

University Studies Update – February 2, 2009

Colleagues,

As you may know, we are developing a campus-wide system of services to support students who are interested in RIT but are uncertain as to the field they want to study and for the current students who want to change programs. While RIT has provided services to both groups of students in the past, this new initiative centralizes the support by merging the Office of Internal Transfers with the cross-college functions of the current RIT Exploration program. The University Studies initiative (formerly referred to as University Options) will reside within the Office of the Provost and be a shared responsibility of the Provost, the VP for Student Affairs and the VP for Enrollment Management.

The University Studies office will be staffed by university-wide advisors, who will work with these students individually, and a director, who will oversee the operations and work with the colleges. To replace the RIT Explorations program, a separate College of Liberal Arts undeclared program will be formed to address the needs of those uncertain students interested in a liberal arts discipline. Likewise, the current undeclared/exploration programs within our colleges will continue to be offered to students who wish additional opportunities to choose a major within a particular college. No incremental (new) positions will be added for this reorganization.

The purpose of University Studies is to provide certain students with a structure that will allow them to identify their skills and interests and explore different fields. It is the intention of this program to establish a welcoming and supportive community across RIT's colleges but also to successfully and efficiently help the student identify and matriculate in an appropriate degree program as soon as possible.

For Fall 2009, this program will not change the size of the first year class but rather will realign students within the class. We will admit a limited and manageable number of select students who fit the characteristics of the uncertain student - probably 50-60 students. Undergraduate Admissions has begun the process of advising and channeling appropriate qualified applicants into University Studies. As we progress with the planning and development of University Studies, we will be addressing how we can take a student advocacy role and plan the logistics of placing these students into classes and programs. An advisory team with representatives from all the colleges, student affairs and enrollment management will make sure that careful planning occurs and that the interests of the students are paramount. An important guiding principle is that we not over-promise to the student in the University Studies program.

We will be sure to bring the details of the University Studies initiative to the campus as planning progresses and ask that you contribute as appropriate to the planning discussions.

Jeremy Haefner, Provost

Mary-Beth Cooper, Vice President for Student Affairs

Jim Miller, Senior Vice President for Enrollment Management and Career Services