Sciences"---signals that: a) it is an important part of a university education, and b) that responsibility for ensuring that students meet the General Education Student Learning Outcomes is shared across the university. For example, communication skills are not something that students should develop only in Liberal Arts courses, but should be cultivated in coursework across the Institute. The "University" element also signals that courses from colleges other than COS and COLA might be approved as University Arts and Sciences (UAS) courses. Criteria would have to be worked out regarding how courses would be accepted as UAS courses. For example, they would have to meet the NYSDE Guidance on Liberal Arts and Sciences (http://www.highered.nysed.gov/ocue/04/liberalarts.htm), and probably a certain number of the General Education Student Learning Outcomes that were developed at RIT during the 2008-2009 academic year (Appendix D). The team would also recommend that courses that are primarily intended for students in a major would not count as UAS courses.

In addition, the team believes that General Education would benefit from greater flexibility. The joint Curriculum Committees of COS and COLA have been drafting a model for a revised curriculum, the basic principles of which were well received by the Greater Expectations team. The current structure of the Liberal Arts core curriculum is discipline-based, including a series of courses that are designed as introductions to a discipline (Sociology, Anthropology, Philosophy, etc.). This may not be the best way to engage student interest, as students may be unfamiliar with the disciplines and wonder why knowledge of these disciplines is important. The alternative model---which is increasingly the standard at colleges and universities across the country---identifies certain Categories of Knowledge in Liberal Arts and Sciences and asks students to choose courses within those categories. Categories that have been proposed include such possibilities as: Human Diversity; Values, Ethics, and Judgment; Artistic Expression; Humans and the Physical World; Global Vision; Mathematical Literacy; Science and the Modern World, etc. Courses from different disciplines would fit into these different categories, which are also designed to ensure that students achieve the General Education Student Learning Outcomes (Appendix D). Departments would be encouraged to offer courses that explore a topic of interest, and that additionally provide students with an introduction to the key methods, theories, and concepts of the discipline so that students may be prepared for upper-division work. Since courses from different disciplines would be included within the same category, this would maximize student choice, while still ensuring breadth of exposure.
Finally, in order to make the General Education curriculum even more transparent and engaging for students, the team proposes a structure of themes (such as has been adopted by Virginia Tech, among others). Themes would be completely optional for students. They could decide not to pursue a theme at all, or only take two courses in a theme and stop, for example. Themes would correspond to timely issues of the day, such as The Digital Age, Sustainability, Globalization, Innovation, or Learning in the City. Descriptions of the themes and courses that pertain to them would be prominently displayed on a campus webpage. The timeliness of the issues would work towards the goal of intentionality, as students might more readily perceive the value of their Arts and Sciences courses. Further, themes would necessarily be multidisciplinary, thereby enhancing the integration of knowledge by students through their pathway at RIT. Finally, themes would ensure the "scaffolding" of General Education, such that topics that students are exposed to in earlier years would entice them to further follow-up in later years. Hence, the Arts and Sciences credits are not something to "get out of the way" early on, but something to be anticipated as a student pursues topics of interest over the four or five years. This sets the stage for students to become "lifelong learners."

**Writing Across the Curriculum**

**Proposed Team Recommendation**

The GE Team recommends a comprehensive Writing Program that would include a minimum of four Writing-Intensive courses embedded in the curriculum. This writing program would call for writing instruction across the general education curriculum and throughout all four years, into the major. Initially, there would be a need to consult the existing Institute Writing Committee (faculty elected from all colleges, representatives from the Academic Support Center and the English Language Center, and the Writing Program Administrator from the Department of English). This committee with consultation of the Academic Senate and the ICC would be charged with design and ultimate implementation of the Writing Program.

- All students would be required to take a W-I course in their first year (no AP credit for a writing course).

- The first W-I course would be a Writing Seminar or a W-I course in the first year. This course would be designed to link to the General Education curriculum, perhaps introducing students to areas of inquiry.

- Two W-I courses would be required in the UAS and spread through the core and electives, as well as concentrations and minors, for maximum flexibility.

- One W-I course would be offered in the major—this W-I designation completes a true comprehensive Writing Program. Students learn to write as professionals in their field of choice only by learning from those working and researching the profession.
• W-I courses will be defined according to best practices and conventional guidelines as courses in which there is some attention to a writing process (proposal, professional review, and copyedited product) and writing instruction (faculty feedback), and in which a final written product accounts for a portion of the final grade.

• Resources and Support will be provided for faculty teaching in W-I designated courses. Faculty will need time to adjust syllabi and will need assistance from a “writing coach” or from Writing Fellows assigned to the course.

• A Writing Fellows program could be developed so student reviewers might serve as mentors and coaches for student writers. Writing Fellows might be trained upper division or graduate students.

• An expanded Writing Center—a Communication Center—will be beneficial to not only support the Writing Program, but also accommodate undergraduate research, faculty research—and perhaps even alumni projects.

• W-I classes will need to be capped with an enrollment that best serves instruction for writing in content courses.

Learning Communities

Across select academic centers at RIT, the number of Learning Communities has grown significantly since the pilot year in 2004. Assessment data show conflicting results with respect to benefits of these efforts as related to retention. However, it appears there are significant benefits afforded students enrolled in Learning Communities and/or registered within programmatic cohort through a wide range of classes, beyond the outcome of short-term persistence. In particular, the Team saw great benefits to maintaining block scheduling for the first year students in programs where this is desired by the department/college. Further, the research on Learning Communities points to a number of benefits accrued from multidisciplinary Learning Communities, including forging a sense of community, deepening learning through a sustained focus on related topics over time and across disciplines, and providing ready-made study partners for challenging material.

Given the other proposals associated with changes in FYE, the GE Team felt it important to consider moving processes in support of Learning Communities to a position beyond the first year, and establishing content-based Learning Communities for students during their second and third year. Similarly, Senior Capstone Experiences could offer a learning community-like experience for students in the final year of their program.
Proposed Team Recommendations:

The GE Team recommends maintaining cohort, block-scheduling for first year students where desired by academic departments.

The GE Team also recommends exploration of Learning Communities for students in their second and third years. In particular, learning communities should be created that are content-based and:

- program/discipline-specific
- multidisciplinary in nature (theme based?)

Additionally, the Team recommends pursuit of a pilot program to investigate the feasibility and efficacy of “Learning/Living Communities” that would tie residential life with curricular and co-curricular aspects for a cohort of students (e.g., around the concepts of sustainability, study abroad, etc.), such as through Global Village, for example.

Innovation Curricula

The GE Team discussed ways in which the concept and spirit of “innovation” could serve as a common thread through a student’s RIT experience. When mapping experiential opportunities of this type onto a student’s tenure with RIT, it became clear that, given the changes proposed in the summer activity and the first-year experience, students would grow to expect to see opportunities in creative and innovative design throughout their time within the major and across the general education curricula. Moreover, one of the approved General Education Student Learning Outcomes (see Appendix D) is that all students should, "Demonstrate creative/innovative approaches to course-based assignments or projects," hence students should be given the opportunity to engage in innovation activities at several points in their undergraduate career. Building on the first-year experiences within the Discovery and Innovation classes, students could then pursue hands-on experiences within the structure of cooperative education, undergraduate research, a series of courses in innovation and/or an innovation minor, the senior capstone experience, or worked into existing courses as an added component. Also, courses that receive General Education (UAS) credit and that have been identified as promoting innovation and creativity could be highlighted as part of the Innovation theme in UAS and given advertisement as such on a campus webpage.

Across all of these curricular and co-curricular options it will be important to address the process and benefits of innovative and creative thought and action.
Proposed Team Recommendation:

The GE Team recommends the creation of an Innovation Council comprised of faculty, staff, and students charged to assist in the design and implementation of innovation experiences for students within and beyond the first year for each RIT student.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN AND PROCESSES FOR REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The GE Team discussed at-length, concerns and plans for how best to introduce recommendations to the RIT community. There was very strong feeling that it would be best to first share information with the Provost, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, and Vice President for Student Affairs and that these presentations/discussions would be co-led by D. Doolittle and N. Boulais. The group also felt unanimously that the entire team should be present for the discussion with the Academic Innovation Council at their annual Retreat the first week of July. Subsequently, these meetings were held and after presentation of recommendations, discussions were focused mainly on the most appropriate processes for dissemination of information across faculty/staff constituencies in the most transparent fashion. These ideas are captured in the final Team Recommendations and include feedback from campus leaders in academic and student affairs as well as the executive committee of Academic Senate.

Proposed Team Recommendations:

Given the effectiveness, quality and spirit of collegiality of the GE team, it is our recommendation that representatives from the original team be included in some manner in the implementation of the following team recommendations.

1. Create a process by which GE Team recommendations and full report can be shared effectively across the university. This should be both in-person through meetings across offices/departments across AA and SA and through dissemination of reports through a dedicated website. This process should also have an associated timeline for communication.

2. Create an ad hoc committee sanctioned through Academic Affairs and Student Affairs divisions as well as the governance groups to review all GE Team recommendations and generate specific proposals for change.

3. Create a standing UAS Curriculum Committee sanctioned by Academic Senate to:
   a. provide guidance and direction for ongoing revisions to RIT’s UAS framework and
   b. review proposals from all areas of the University for courses designed to meet the Learning Outcomes suitable for UAS credit and forward recommendations to the ICC for consideration.
APPENDICES:

A. Timeline of approach

March 30, 2009: Received notification from AAC&U that RIT proposal was accepted and invited to participate in 2009 Greater Expectations Institute: Leadership to Make Excellence Inclusive

April 14, 2009: First meeting between Mary Beth Cooper, Jeremy Haefner, Nicole Boulais, Dick Doolittle to discuss the process of selecting team representatives for the GE Institute Conference. Decided there would be eight faculty (from eight different Colleges), three from Student Affairs, and two students. Faculty would be recommendations from Academic Senate, staff from Student Affairs and students would be recommended by Student Government

May 21, 2009: First meeting of the full GE Team. Discussed general charge and expectations

June 12, 2009: Second meeting of the full GE Team. Discussed all the “pieces” of our charge to include information-sharing sessions lead by members of the team or others from around the university with a focus on:
- general education curriculum
- learning communities
- first-year experience
- summer reading book
- writing across the curriculum
- innovation curricula
- NSSE/Noel Levitz data
Additionally, Ian Gatley and Maureen Valentine presented information about a “Systems” approach to our thinking of how best to meld these different pieces and build bridges between Student Affairs’ and Academic Affairs’ processes.

June 17-21, 2009: RIT GE Team attended the AAC&U Greater Expectations Institute in Burlington, VT.

June 23, 2009: D. Doolittle and N. Boulais met with Jeremy Haefner and Chris Licata to discuss GE experience and Team recommendations.

June 24, 2009: D. Doolittle and N. Boulais met with Mary Beth Cooper to discuss GE experience and Team recommendations.

July 7, 2009: GE Team presented briefing and recommendation outcomes from the Greater Expectations Conference to the RIT Academic Innovation Council over an afternoon Retreat at the Rochester Yacht Club
B. Case Study: “Michele’s” Path through the RIT Experience

Michele’s path was designed by the GE team to exemplify one pathway through RIT which includes curricular and co-curricular experiences across an entire undergraduate career that are interconnected and complementary. Many unique paths would certainly exist but the ultimate vision of the GE team was that ALL students would experience this type of integrated, innovative and intentional.

1. Michele receives her Experience RIT package in the mail. The Experience RIT project, with its problem solving and interactive components, connects Michele to her Discovery instructor and faculty. Michele looks forward to participating in RIT Orientation.

2. At Orientation Michele builds connections to other students and RIT. Michele is excited to learn that she enrolled in the Experience RIT project. At the traditional Tiger Walk, Michele feels welcomed and proud to be a Tiger.

3. In her Discovery Class Michele continues to develop relationships with her classmates, instructor, and faculty. She works with her peers and learns about RIT, cultures, resources, and success strategies to support her at RIT. Michele enjoys the class, how to register for Winter Quarter that she was facilitated by her Peer Mentor.

4. During an individual meeting with her Discovery instructor, Michele considers a preliminary Pathway to guide her RIT career. Michele would like to study abroad, learn more about activism and social justice. Her Discovery instructor suggests clubs, programs, and resources that focus on her areas of interest.

5. In Michele’s Discovery class, one of her assignments is to develop an ePortfolio. She posts a draft of her Pathway. They also discuss the University Arts and Sciences requirements. Michele’s interest is piqued by the social justice theme and the writing skills she will develop in Writing Across the Curriculum and writing intensive classes.

6. In Michele’s Innovation class, she is assigned to a multidisciplinary team. Their project is to improve access to students with disabilities on campus. The team’s solutions are exhibited on campus and they win a spot at Imagine RIT. In addition, while working at the Innovation Center, Michele connects with her faculty. For example, she learns that her professor regularly travels to Costa Rica as part of a research team.

7. Michele begins to prepare for her study abroad experience by taking a Spanish class, and a political science class called, Politics in the Developing World. Michele also joins the Study Abroad Living and Learning Community housed in Global Village.

8. Michele becomes the president of the RIT Social Action Group. She sees this experience as the basis for an igniter leadership class. Michele documents this in her ePortfolio.

9. During the summer of her sophomore year, Michele studies abroad in Costa Rica. She writes an essay reflecting on her time in Costa Rica, which she adds to her ePortfolio.

10. Michele continues to take electives in University Arts and Sciences and in her Program. She takes a writing intensive course in her major and accesses a 3rd and 4th year co-op. She also registers for a Content Area Learning Community, with a focus on making changes in local government.

Every great community has a story to tell—meet Michelle.

Characteristics of an RIT Graduate

- Leader
- Possesses entrepreneurial spirit and drive
- Positioned for life-long learning
- Expert thinker
- Engaged in collaborative, flexible learning
- Ethical
- Technologically adept
- Innovative thinker
- Proud of self and RIT
- Earned meaningful degree
- RI ambassador
- Prepared for work in global society
- Effective communicator
- Calculated risk-taker
- Confident in abilities
- Imaginative learner
- Engaged citizen
C. Background: RIT Mission and Values

The RIT community engages and motivates students through stimulating and collaborative experiences. Our mission is to provide technology-based educational programs for personal and professional development. We rigorously pursue new and emerging career areas. We develop and deliver curricula and advance scholarship relevant to emerging technologies and social conditions. Our community is committed to diversity and student centeredness and is distinguished by our innovative and collaborative spirit. Internal and external partnerships expand our students’ experiential learning. RIT is committed to mutually enriching relationships with alumni, government, business and the world community. Teaching, learning, scholarship, leadership development, and student success are our central enterprises.

RIT reaches the highest levels of quality through collective and individual commitment to ethics, pluralism and respect for humanity. Together we value collaboration, openness, flexibility, pragmatism, experiential learning, entrepreneurship, global awareness and relationships, innovation, and practical applications. Individually, we are responsible, hard-working, critical thinkers who pursue personal and professional growth with diligence, pride, and spirit.

D. RIT's General Education Student Learning Outcomes (approved by the Academic Senate, 21 May 2009)

The general education student learning outcomes listed below express the educational philosophy of RIT and incorporate essential knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of all RIT baccalaureate graduates. These student learning outcomes not only enhance the students’ intellectual growth, but expand their global awareness and their ability to develop innovative approaches to problem-solving in their professional and personal lives.
### Communication

- Express themselves effectively in common college-level written forms using standard American English
- Revise and improve written and visual content
- Express themselves effectively in presentations, either in spoken standard American English or sign language (American Sign Language or English-based Signing)
- Comprehend information accessed through reading and discussion

### Intellectual Inquiry

- Review, assess, and draw conclusions about hypotheses and theories
- Analyze arguments, in relation to their premises, assumptions, contexts, and conclusions
- Construct logical and reasonable arguments that include anticipation of counterarguments
- Use relevant evidence gathered through accepted scholarly methods and properly acknowledge sources of information

### Ethical, Social, and Global Awareness

- Analyze similarities and differences in human experiences and consequent perspectives
- Examine connections among the world’s populations
- Identify contemporary ethical questions and relevant stakeholder positions

### Scientific, Mathematical, and Technological Literacy

- Explain basic principles and concepts of one of the natural sciences*
- Apply methods of scientific inquiry and problem solving to contemporary issues
- Comprehend and evaluate mathematical and statistical information*
- Perform college-level mathematical operations on quantitative data*
- Describe the potential and the limitations of technology
- Use appropriate technology to achieve desired outcomes

*BS Students Only

### Creativity, Innovation, and Artistic Literacy

- Demonstrate creative/innovative approaches to course-based assignments or projects
- Interpret and evaluate artistic expression considering the cultural context in which it was created