# R·I·T athenaeum

News and Insight from Rochester Institute of Technology

Volume 6. Number 6 www.rit.edu/athenaeum

#### RIT Global

## International flavor



RIT's international student population has more than doubled over the past 10 years. Read about how graduate programs are fueling an enrollment explosion. Page 4

## Technology on Campus

## **Making MAGIC**



From software development to computer games and even prosthetic limbs, the MAGIC Center continues to make its mark on campus and across the country. Page 5

## Research and Scholarship

## Teaching excellence

Each year, RIT pays tribute to faculty members hailed as the university's finest educators with the Eisenhart Awards for Outstanding Teaching. Meet this year's recipients. Page 10

## About Students

## Fantasy, fiction and fashion



The one-of-a-kind Tora-Con convention is an annual gathering of fans focused on anime, manga, Japanese culture, sci-fi, fantasy and RIT culture at large. Page 12



## Class of 2015

Behind every student, there's a story. At this year's Academic Convocation, RIT will confer degrees on some 3,500 graduates. Meet some of the members of this year's graduating class, and learn about the roads they traveled to reach this milestone. Page 6

JUNE-JULY 2015

## athenaeum

#### **VOLUME 6, NUMBER 6**

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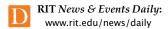
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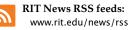
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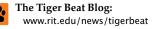




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RIT's traditional seal, imprinted on our graduates' diplomas, features the image of Athena, Greek goddess of wisdom. The institute came to be as a result of the merger in 1891 between the Rochester Athenaeum, a literary society founded in 1829, and the Mechanics Institute, a practical technical training school founded in 1885. In 1944, the university changed its name to Rochester Institute of Technology.



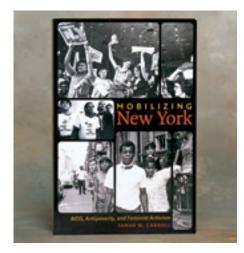
## Picture Perfect



Photo by A. Sue Weisler

Exhibits at the 2015 Imagine RIT: Innovation and Creativity Festival packed STEAM — science, technology, engineering, arts and math — including this working replica of an amusement park, built with 50,000 pieces of K'nex. Some 35,000 people attended the event.

## Author's Spotlight



Mobilizing New York: AIDS, Antipoverty, and Feminist Activism Written by Tamar W. Carroll, College of Liberal Arts

### BY GREG LIVADAS

Attending graduate school, Tamar Carroll visited the Smith College Archives in Northampton, Mass., expecting to research and write about feminist Gloria Steinem. But first, the archivist shared papers about a Brooklyn-based feminist group named the National Congress of Neighborhood Women.

"I found it fascinating," said Carroll, now an assistant professor of history at RIT. "It was all unexpected, all of these coalitions between groups that were supposed to be at odds with each other. To find white and black women collaborating, to find Catholic women who were supposed to be opposed to feminism was really interesting. I wanted to look at other examples of coalitions between unlikely allies."

The culmination of Carroll's research resulted in *Mobilizing New York: AIDS, Antipoverty, and Feminist Activism,* a book that focuses on three grassroots movements that empowered people for social change in New York City.

"I look at the ways they were trying to foster participatory democracy, grassroots activists partnering with professionals to achieve better results," Carroll said.

The programs Carroll researched include Mobilization for Youth, a demonstration project for the War on Poverty, which generated programs such as Head Start and Legal Services for low-income Americans; The National Congress of Neighborhood Women, in which displaced homemakers united with feminist activists and established the first publicly-funded domestic violence shelter in New York state; and the AIDS Coalitions to Unleash Power (ACT UP), an AIDS awareness organization and Women's Health Action Mobilization (WHAM!), which fostered in a coalition between gay men and reproductive rights feminists in the 1980s and 1990s.

"These are stories of ordinary people who changed their world, and I hope readers will be inspired by their examples," she said.

### News in Review

## START-UP NY continues to grow with RITconnected companies

Three more companies with ties to RIT have been accepted into the state's START-UP NY business development program.

Darkwind Media, a graduate of Venture Creations business incubator, develops gaming software and provides consulting services to other game development studios. Darkwind employs 15 people and expects to create 11 jobs at 40 Franklin St. in downtown Rochester.

Optel Inc. is a new venture that provides a variety of services to companies in the medical device field, ensuring compliance with the requirements of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Optel will be locating to Venture Creations and will create 18 new jobs while investing \$285,000.

ClearCove Systems is a renewable energy company founded by RIT alumni that will create 23 new jobs and create \$5 million to \$10 million in economic benefit in 2015. ClearCove Systems' patented technology significantly reduces energy consumption, substantially improves energy production and reduces the installation and operating costs of a municipal or industrial wastewater treatment facility.

Businesses accepted into START-UP NY and create new jobs will pay no state or local taxes for 10 years. State officials say the tax benefits will help accelerate entrepreneurialism and job creation across the state on a large scale.

## Viewpoints

## Wallace Center puts people first



Shirley Bower is director of RIT Libraries

This column presents opinions and ideas on issues relevant to higher education. To suggest an idea for the column, email athena@rit.edu.

The digital revolution has brought transformational change to libraries, causing many to question the future of these time-honored institutions. But rather than disappearing from the landscape, libraries are experiencing a resurgence, playing a role in their communities that is more important than ever. Walk into The Wallace Center (TWC) and you will experience this firsthand.

When I joined the Wallace Library almost 30 years ago, our space, like most libraries, put books first and people second. Technology was in its infancy and almost all library collections were print. Access to information was constrained by a physical building for limited hours. Today, the picture is much different. Digital collections and connections have removed physical boundaries and enabled TWC to deliver information to the researcher's desktop 24/7 while expanding its reach beyond the Henrietta campus, serving as a valuable resource for our global programs and online learners.

Enhanced digital collections have also led to

a transformation of physical space and enabled new partnerships. The first floor of TWC is now a vibrant space where students can connect with their peers and find resources that were previously scattered on campus. Where else can students obtain research assistance for a thesis, consultation on a writing assignment, escape the dorms to a 24-hour quiet study space, collaborate with team members to finish a group project, practice a presentation, and learn ASL? Nearly 3,500 students and faculty come to TWC every day for these services and more.

The new digital environment is balanced with a strong commitment to tradition and history. Special collections such as RIT Archives, RIT/NTID Deaf Studies Archive and the Cary Collection preserve RIT's history and enhance RIT's reputation while providing a unique opportunity for students and faculty to interact with primary source materials that include not only rare printed volumes but RIT memorabilia, working historical presses and artifacts that tell the story of the deaf community.

Collections, space and student services tell only a small part of TWC's story. Faculty career development, media and Web development services, event and publishing support and an award-winning

University Press also define The Wallace Center. Located at the heart of the campus and described by one of our students as "central to a balanced and strong academic experience," The Wallace Center has evolved from a library into an academic center that is responding to the needs and contemporary learning styles of our students and faculty by incorporating a creative range of services and collaboration spaces. TWC is "more than a library"; it is a blend of interconnected services that together create a unique learning space and opportunities for our students and faculty. With a commitment from RIT, The Wallace Center will continue to evolve and enhance research, scholarship and the academic experience at RIT.





hoto by David Wivel

## RIT unveils \$1.5 million Battery Prototyping Center

State officials and industry executives joined RIT in unveiling its new Battery Prototyping Center, a \$1.5 million state-of-the-art facility that will conduct research and work with companies in this rapidly growing local industry.

The center, located in Institute Hall, will work with companies on prototyping the next generation of rechargeable batteries (such as lithium ion) in an industry-recognized size typically used in consumer electronics, including cell phones. While ultimate applications for these new batteries will include electric grid and transportation storage, this size is a recognized standard for testing and evaluating new prototypes. Companies can either use the laboratory's equipment to conduct their own trials or hire RIT to do the work.

RIT's Battery Prototyping Center was made possible by support from New York State Energy and Research Development Authority (NYSERDA), Empire State Development (ESD), the state's economic development agency, and the New York Battery and Energy Storage Technology Consortium (NY-BEST).

"The Battery Prototyping Center at RIT will be a tremendous resource to startups, established companies and researchers seeking to prototype a wide range of battery materials," said Ryne Raffaelle, RIT vice president for research and associate provost. "We are proud to be part of the growing energy storage ecosystem in New York state and grateful to our partners at NYSERDA, ESD and NY-BEST for their support in making this facility a reality."

The center is part of a plan to establish a comprehensive battery and energy storage hub in the region, a priority of the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council.

## Mozrall named dean of Saunders College

Jacqueline Mozrall is the new dean of RIT's Saunders College of Business.

Mozrall had been interim dean since last July. "Jacquie is a committed educator, able admin-



Jacqueline Mozrall

istrator and innovative leader who will advance Saunders College's commitment to providing students with an outstanding business education," said RIT President Bill Destler. Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Jeremy Haefner said Mozrall distinguished herself from

the other candidates in the nationwide search, with her vision for the college, her experience and skills as a leader and her understanding of and dedication to RIT.

"As interim dean, she demonstrated a bold vision for Saunders as a college of business inside a leading institute of technology—with her ability to work with Saunders faculty, her passion for connecting with students to understand their needs, and her ties to building connections to alumni and community," Haefner said.

Mozrall received her Bachelor of Science degree in industrial engineering from RIT in 1987 and holds a place in RIT's athletics Hall of Fame for an outstanding career in soccer. She received a master's degree in industrial engineering from North Carolina State University and a Ph.D. in industrial engineering from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

"I've always considered RIT my professional home since undergraduate school and I am honored and humbled by this opportunity to serve as dean of Saunders College," said Mozrall.

## Three RIT students win Fulbright scholarships

Three RIT students won highly competitive Fulbright scholarships for the 2015-2016 academic year.

"Over the past five years, RIT's had two Fulbright winners, so to have three at once is quite the achievement," said Jenny Sullivan, assistant director of RIT's Study Abroad and Fellowships office. The students are:

- Kaylin Beiter, a biomedical sciences undergraduate from Rochester who will travel to Senegal to study how HIV medication adherence struggles and drug resistance are leading to a growing degree of HIV viral diversity.
- History Estill-Varner, an ASL-English interpreting and global studies double major undergraduate student from Independence, Mo., who will travel to the Dominican Republic to collaborate with the country's National Association of the Deaf and the National Interpreting Association to build a sustainable Interpreter Training Program.
- Rose Rustowicz, an imaging science undergraduate student from Amherst, N.Y., who will travel to Iceland to work with a University of Iceland research team to conduct remote sensing at the Hekla volcano which will allow them to map and monitor hazardous and vulnerable areas.

Yasmeen Smalley '13 (biomedical photographic communications) was named as an alternate in the event that one of the other students declines or is unable to make their international journey. If selected, the Houston native will visit the Philippines to develop a photodocumentary featuring their research on environmental factors that have led to mass destruction of biodiversity in the coastal waters of the Philippines.

**▼** RIT Global

## International student population doubles over last decade

Explosive enrollment in graduate studies fuels international growth

The international student population at RIT has more than doubled over the last 10 years, driven by explosive enrollment in the university's graduate programs.

A record 2,497 international students from 103 countries chose to study at RIT this academic year, making up 15 percent of the total student body. More than two-thirds of these students are pursuing graduate degrees. Students from India and China account for a whopping 57 percent of the international scholars at RIT and have been a significant factor in the growth of the program.

'When you get above the undergraduate level in India and China, it's my understanding that there are fewer programs, fewer seats available at the good domestic universities," said Jeffrey Cox, director of International Student Services at RIT. "The growing trend globally has been that these highly qualified students have to go outside of their countries to find seats. The demand has exceeded the capacity in these students' home countries, and I think the trend is still going up."

Cox added that he believes RIT's growth in international graduate studies can be attributed to its strong academic reputation, co-op program and financial assistance, as well as its "greatness through difference" as exemplified by the many unique master's programs offered in fields such as sustainability, imaging science and color science.

This increase in international involvement exemplifies RIT's commitment to global engagement and diversity both oncampus and abroad. Beyond drawing more international students to Rochester, RIT is also working to expand its presence overseas through its international campuses and partnerships with other universities. The large number of graduate students coming to RIT has also helped bolster the school's desire to boost research efforts.

One of the goals of RIT's 2025 Strategic Plan, which was adopted by the Board of Trustees in November, is to grow the graduate student population, including American and international students, to around 30 percent of the total student population.

"I think that's naturally going to happen anyway given our current trajectory," said Cox.

For Varun Kasturia, a third-year business management student from Mumbai, getting accepted by RIT was just the first step in his journey to the United States.

"The visa application for any college in America is straightforward," said Kasturia. "They ask a few questions in the visa interviews based on your major and your SAT scores and what you plan to do after graduating."

After acquiring a visa, international students are closely monitored. Everything from course loads to living arrangements must be reported back to the government



From left, international students Yuwei Qiao of China, Paola Gonzalez of Dominican Republic and Jassim Dalwai of India stand in the Student Alumni Union.

for security and immigration purposes.

Kasturia chose to come to RIT because of the university's strong educational programs and financial incentives.

"I have a great scholarship from RIT and it's really helped financially, but it wasn't the deciding factor for me," said Kasturia. "I was accepted by a few other colleges, but my family and I decided RIT was the best in terms of quality of education."

While many international students pay for their education out of pocket, some are able to earn academic scholarships from RIT. Others are supported through government programs that have partnered with RIT, such as the Brazil Scientific Mobility Program, or international organizations like the Fulbright Program, which provides tuition for international scholars from developing countries. There are 40 Fulbright scholars from more than 25 nations attending RIT this year.

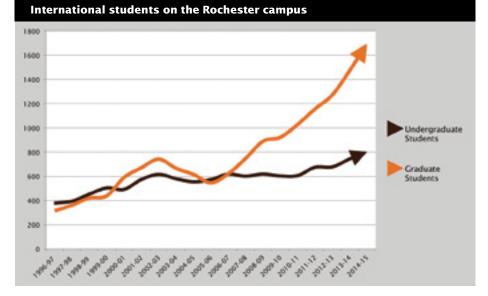
To ease the students' transition to the U.S., Cox and his staff offer an orientation process prior to the start of the school year. This year, more than 800 new students participated.

"We definitely see a difference between

the students who go through the program and those who don't," said Cox. "It's helpful for a couple of reasons, primarily setting up your life and making friends. You've come all this way and it's likely you don't know anvone."

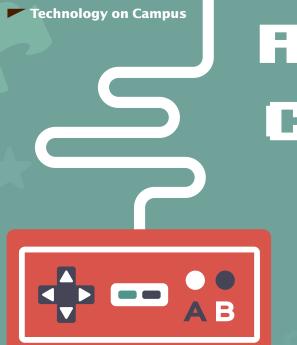
International students are also supported by student-run clubs and organizations, including Global Union, the Organization for the Alliance of Students from the Indian Subcontinent, Asian Culture Society and the African-American Latin American Native American Collegiate Association (ACA) among many others. These organizations frequently sponsor and host events around campus to promote interaction and awareness between cultures.

"For whatever reason they come, I'm grateful to have them here," said Daniel Getachew, a fourth-year packaging science student and E-Board member for ACA from New Rochelle, N.Y. "Growth in the minority community is great news. I'm starting to see more diversity on campus than I have seen in previous years. We're heading in the right direction." ■



## Web extra

To meet some more of RIT's international students, go to rit.edu/athenaeum and



# RITCENTER CONTINUES TO MAKE 'MAGIC'



#### BY SCOTT BUREAU

In the two years since its establishment, RIT's Center for Media, Arts, Games, Interaction and Creativity (MAGIC) has focused transforming ideas into awardwinning digital products. Set up to help bridge the gap between university research and commercial production, MAGIC helps students, faculty and staff from across the university take their creations, such as video games, apps and software, and get them to market.

In 2013, MAGIC provided support for what became its first commercial project, the video game Chain Gang Chase. Since then, MAGIC has supported more than 20 projects and published three games through its third-party production studio, MAGIC Spell Studios.



Splattershmup, created by a class, is gaining international attention.

It's also been the home base for e-NABLE, the international online community founded by research scientist Jon Schull that makes and improves affordable 3D-printed prosthetic devices for people in need, and recently launched a Religion, Culture, and Policy Initiative for research focused on games, religious literacy, the acquisition of cultural practices and the implications on policy and politics. This summer, five multidisciplinary teams will be funded for summer cooperative education experiences, allowing students to work on a project that leads to "start-up" products and commercial activities

With a host of new student projects, research initiatives and grants on the way, the MAGIC Center is creating a buzz that extends far beyond the bricks of RIT. Here's a look at two recent projects:



## SUPER DELUXE STUDENTS

For the past three years, RIT students Dan Plate and Gary Porter — best friends since high school — have spent their free time creating Super Daryl Deluxe, a 2D slapstick orientated action video game that draws loosely from their high school experiences and inside jokes. While the game is not yet complete, it is already winning awards, taking first place in the Visual Quality category of the 2015 Intel University Games Showcase at the Game Developers Conference and the top prize in the Microsoft Imagine Cup U.S. Nationals.

"How often do you get to make a completely absurd game with your best friend?" said Plate, a fourth-year illustration major from Waterloo, N.Y. "Well, my answer would be all too often." Plate and Porter, a fourth-year game design and development major, share a passion for being creative and are kicking around the idea of making a YouTube cooking show and writing a screenplay.

"When I decided to attend RIT, I told our group of friends that I wanted make a game about them and how goofy they are," said Porter. "When Dan transferred to RIT two years later, we started joking about the idea of actually making it."

Porter is the programmer; Plate is the artist. The duo co-wrote the six-chapter game, which borrows elements of their lives, including the look of the school, names of characters and even the likenesses of a few evil teachers.

The game's main character, Daryl Whitelaw, is a stereotypical high school kid whose special powers include a hammer that turns into a rhino on a stick when Daryl levels-up. Daryl is the new kid at a school that has been taken over by a group of evil scientists. With the help of a school janitor, Daryl uncovers the plot and attempts to the save the world — all while trying to be the most popular kid at school.

Their company, Dan and Gary Games, is being incubated in MAGIC Spell Studios, and this will be the first game released by their company. Super Daryl Deluxe is expected to be published and released within a year.



## SPLATTERSHMUP MAKES A SPLASH

Fifteen RIT students can now add title credits to their résumés after working as a class on Splattershmup.

Created as part of Production Studio, an elective course offered through RIT's

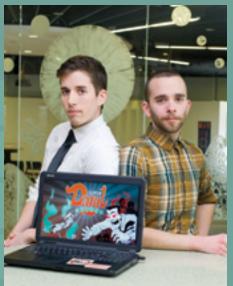


Photo by A. Sue Weis

Gary Porter, left, and Dan Plate, created a game that won the Microsoft Imagine Cup.

School of Interactive Games and Media, Splattershmup marks the first time that an RIT class has set out to produce and publish a complete game. The game was demonstrated at the 2015 Game Developers Conference, published through MAGIC Spell Studios and is available in Microsoft's Windows Store.

The free desktop computer game is a cross between a shmup — a classic shoot 'emup arcade game, such as Asteroids — and abstract Jackson Pollock-style action painting.

"The class making the game is probably why Splattershmup turned out so awesome," said Ashwin Subramanian, a composer and audio programmer who attended GDC and tested the game. "The more eyes you can get on something, the more iterative your process can become. It's just so unique in terms of the concept."

The game has gained international recognition, being selected from more than 40 submissions for the 2015 Blank Arcade exhibit at the Digital Games Research Association conference in Germany. The exhibit highlights experimental games and artwork that push the boundaries of game design and theory.

## Meet the Class of 2015

#### BY ELLEN ROSEN

At the Academic Convocation, RIT President Bill Destler will confer degrees upon some 3,500 undergraduate and graduate students.

The event kicks off RIT's two-day commencement celebration that inclues 11 smaller ceremonies in RIT colleges and centers. Graduations at American University in Kosovo, RIT Croatia and RIT Dubai follow

For the graduates, it's the culmination of many years of hard work and study. But it's also the beginning of a new stage in life — a chance to take all that they have learned during their time at RIT and apply it toward building a career — and a new life.

Behind every graduate, there is a story — a story of what brought them to RIT, of the path each took to reach this milestone of graduation, and the plans each

is making for the future.

Some of those stories are on these pages.

And there is even more on a special graduation website — rit.edu/news/commencement.php — including more interviews with members of the graduating class, photographs and videos highlighting this special day.



Photo by A. Sue Weisler

Professor Hans Schmitthenner, center, with graduating chemistry students, from left, Taylor Barrett, Chelsea Weidman, Stephanie Beach and Lauren Heese.

## Four graduating chemistry students leave behind a research family that's done award-winning, groundbreaking work

#### BY DERRICK HUNT

For chemistry students and undergraduate researchers Taylor Barrett, Chelsea Weidman, Stephanie Beach and Lauren Heese, graduation will be bittersweet.

The four seniors entered RIT's chemistry program together as freshmen and quickly became inseparable friends after meeting in professor Hans Schmitthenner's research lab, which opened in 2012.

"My entire college experience has been as a part of this group," said Beach. "We all grew together through the chemistry program and our research. We really are like a family."

Under Schmitthenner's direction, the students conducted groundbreaking research on targeted molecular imaging agents over the past three years. The technology allows medical professionals to easily distinguish cancerous cells from healthy cells and has applications in virtually every stage of cancer treatment,

including early detection, diagnosis, surgery and recurrence checks.

Earlier this year, the researchers won a \$440,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health for the development of a photoacoustic imaging component in collaboration with the University of Rochester. Schmitthenner, Barrett, Weidman and Beach have also filed for a patent.

"It's never been just about the research with Dr. Hans — he mentored and shaped us as scientists," said Weidman.

Schmitthenner, who joined RIT's faculty in 2010, credits Barrett, Weidman, Beach and Heese with the success of his lab and research. Without their dedication and hard work, Schmitthenner doubts that his lab would have earned any of its recent accolades.

To Schmitthenner, the relationship between himself and his students was a partnership.

"In chemistry there is the thrill of the

chase, the utter dismay of reactions not working, and then the elation of capturing the target compound," said Schmitthenner. "It's tough to beat that feeling, and they've all experienced that now."

After May, each student will forge her own path. All four women are aiming to ultimately earn doctorate degrees in their respective fields.

Barrett, a chemistry major from Middletown, Pa., is considering programs at the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the University of Washington. After earning her Ph.D., Barrett desires to open her own lab or help create science policy.

The group's other chemistry major, Beach, was accepted by Boston University. Although she hails from Douglasville, Pa., Beach has always wanted to live in Boston.

Weidman, a biochemistry major from Eastampton, N.J., applied to several universities for graduate studies, and chose to pursue her Ph.D in chemistry at Boston College this fall.

Due to switching majors from biochemistry to biotechnology, Heese has an additional year of studies to complete at RIT. However, the Latrobe, Pa., native also plans to attend graduate school after graduating next spring.

Although they will no longer be working together at RIT, Schmitthenner and his former students hope to stay in touch.

"I can't wait to hear about what they accomplish," said Schmitthenner.

Schmitthenner's research lab, meanwhile, will continue to build on the foundation that Barrett, Weidman, Beach and Heese laid out.

"We have very promising students coming right along behind them, ready to step into the driver's seat," said Schmitthenner.
"They've played a large part in mentoring these students and have become role models whether they know it or not." ■

## RIT's graduation coordinator ready for her turn to cross the stage

For nearly 20 years, Linda Cunningham has been responsible for helping facilitate and coordinate RIT's scholarly events, faculty events and graduation ceremonies. This year, it's her turn to wear the cap and gown.

"I'm normally a behind-the-scenes person, but I don't know — you might see me doing cartwheels across that stage," said Cunningham, a project and event manager for the Office of the Provost who will earn her applied arts and science bachelor's degree in business management at this year's ceremonies.

It certainly hasn't been an easy process for Cunningham, who originally enrolled in college in 1979 but dropped out due to personal circumstances.

A single mother, Cunningham raised three children and put each of them through college. Her two oldest children have already graduated college, while her youngest will be graduating from Emerson College just four days before her RIT graduation.

"It's a big year for us," said Cunningham. "I was kind of hoping I would graduate before at least one of the kids but I'm

definitely not complaining. It was a priority for me to get my kids through college and now I'm finally graduating too."

Cunningham's academic journey began anew when she took a position with RIT's Academic Affairs office in 1997. After a few years at RIT, Cunningham started to ease back into college education by earning her certificate in exercise science.

"I wanted to see if I could really achieve this goal, between raising a family and working a full-time job," she said.

Cunningham then completed her associate degree in applied science, and after taking a brief break, she continued working toward the completion of her bachelor's degree. And at long last, her journey will reach its end in May when she graduates from RIT as an Outstanding Undergraduate Scholar with an undergraduate degree in business management, a minor in communication and concentrations in marketing and exercise science.

"It's amazing how much time is consumed by school," Cunningham said. "With my newfound free time, I think I'd really like to volunteer in the Rochester community and get a social life."



After 20 years of coordinating commencement ceremonies. Linda Cunningham will be participating in this year's, as a graduate of the Center for Multidisciplinary Studies.

Receiving a Fulbright Scholarship allowed Kunsang Dorjee to live his dream of studying in the United States. He earned his MBA and will return to Tibet to work in aovernment.

## Studying here fulfilled his dream

"Climb every mountain" could certainly describe Kunsang Dorjee's life.

As a Tibetan refugee who hails from the high Himalayans in the city of Dharamsala, India — home to His Holiness the Dalai Lama — he is neither a citizen nor has a country to call his own.

Born to a peasant family in a struggling exiled community, Dorjee's father died when he was 11, leaving behind a widow and three sons. A year later he "was on his own" — sent to a boarding school run by the Central Tibetan Administration.

But he always had a dream to study in

Dorjee said he "was greatly honored" to receive a Fulbright Scholarship to earn his MBA from RIT and will graduate with a 3.89 GPA from Saunders College of Business this May.

"I prepared very hard for this scholarship," he said. "Living in a challenging situation, even a multiple of my family's lifetime savings couldn't afford me such a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to study at such an esteemed university as RIT."

Dorjee also gives special thanks to his adviser Peggy Tirrell, senior associate director for graduate programs and admissions at Saunders College. "I am not as young as many other Fulbright students and I was pleased and honored she had faith in me. I wanted to live up to her expectations."

Although Dorjee has been an active

member of the Financial Management Association and Next Generation of Accountants, he said he most appreciates the faculty because of their real-world experience, the diversity of students "who bring culture and friendship," and the kindness of Saunders Visiting Lecturer Tom Traub who invited him to share a holiday with his family.

"My experience of that celebration was unforgettable," said Dorjee. "I wish every country and culture had Thanksgiving Day to appreciate the kindness of our near and dear ones."

In June, Dorjee will return home to a higher-ranking job within the Central Tibetan Administration, where he previously worked as chief protocol officer. His spiritual footpath includes supporting other refugee children to become professionals who can give back to the community something he learned firsthand from the teachings of the Dalai Lama, whom he said "was like meeting with Jesus."

"He taught me that helping others or giving happiness is the meaning of life," said Dorjee. "When I was growing up, I could spend only two months a year with my mother, who never remarried, and my eldest brother, who is mentally and physically challenged. Now I will get to live in the same house and see them every day. For that, I am grateful. Thanks to RIT, my life has truly changed." ■

## NTID student focusing on future

#### RY VIENNA MCGRAIN

Mason Chronister carefully files away colorful memories of people he has met, places he has traveled, unforgettable experiences he's had. As he faces his promising future, Chronister anticipates making memories in a new way as he copes with gradual loss of his vision.

Chronister, who will soon earn his associate in applied science degree in administrative support technology from RIT's National Technical Institute for the Deaf, has Usher Syndrome, a rare genetic condition resulting in hearing loss and slow-developing visual impairment that causes night blindness, loss of peripheral vision, and ultimately, complete vision loss. About four people in every 100,000 are diagnosed with the incurable condition.

"I was born deaf to hearing parents and attended mainstream schools," said Chronister, from Red Lion, Pa. "I didn't start noticing the effects of Usher Syndrome until I was about 14. As time has gone on, it's gotten worse. I'm not able to see at night and my peripheral vision is limited. Sometimes I look clumsy because my balance has been affected. But despite all of my challenges, I've always known that I can accomplish anything — including realizing my dream of one day working for the government."

In many ways, Chronister is like other successful RIT graduates. He carries a 3.34 GPA and is a certified Microsoft specialist

in Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint.
After graduation, he will use his skills as an administrative professional with the Defense Logistics Agency, a branch of the U.S. Department of Defense located about an hour away from his home in Pennsylvania. A successful co-op assignment last year

helped secure permanent employment.

"I've always been fascinated by government — how it operates and how it impacts people's lives," he said. "Although I'm deaf and have limited vision, I'm able to work with my supervisor and co-workers to expertly execute my job, which includes documenting sensitive military information."

Chronister was the first RIT student with Usher Syndrome to study abroad in Italy. He has also traveled extensively throughout the United States, visiting one of his favorite spots, San Francisco, where he actually hugged a part of the Golden Gate Bridge.

"And I hugged a column in the Roman Colosseum, too," he laughed. "When I see something famous, it's what I do. It helps me commit it to memory and literally helps put me in touch with these fascinating objects."

Back at NTID, Chronister has performed small roles in theatrical productions including *Damn Yankees!* and *Hairspray*.

"It's challenging for me because of the dramatic lighting and the many stage props in my path," he said. "It's a true team effort — from our director to the other deaf and hearing actors and interpreters — to be sure



Photo by A. Sue Weisler

Mason Chronister, who is graduating from NTID, says he won't let Usher Syndrome hold him back. He starts work later this month for the U.S. Department of Defense.

that everything comes together and works out for me. I saw another student with Usher Syndrome participate, and that really inspired me. And my participation seems to have inspired others to join in."

Those who know Chronister well say that he is destined to live a great life.

"Mason is awesomely intriguing," said Jonathan Holmes, his employment adviser at NTID. "He is unafraid to step into vulnerability and embrace his own authenticity. Mason is one of the few individuals I have ever encountered who has found the secret of living an honest and fulfilling life at such a young age."

"No one knows what the future holds," Chronister adds. "Every day they are making strides in the medical field and I continue to keep my strong faith. With the support of my family and friends, I refuse to let my loss of vision and hearing prevent me from doing everything I want to do."

## Army ROTC 'commission accomplished' for graduate Adam Podolec

## BY MICHELLE COMETA

Even before the bagpipes lead students into the Gordon Field House, Adam Podolec will be sworn in as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army during the annual Reserve Officers' Training Corps commissioning ceremony.

Podolec began as a cadet in RIT's Tiger Battalion five years ago. Shortly after graduating with a bachelor's degree in electrical Uengineering, he will become a member of a National Guard unit in Concord, N.H.

Before that, though, Podolec has to be sworn in to service. A military commissioning ceremony is about recognizing past training in both the classroom and in the field. It is also a launching point for cadets into service.

His commanding officer, Lt. Col. Edward Whitaker, will administer the oath, in which

Podolec will swear, "to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same. And that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am about to enter."

"Adam epitomizes the benevolent Army officer. Soon-to-be Second Lieutenant Podolec is a quiet professional whose maturity and leadership far exceeds his peers. Adam will make an outstanding officer," Whitaker said.

The first salute as a new officer is significant, tied to traditions in the Army that date back to the Civil War.

"My grandfather was a medic in Korea," said Podolec, who grew up in Cambridge, N.Y." After your oath, you do your first salute to a non-commissioned officer, so I will have my grandfather here for that. And it is also tradition for you to hand that person a silver dollar."

That tradition acknowledges the new rank and responsibility, and also symbolizes the mentoring relationship between new officers and experienced non-commissioned officers. This will be familiar to Podolec who worked his way to more advanced cadet ranks while at RIT. As he gained experience, he was given more responsibility and involved in guiding new cadets.

All ROTC students take military science classes in addition to traditional academic courses. Podolec pursued electrical

engineering and was part of an ankle-foot orthotic senior design project team.

He is currently working with Rochester's Al Sigl Center staff to learn more about the specific needs of clients with disabilities and what technological solutions might be developed by the staff and RIT student-engineers to support these individuals. Completing this final co-op will close his time at RIT.

After graduation, ROTC graduates can take one of three different routes to service: Active Duty, National Guard or Reserves.

"I have a very technical degree that has kind of an expiration date on it because technology moves so fast. I really want to use that degree that I worked for, but also be a part of the military," he said. "I'm committed to a National Guard base in Concord, N.H., where I'm going to be a medevac Black Hawk pilot. I just found that out not too long ago, so I am super excited."

He will be moving to New Hampshire after graduation.

He has more years of training ahead, specifically flight school and the Army's medical officers basic leadership course. Afterward is flight certification.

"I am ready for this. Everything about a month ago was up in the air... I didn't know the results of my flight board, I didn't know if I was going to be able to fly but I had a plan and worked toward it," he said. "Those helicopters that fly over the campus from time to time? That's going to be me one day!"



hoto by A. Sue Weisler

Adam Podolec, who is graduating with a degree in electrical engineering, will be sworn in to the U.S. Army and train to be a medevac Black Hawk pilot with the National Guard.

Tiger Sports

## **RIT's Matt** Garbowsky dominates college hockey

It was a dream season for RIT men's hockey captain Matt Garbowsky.

The fourth-year business management major from St. George, Ontario, Canada, became a household name in college hockey in 2015, setting countless records and earning several accolades en route to leading RIT to the Atlantic Hockey Championship.

Garbowsky and the Tigers advanced to the NCAA Tournament for the second time as a Division I program. RIT defeated No. 1 Minnesota State in the NCAA Midwest Regional before falling to Nebraska-Omaha in the Regional Final. RIT enjoyed a seven-game winning streak late in the season and finished 20-15-5.

In March, Garbowsky was named one of 10 finalists for the 2015 Hobey Baker Award, college hockey's most prestigious individual honor. He was the second Tiger to be named a finalist, joining Simon Lambert who was on the list in 2008. On April 10, Garbowsky was named a 2015 CCM Hockey Second Team All-American, becoming the first RIT player to earn this prestigious honor since the program moved to Division I in 2005. He was also named a USCHO.com Second Team All-American.

In addition, Garbowsky was named the Atlantic Hockey Player of the Year, Best Defensive Forward, won the Leading Scorer Award, and was a unanimous first team selection. He was also named the Most Valuable Player of the Atlantic Hockey Championship Tournament and was named to the All-Tournament Team.

"Matt is very deserving of all of these tremendous



Matt Garbowsky

individual honors," said RIT head coach Wayne Wilson. "He has worked extremely hard at his game and is the most complete hockey player to go through the RIT program. He is not only a great player, but an even better person. We are very proud of his accomplishments during his four years at RIT."

Garbowsky, a three-year captain, enjoyed an incredible senior season for the Tigers. A four-time AHC Player of the Week, Garbowsky led Division I with 729 face-off wins, ande led Atlantic Hockey in scoring during league play.

"RIT was a blast, all four years, " Garbowsky said. "I had a great time and got a great degree at the same time. Definitely glad RIT gave me the chance to play. It was a lot of fun."

Garbowsky set the Division I team record with 54 points and was one goal shy of tying the Division I team record. He tied a career-high with four points on three separate occasions and recorded a pair of hat tricks, tying a Division I single-season team mark. Garbowsky finished his RIT career with 48 goals and 66 assists in 128 games. His 114 points are fifth best at RIT in the Division I era, while the 48 goals are fourth and 66 assists are tied for seventh.

On March 31, Garbowsky signed a contract with the Rochester Americans of the American Hockey League through the 2015-16 season. He appeared in nine games for the Amerks and recorded his first professional point on April 11.

Jordan Ruby

## goes pro fessional contract East Coast Hockey League (ECHL) and

**Standout** 

goalie

save percentage. Overall, Ruby set the school mark the Division I era at RIT.

## **Honorees heralded at Press Radio Club Day** of Champions

RIT President Bill Destler, men's lacrosse head coach Jake Coon and men's and women's hockey student manager Joe Vicario were honored at the 2015 Rochester Press Radio Club Day of Champions Dinner May 4. Destler was named the Morrie Silver Award Winner, presented by the Rochester Red Wings; Coon, the Rochester Razor Sharks Local Coach of the Year; and Vicario, a Coca-Cola Hometown Hero.

Since Destler became RIT president, the men's hockey team made a run to the NCAA Division I Frozen Four in 2010. Women's hockey won the NCAA Division III National Championship in 2012 and made the leap to Division I later that year. The men's lacrosse team has become a perennial power, making five straight NCAA Tournament appearances, including their first trip to the championship game in 2013. In addition, several athletes have earned All-American honors and RIT student athletes maintain a grade-point average of 3.2.

In 2014, RIT opened the \$38 million, state-of-the-art Gene Polisseni Center.

In his six seasons at RIT men's lacrosse, Coon has led the Tigers to a 101-14 record, five consecutive conference titles, and five trips to the NCAA Division III Tournament, including the Tigers' first-ever appearance in the national championship game in 2013. He was named Division III Coach of the Year in 2011 by the United States International Lacrosse Association and in 2013 by the Men's Collegiate Lacrosse Association.

"Part-time Joe" Vicario, a fifth-year applied technology student in RIT's National Technical Institute for the Deaf, is a manager for the men's and women's hockey teams. On Feb. 7, RIT players wore special jerseys that were auctioned off during the game with more than \$10,000 going to the Testicular Cancer Foundation of Western New York, which Vicario founded. Go to www.tcafofwny.org for more information. Vicario, who has Goldenhar Syndrome and is a testicular cancer survivor, has survived 31 surgeries, including 21 before his 12<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## RIT runners race along the 'Tiger Trail'



RIT cross country and track and field runners from the past and present pushed across the finish line March 29, completing the eight-day, 1,400-mile RIT Tiger Trail relay from Auburn, Ala., to campus. The run was held to raise awareness for the national Tigers for Tigers coalition, and the athletes - the first female group on campus to complete a journey of this magnitude — were greeted enthusiastically back in Henrietta. Runners, from left to right, are Amanda Dole, Nicole Varble, Julie Kerchner, Megan Karpie, Rachel Zoyhofski, Kaylin Beiter, Kelly Weiskittel, Alex Shipman and Jeriann Beiter.

Research and Scholarship

## RIT honors outstanding professors of the year

## Eisenhart, Provost's awards are prized recognition for faculty

## Web extra

To read about more faculty award winners, go to rit.edu/athenaeum and click on 'Research and Scholarship.'

## **Eisenhart Awards for Outstanding Teaching**

# Fourth teaching and mentoring recognition in five years presented to CAST professor

#### BY MICHELLE COMETA

RIT dedicated a new interactive learning classroom at the start of this academic year. Today it's filled with mechanical engineering technology students solving problems — and swaying to salsa music.

While the technology paired with active and cooperative pedagogy in the classroom has positively influenced student learning, Robert Garrick added a personal touch and the encouragement necessary for these student successes.

Garrick is one of this year's winners of the Eisenhart Award for Outstanding Teaching. He is being recognized for his work on the Technology Rich Interactive Learning Environment classroom, also referred to as TRILE. An associate professor in the College of Applied Science and Technology's School of Engineering Technology, Garrick led the development of the interactive classroom as well as research on its effectiveness.

"It is nice to be recognized, but it's even better to involve others in this. Word is spreading about the classroom and the students' learning. More of our CAST faculty will be using the classroom here and with connections to our international campuses," he said. "We started from an 'incubator' in the Teaching, Learning Technology Lab in the Wallace Center. We took what worked there and deployed those features into a common use classroom."

Garrick has shown that technology can enhance collaborative learning, and it resonates with today's students. By connecting the teaching, learning and technology dots, his students have seen remarkable retention of material in the MET program. Garrick has also seen improved retention rates and increased interaction among students.

Filled with tablet computers, cameras, interactive screens and collaborative software, the classroom is primarily used for teaching CAST courses. The new learning environment is a means to transform education from predominantly lecture to more active/cooperative learning, where students, especially those with lower GPAs or from under-represented groups, can benefit from this non-traditional classroom setting. Being successful in coursework increases the likelihood that students will be retained in academic degree programs, graduate and eventually move into viable careers, said Garrick. It also has become a social learning environment when they have some input about the atmosphere in the classroom from putting together student work teams



to the background music they play while solving problems.

"It becomes their classroom, and their personalities come through, much more than in a lecture class," he said.

This is the fourth time in five years that Garrick has been recognized for his innovative teaching practices. In addition to this year's award, he won the Richard and Virginia Eisenhart Provost's Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2009-2010, the Provost's Award for Faculty Mentoring in 2012-2013, and the Provost's Innovative Teaching with Technology Award in

2013-2014.

"We are very proud of all our students, faculty and staff — but especially of those who continue to raise the bar of excellence," said Fred Walker, dean of the College of Applied Science and Technology. "Being honored as a recipient of the prestigious Eisenhart Award for Outstanding Teaching, and recognized once again for his teaching, remains testimony to Rob's exemplary dedication and commitment to his students. We applaud Rob for yet another wonderful achievement and wish him continued success in his career at RIT."



# Award-winning animator and director adds to list of honors

#### BY RICH KILE

As a longtime animator and movie director, Tom Gasek has inventively created countless original scenes and characters during more than 30 years of award-winning, professional stop-motion filmmaking.

He now has another award to add to his honors after earning one of this year's

Eisenhart Awards for Outstanding Teaching for his work in the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences.

"Teaching has been a wonderful second career for me," said Gasek, an associate professor and director of graduate studies in the School of Film and Animation (SOFA) who joined RIT in 2005. "This is really very humbling for me."

In many ways, the Utica, N.Y., native has come full circle as a 1979 graduate of RIT's School of Design. He was among the first

class to take animation at the university and is a former student of longtime RIT professor R. Roger Remington.

Gasek won a Student Academy Award near the start of his career with partner Malcolm Spaull for their animated version of Lewis Carroll's *The Walrus and the Carpenter* — back when both attended RIT. Spaull now serves as administrative chair of SOFA.

A self-described "animation gypsy,"
Gasek then embarked on a nearly three-decade path of full-time animation and directing that saw him create with a number of the industry's most respected names.

At Aardman Animations in the United Kingdom, he contributed animation to Nick Park's *Wallace and Gromit* short "The Wrong Trousers," and the Peter Lord/Nick Park feature *Chicken Run*. Gasek later codirected and animated the *Inside-Out Boy* for Nickelodeon, which is part of the permanent collection at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

He has contributed animation to Aardman's *Creature Comforts America*, Sony Bravia's *Play-Doh*, and Laika Studio's *Coraline*, and he continues to direct and animate commercials and independent films. In the past several years, Gasek produced, directed and animated two short independent stop-motion films, *Off-Line* and *Ain't No Fish*. Co-directed with partner Miki Cash, *Ain't No Fish* won the Director's Award at last year's San Francisco International Ocean Film Festival. He also wrote a book for Focal Press in 2011 titled *Frame-by-Frame Stop Motion*, the only complete resource of its kind.

Gasek's second career started after reaching out to his former film partner Spaull about a possible teaching opportunity in SOFA. "He said there might be a one-year opportunity here and things grew from there," Gasek recalled.

Since his arrival at RIT 10 years ago, Gasek has leveraged his industry experience while nurturing burgeoning filmmakers. While he had no formal experience in the classroom, he trained fledgling animators for years on TV series while heading up studios in San Francisco and Massachusetts. He uses his connections to identify trends and help keep the SOFA program apace with the industry.

Today, Gasek prides himself with the connections he makes with his students.

"I enjoy my students, hearing what they have to say with their work, and helping them develop their ideas," Gasek said. "I have great respect for them as people and creators."

## Effectively making lessons come to life

#### BY VIENNA MCGRAIN

Providing experiential learning opportunities and establishing strong connections with his students are two contributors to Christopher Kurz's success in the classroom. His triumphs are the result of thought-provoking and practical applications of his lessons and his ability to adapt his teaching style and philosophy to meet the changing needs of his diverse students.

Kurz, an associate professor in NTID's secondary education of students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing master's program and a 1995 graduate of RIT's applied mathematics program in the College of Science, is one of this year's recipients of the Eisenhart Award for Outstanding Teaching. Kurz helps develop the talents of his students who will soon re-enter classrooms around the world in a different capacity — as educators of deaf and hard-of-hearing secondary students.

"My inspiration comes from seeing my students improve their skills, grow, become professionals," he said. "I have also learned to connect deeper with my students and learn more about where they come from, what they bring to the table. My students and I — we have a mutually beneficial relationship."

Kurz is also known for making his lessons come alive. For several years, he has taught deaf history courses in which students examine artifacts like school diaries written by deaf students in the 19th century, war-era dollar bills that were published by a school for the deaf during wartime, and antiquated instructional materials to catch a glimpse into what life was like for deaf people over the past 400 years. He also enlists a technique called "Theatre in Education," where actors dressed as Edward Gallaudet, Alexander Graham Bell and other famous pioneers in deaf history entertain and educate through debates designed to spark conversations about deaf life and issues in deaf education from decades past. Kurz's students



also develop partnerships and curricular and historical research projects alongside Rochester School for the Deaf that, accordingly to Kurz, is rich in local deaf history.

"I want to be a driving force in raising the

bar for students in the field of deaf education," he added. "I'm a product of deaf education, so it's important for me to be a catalyst in educating and preparing the next generation of teachers of the deaf."



Katie Terezakis college of Liberal Arts

# Philosophy professor believes teaching 'keeps her honest'

## BY GREG LIVADAS

Although Katie Terezakis, associate professor in the Department of Philosophy, teaches a wide variety of subjects in philosophy, she most enjoys returning to the

ancient Greeks, whose lineage she shares.

"I tell my students that Socrates remains our role model, which probably means that ideally, good teaching entails upsetting people every day," she said.

Terezakis, who has taught at RIT for nearly 10 years, is receiving one of this year's Eisenhart Awards for Outstanding Teaching.

"I'm lucky enough to be able to talk to students every day about some of the things I care most about," she said. "Teaching keeps you honest. You cannot stand in front of people, day after day, without clarifying what you really mean, deciding which ideas and which values work and which do not, and updating your own studies accordingly."

Terezakis grew up in Connecticut, attended college in Heidelberg, Germany, and went to graduate school at the New School for Social Research in New York City. She lives on a former farm "almost in the middle of nowhere, which was my aspiration when I left Manhattan a decade ago," she said

She enjoys gardening, cooking, making wine and providing animals sanctuary, and is obviously passionate about philosophy.

She wants her students to feel as though the philosophical canon is "their rightful inheritance" and "an ongoing tradition that is full of techniques of reasoning and exercises of imagination that enable each of us to cultivate ideas that work, to clear out the biases that don't, and to cope realistically with what remains unknown."

She is writing a book on Rochester-born philosopher John William Miller, which expands on some of her earlier published work in linguistic philosophy. She looks forward to screening that new research in her classes.

"I want to keep the candor demanded in the classroom alive in my own writing," she said. "Teaching in the philosophy department at RIT has allowed me to do that."

## Richard and Virginia Eisenhart Provost's Award for Excellence in Teaching

# Professor brings passion to teach from the Big Apple to RIT

#### BY RICH KILE

David Halbstein hails from the land of the Jersey Shore and Bruce Springsteen. Yet when he stepped onto the RIT campus for a job interview five years ago, he said he felt a connection like never before.

"I was working in New York City at the time, but when I came to the campus I knew this is where I wanted to be," said Freehold, N.J., native Halbstein, an assistant professor in the School of Design and this year's recipient of the Richard and Virginia Eisenhart Provost's Award for Excellence in Teaching, given to a faculty member with less than three years experience. "I felt at home."

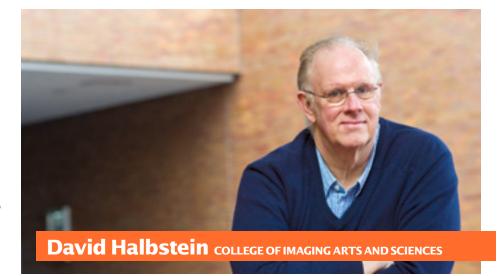
Before his arrival on campus, the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences professor worked and taught in metropolitan New York for 15 years. His production credits included the likes of MTV, USA Networks and PBS.

But he always felt a calling to the classroom and teaching. Halbstein spearheaded and ran the inaugural Autodesk Corporate Training Center in New York City, and prior to RIT taught 3D digital graphics at the School of Visual Arts and New York University down in the Big Apple.

Now, as an assistant professor of 3D digital design, Halbstein cautions his students that his class — and the design industry itself — weeds out those without the fervor to succeed in a demanding field.

"When I first walk into the classroom, I tell my students that in this particular discipline you need a passion and a lot of talent to pull all things together and do well," Halbstein said.

That philosophy hearkens back to his days as a student at William Patterson University, when "I knew what I wanted to get out of school and it had little to do with what the professor expected of me," he said.



As a professor, he stresses to students to stay motivated and focused to succeed in the rapidly changing field of 3D design.

"There is always going to be new software and methodologies in this discipline," Halbstein said. "But it isn't about the software. Design and images matter, along with texture and color. I tell my students that they need to learn how to think conceptually and apply that to an ever-changing world."

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