

Drs. Haefner and Cooper,

Thank you for the opportunity to serve on the Greater Expectations team. It has been a wonderful journey and the caliber of work done by this talented group is unmatched! This report is intended to provide you with an official update on our progress.

- **Campus Presentations** – As of December 2009, the Greater Expectations team completed 20 presentations for the RIT community to present recommendations and gather feedback. Presentations were made to the faculty and staff in all eight colleges via sessions hosted by the Deans. Additionally presentations were made to the Division of Student Affairs, Development and Alumni Relations staff, Student Government, Academic Senate, Staff Council, the NTID leadership team, Academic Affairs leadership groups, and presentations for the Education and Student Life committees of the Board of Trustees.
- **Website** – a website with materials providing an overview of the team recommendations and intentions was developed and shared with the RIT community. This site has served as an anchor point for information and will continue to be updated as these initiatives move forward. We have received positive feedback about this site from both current members of the RIT community and prospective employees.
- **Feedback review** – The Greater Expectations team met in November to review feedback and outline next steps for each of the key recommendations. A summary of additional input has been compiled and reviewed by the complete team (a summary of this feedback is attached for your review)
- **Charge Phase II** – In September 2009, an extended charge was given to the Greater Expectations Team. This charge included the following:
  - ▶ Complete the communication phase via presentations and discussions; collect and summarize feedback; adjust recommendations and report as necessary; provide report back to VPSA and Provost.
  - ▶ Oversee the development of an formal proposal development phase for the Greater Expectations recommendations:
    - In some cases this may include the forwarding of a final report and recommendations to a standing committee (such as the Institute Writing Committee, Learning Community Advisory Board, and General Education Curriculum standing committee charged by Academic Senate)
    - In other cases, this may involve the direct development of curriculum or other program proposals (such as Experience RIT, Discovery & Innovation courses, and e-portfolio) by this team. Subcommittees may be formed with members from outside of your original team in order to best accomplish this task.
  - ▶ Design and implement the shepherding of these proposals via the appropriate governance structures and other University processes.
- **Status Report** – A brief summary update, organized by initiative, is provided below per the initial recommendations of the Greater Expectations team.

## 1. Summer Reading Book:

- Original Proposed Team Recommendation: Investigate the feasibility of replacing the summer reading book with a new, summer program for incoming students entitled “Experience RIT” .
- Status: Lead by Neil Hair (Saunders College of Business) and Joe Geigel (GCCIS), a subcommittee of Greater Expectations Team members began discussions of a wide range of activities designed to bring pre-college first-year students together with each other and with members of the RIT community in the summer before Orientation. Initial planning includes use of SecondLife to introduce students to the campus environment through a virtual reality world. It will take the balance of this summer and part of the next academic year to construct a SecondLife world that provides opportunities for students to explore their future community and all of its essential facilities and functions. In addition to meeting up with each other and staff/faculty from RIT, students will be tasked to gather items, engage in some “game play”, and visit locations in SecondLife that mimic the campus environment of RIT. Additionally, students will also be engaged through linked activities through Facebook as part of an intentional approach to create a social network to ease student transition to the college environment.

## 2. FYE:

- Original Proposed Team Recommendation (A): 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. Additionally, 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.
- Status: A subcommittee of the Greater Expectations Team has been formed and is working on a draft proposal for the Discovery and Pathways (previously Innovation) courses. It is anticipated that these drafts will be ready for review by the VPSA and Provost in March, followed by a review of the ICC before the end of the spring quarter. It is hoped that these proposals will be accepted for implementation beginning for the fall of 2010. Given the calendar decisions, this plan has been designed intentionally as a three-year transition plan and can/should be reviewed for long term application as future curriculum decisions around General Education develop.
  - Discovery (basic concept) Fall Quarter, mandatory course, 1-credit, enrollment by major, taught by current FYE staff and adjuncts (with an effort to include new instructors from the advising staff in the colleges). Course focus on discovery of self, RIT, and the larger community via weekly activities, presentations, team projects and other assignments which support some key areas of the general education learning outcomes. Course would continue to have a “coaching” type experience linked to the e-portfolio and advising initiatives as they develop.
  - Pathways (basic concept) Winter or Spring, mandatory course, 1-credit taught by current FYE staff as well as other interested and qualified RIT faculty and staff. Open enrollment by theme (student choice). Current model includes suggested 3-4 themes of innovation, leadership, service learning and academic success. All courses would have common learning outcomes and deliverables (for example, group project and presentation) but would be uniquely tied to the overarching theme.

### 3. General Education:

- Original 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.
- Status: Building, in part, on these recommendations and direct charges from the Provost, the Academic Senate created a new standing committee, the General Education Committee (GEC), that will begin functioning in the spring quarter 20093. As charged by the Senate, the GEC shall study the general education curriculum and general education course proposals from a university-wide perspective and maintain appropriate inter-college relationships with regard to general education matters.

### 4. Writing Across the Curriculum:

- Original Proposed Team Recommendations: 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 (IWC)(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.
- Status: Recommendations of the GE team were shared with the IWC via Lisa Hermsen. The IWC is currently working on the final draft of a comprehensive proposal for curriculum, policy and support needs related to the advancement of writing at RIT. Final draft is expected in February 2010 to the Provost and ultimately will be reviewed by the appropriate committees in the Academic Senate.

### 5. Learning Communities:

- Original Proposed Team Recommendation (A): 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, program/discipline-specific, and multidisciplinary (theme based) in scope. 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.
- Status: Academic affairs will work in collaboration with Student Affairs/Residence Life to design a short and long range plan toward creation of Learning and Living/Learning

Communities on the RIT campus. Specifically, Stephanie Bauschard will be hired on a special project contract over the spring and summer quarters to help bring clarity of purpose to:

- First-year learning communities – building on progress made, to-date, first-year students will be organized within select departments into learning communities comprised of FYE and one other foundational discipline. Efforts will be made to generate appropriate assessment data to verify the efficacy of this approach and decisions made on whether to expand the program to include a wider range of departments, programs, and students
- Content/Discipline-based Learning Communities – A specific request for proposals was included in this year’s PLIG program in support of plans to develop content-based Learning Communities primarily directed toward upper class students. Once funded proposals and PIs have been identified, learning community orientation workshops will be designed to promote appropriate model design including an effective set of assessment metrics
- Living/Learning Communities – As a step toward the construction of an appropriate pilot project, new tools will be created to assess the value of special interest/theme-based living communities within current residential facilities. From those data, several living/learning community pilot projects will be proposed for implementation in the fall of 2011. The initial sense is that courses within the general education class portfolio (that would cut across the housing “theme”) would be ideal to connect with the appropriately themed residence hall/floor as the first test case.

6. Innovation Curricula:

- Original Proposed Team Recommendations: 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.
- Status: An Innovation “Council”, acting more like a curriculum committee body at these early stages, has been created to provide feedback and input on the creation of a new series of courses designed to serve as an innovation concentration and/or minor. It now appears as if this sequence of courses is going to be reviewed by faculty of the Center for Multidisciplinary Studies for approval through the CAST Curriculum Committee. Additionally, there are still plans to provide an “innovation” experience for first year students through a revised FYE II course. Discussions are also continuing within the guise of the ICE (Innovation/Creativity/Entrepreneur) *ad hoc* Committee chaired by Don Boyd to identify links between curricula (current and future experiences within the primary field of study and/or general education) and ICE opportunities to expand student experiential learning and career preparation.