

Colleagues,

With the end of fall quarter classes, I take this opportunity to update you on some of the work that the Academic Affairs division has accomplished to date.

Academic Program Success Priority: General Education Learning Outcomes -

As you may be aware, we are looking at general education learning outcomes partly in response to Middle States and partly because we have a confluence of opportunities to consider rethinking how we approach general education. The Faculty Study Team's final report is available for all to read and many curriculum committees are looking over that document carefully. You can find it on the Provost website: http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/priorities_initiatives.php

I am particularly appreciative of the leadership by the ICC and the Academic Senate for their action in approving two motions that will guide the campus as it moves forward with its look at general education. You can find those motions at the Academic Senate site: <http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/academicsenate/>

How will we move forward? I anticipate two concurrent efforts:

- 1) Chris Licata, Senior Associate Provost, is leading a team of faculty to develop and implement an assessment pilot for this academic year. This pilot will help us learn about assessment, provide insight to our current general education curriculum, and provide Middle States with the information they are seeking.
- 2) Working closely with Academic Senate, I will charge a committee consisting of representatives from the college curriculum committees to develop a proposal for general education learning outcomes and a sustainable assessment plan moving forward.

Innovation Priority: Innovation Curriculum - The Innovation Curriculum Working Group, led by Professors Richard DeMartino and Jon Schull, has submitted the first of its innovation curriculum recommendations. In the report, which will be available on the Provost website (http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/priorities_initiatives.php), the group has recommended programming that can occur in the new Student Innovation Center. The vision is to create a space that entices students to collaborate, learn, and innovate in multidisciplinary teams. The next step is to create a charter, based on the recommendations, and begin implementing the steps needed to set up the infrastructure. Assuming construction of the Center stays on track, I anticipate that the Student Innovation Center will be abuzz with activity by the time the Imagine RIT festival occurs on May 2nd.

Student Success Priority: Undecided Students - If you attended Dr. Destler's Open Administration Forum in late October, you heard a discussion on positioning RIT to embrace the 'undecided student'. A sizeable number of high school seniors remain undecided as to their major while they apply for college. It is healthy for RIT to recruit these students, allow them to experiment with disciplines, encourage them to discover what are their interests and support them just as we do with the students who declare a major. A proposal for creating a way to admit these students and enable them to discover is now under consideration by the academic and student affairs leadership. More information will be posted to the Provost website shortly.

Academic Operations Priority: Calendar Options - During December, three different quarter-based calendar options are being vetted with the RIT governance groups. You can see a summary of these options at the Provost website (http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/priorities_initiatives.php). After soliciting this campus input, the calendar committee will recommend one option, which will then go to the governance groups for approval.

Student Success and Inclusivity Priority: Student Success 'Tiger Teams' - Two taskforces have been meeting and collecting data in order to make recommendations for increasing our graduation and persistence rates. The Student Success Tiger Team, led by Dr. Chris Licata, is studying the broad system of retention efforts we have at RIT, searching for national best practices, analyzing the RIT data, and making recommendations to move forward. If you have questions or ideas, please contact Dr. Licata (CLicata@ntid.rit.edu).

Eulas Boyd and I are co-leading the AALANA (African-American, Latino-American, Native-American) Student Success Tiger Team. The charge to this group is focused particularly on the success rates of these populations. Please feel free to contact either Eulas or myself if you have questions.

There are a number of other important discussions going on including those that support our research, faculty success, and international education priorities. As the committees develop reports and proposals, these, too, will be posted to the Provost website.

In the meantime, I close with my personal wishes that your quarter break is filled with family, friends, and relaxation. Let the excitement of the election, the turmoil of the economy, and hectic pace of work take a backseat for a time of reflection and thanksgiving.

Jeremy Haefner
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

