<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What is academic quality? I didn’t think I needed to worry about it—isn’t that what accreditation accomplishes?</strong></th>
<th><strong>In totality, AQ answers the following 5 key questions:</strong></th>
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| · Accreditation certainly helps establish the criteria that comprise academic quality but it isn’t the whole story!  
· Academic quality (AQ) is at the heart of the academic enterprise of the institution: the quality of the teaching and learning that takes place.  
· In totality, AQ answers the following 5 key questions:  
  o How good is the “product” at the institution? [How much are students learning (i.e., the value of the education)? How much do they know when they graduate?]  
    ▪ Student learning outcomes and assessment form the foundation this question  
    ▪ Does the institution have and is it using a process for continuously improving the quality of its products and processes?  
  o How good is the institution at producing the product? [How well do students complete their degree?]  
    ▪ Student persistence and graduation rates are important metrics  
  o Are our stakeholders satisfied with the product? [Students, parents, employers, other institutions, members of the public, civic leaders]  
  o Does the institution offer the right ‘mix’ of products? [What is the right mix of academic programs for RIT and how well do we provide that mix?]  
    ▪ Academic program review, program management, the academic program portfolio blueprint  
  o Does the institution make the grade for AQ? [Is there evidence from external validation that the institution maintains the highest possible academic quality?]  
    ▪ Institutional accreditation is the anchor for institutional effectiveness |

| **Why should I care as a trustee? Isn’t that what the provost and the faculty take care of?** | **In part, yes; however, as a trustee you are a steward of the institution**  
· A fundamental part of this stewardship is to assure the larger community and the stakeholders that the education offered by RIT is of the highest possible quality  
· This is part of the fiduciary responsibility of every trustee, and just as important as ensuring that the institution has the necessary financial resources and that it is using them wisely |
| What are my responsibilities as a trustee? | • Essentially, it is the trustee responsibility to understand AQ and to make sure that the faculty and administration maintain the highest possible AQ.  
• More specifically, the responsibilities include:  
  o Ensuring that the institution (the faculty and administration) has a solid grasp on what AQ means, how it is measured, and its responsibilities for continually improving AQ  
  o Ensuring that the institution has sufficient and robust policies and practices that effectively advance AQ  
  o Demanding that there is a culture of evidence to support a keen understanding of AQ at the institution  
• It is the responsibility of the faculty and administration to:  
  o Establish, manage and evaluate the curriculum  
  o Determine the processes by which AQ can be assessed  
  o Establish the student learning outcomes; assess achievement of outcomes and use the results that lead to improvement |

| Can we track our quality using metrics? | • Yes, there are a number of metrics that ‘reflect’ level of academic quality. At RIT, we break them down into input, environmental and output metrics.  
  o Input metrics include, for example, how prepared the students are when they enter RIT and the percentage of faculty with terminal degrees  
  o Environmental metrics include how current students perceive their engagement in the learning process, persistence and graduation rates, the size of classes, and the ratio of tenured or tenure track faculty at RIT  
  o Output metrics reflect how much the student knows and has learned at RIT, and how satisfied the employers are who hire our graduates  
• RIT has developed an academic quality dashboard that the Education Core committee reviews every year, which includes these three types of metrics and which shows 3 year trend data for each metric. |

| Where does Middle States come into this discussion? | • RIT is officially accredited by Middle States Commission on Higher Education. This regional accreditation body is one of 6 such organizations sanctioned by the federal government to assess how well institutions of higher education are performing. The accreditation cycle is 10 years in duration and involves a rigorous self-study, external review and visit, and a final evaluation |
report. A mid-point review is also required. Accreditation is the ‘final exam’ on academic quality that an institution must pass in order to be eligible for federal aid, etc.

| What other processes should I be aware of that help ensure that AQ is maintained | • RIT supports:  
  o Academic program review and other professional program accreditation review  
  o An extensive set of academic student learning outcomes supported by assessment methodologies and continual improvement processes  
  o Stakeholder satisfaction surveys |
|---|---|
| What can I do to further ensure that RIT maintains the highest possible academic quality? | • Learn more about the AQ dashboard, student learning outcomes, academic program review or the Middle States accreditation process  
• Ask that AQ be discussed annually in the full board of trustee meetings  
• Understand the connection between resources and AQ; ask the necessary questions to make sure that the right amount of resources are available to ensure the highest possible quality  
• Review AGB Statement on “Board Responsibility for the Oversight of Educational Quality” (AGB Press, 2011; available free of charge online at [http://www.agb.org](http://www.agb.org))  
• Ask to serve on the Education Core Committee |