

Provost's Update – December 2008

Colleagues,

As the winter quarter ramps up, I want to share with you some key initiatives that the division of Academic Affairs will be working on in the coming months. As always, I also want to thank you for the work you do – this fundamental work is in direct alignment with the RIT mission and enables us to consider new initiatives.

For the purposes of context, our vision is to make RIT a national (even international) university and, towards that vision, we are working to achieve the goals set by Dr. Destler and the Board of Trustees. These goals shape the Academic Affairs priorities: student success, research/scholarship/creative work, faculty success, innovation, diversity and inclusivity, international education, academic operations and academic program success. While there are many initiatives in support of these priorities, the key ones this quarter are as follows:

Student Success

- *Tiger Teams*: The Student Success (led by Dr. Chris Licata) and the AALANA Student Success (led by Eulas Boyd) tiger teams continue to collect data, interview focus groups, look at best practices and are beginning to formulate conclusions. See the charges to these groups at http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/priorities_initiatives.php under Student Success.
- *University Options*: With broad campus representation from Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, a planning group (with broad campus representation) will formulate a proposal for a University Options program. The objective of this program is to provide a programmatic framework that will welcome the potential or current RIT student who is not certain about what field to choose or the student who might need to change majors. The working proposal and the charge to the planning team is available at http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/priorities_initiatives.php under Student Success.
- *Calendar Options*: As you may know, there are three quarter-based calendar options being vetted with the governance groups. Institute Council will be discussing a single option at the January meeting. The three options are available for your review at http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/priorities_initiatives.php under Academic Calendar.

Research/Scholarship/Creative Work and Faculty Success

- *Faculty Workload*: We are working on a proposal for addressing the teaching loads in order to support the expectations for research, scholarship, and creative work and to strategically address the research goal of \$100M in sponsored research. Hank Etlinger, in his role as Faculty Associate for Scholarship, Teaching and Learning, will provide key assistance for this effort.
- *Undergraduate Research*: We are developing a campus-wide approach for supporting undergraduate research.

- *FITL and PLIG*: Dr. Lynn Wild will again be hosting the successful Faculty Institute for Teaching and Learning this year in late May. We anticipate bundling FITL and the Provost's Learning and Innovation Grants this year; look for more details soon.

Innovation

- *Center for Student Innovation*: Thanks to the Innovation Curriculum Working Group, led by Jon Schull and Richard DeMartino, a charter for the Center can be found at http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/priorities_initiatives.php under Innovation. As we want this Center to 'stand up' and explode with activity in time for the *Imagine RIT* festival (May 2nd), I will be seeking an experienced director to get the CSI started. Look for a call for applications soon.
- *Innovation Curriculum*: Building on the work of the Innovation Curriculum Working Group, we will focus on building new curriculum projects that support innovation.

Diversity and Inclusivity

- *Women Faculty*: Through the Office of Faculty Recruitment, led by Renee Baker, we are building capacity to assist search committees to identify promising female candidates, thus ensuring that faculty pools are as diverse as possible.

International Education

- *Study Abroad*: The Study Abroad Office, led by Ty Stewart, will be conducting a faculty and advisor survey about study abroad in order to better understand how RIT can help students have international experiences.

Academic Operations

- *Space planning*: Led by Sue Provenzano, we have formed an Academic Affairs Space Planning group that is continually monitoring space issues that affect the core mission of the university.
- *Budget planning*: The Academic Innovation Council (deans, assistant provosts, Academic Senate chair) will be sharing their budget priorities and requests in January prior to the start of the budget hearings in February. By sharing the requests, there will be greater opportunity for synergies and collaboration.

Academic Program Success

- *Assessment*: The search for a Director of Learning Outcomes Assessment is going quite well and we hope to announce the selection in the coming weeks. The timing is important as this person will add experience and expertise to our general education and program assessment efforts. These efforts, as you know, must be reported to Middle States in our April 1 letter.
- *General Education*: There will be three parallel general education efforts. First, Interim Senior Associate Provost Chris Licata is leading a team of faculty members who are working this quarter and next to establish an assessment timeline and collect data as part of the continuous improvement cycle. Second, the Academic Senate will be forming a team of representatives from all the college curriculum

committees; this team will propose to the campus a set of learning outcomes as well as an assessment and evaluation plan for our general education curriculum. Finally, I have asked the deans of the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Science to bring together their curriculum committees to have broad discussions on the general education curriculum itself.

There is a lot going on and I am enthusiastic that these initiatives will help RIT make material progress toward its goals that will, in turn, lead RIT to its vision. But all of these efforts would not be possible without the efforts you put in. Your role and contribution to the vision is front and center and I thank you for your work and energy.

Have a great winter quarter.

Jeremy Haefner

P.S. – The Men's Hockey team was awesome in defeating the Air Force Academy Falcons on Saturday. Go Tigers!