

Brick City Homecoming 2007

State of the Institute

Good morning everyone and welcome to RIT's Brick City Homecoming. It is wonderful to have so many parents, alumni and friends joining us for this magnificent weekend. I am especially excited because this is my first Brick City weekend and I'm looking forward to experiencing it myself along with my wife Rebecca. Rebecca and I have been warmly welcomed by the RIT family. And you, too, are a big and important part of our family. I am honored and humbled by the invitation to join the RIT family as your 9th President.

The RIT family certainly has a lot going for it. To say that I have been impressed with the quality and range of RIT's educational and research programs would be an understatement. And I have come to appreciate even more RIT's unique emphasis on career-oriented educational programs and a student-centered learning experience. Whatever we do together to move RIT to the next level, we must be sure to sustain this unique mission. RIT is indeed a "Category of One" university!

See for yourself as you tour the campus. You will discover exciting new courses in the hottest career fields. You will find partnerships with business, industry and government prospering. You will find new laboratories and facilities throughout the campus.

Let me review some of RIT's recent significant accomplishments and some exciting new initiatives for the coming year:

- First, let's review our enrollment:
 - Nearly 16,000 students call RIT home, an all-time high. This is not just in Rochester, but also in satellite campus around the world and even students studying on-line.

- Indeed, RIT is now the 15th largest private university in the nation, in terms of undergraduate enrollment.
- Enrolled students come from all 50 states and nearly 100 countries.
- This year's freshman class of 2,530 is an all-time high. They are among the best and brightest.
- Our graduate program continues to grow with 2,500 students.
- One of the hallmarks of an RIT education is the cooperative education program, where students get hands on, practical experience with the best big and small companies in the world. For 6 straight years, *U.S. News and World Report* has singled out a few universities as the elite internship/co-op schools across the land. RIT has made the list each time, including this year. This past year, we placed more than 3,500 students in more than 5,200 co-op assignments with 1,900 employers across the United States and overseas. The 10 largest employers of recent RIT graduates are: Microsoft, Toyota, Lockheed Martin, Xerox, Cisco, Harris RF Communications, Intel, Liberty Mutual, BAE Systems, and Boeing.
- Let me also tell you about our recent big announcement: Building upon our leadership in the field of sustainable production, RIT has established The Golisano Institute for Sustainability, thanks to a \$10 million commitment from B. Thomas Golisano, founder and chairman of Paychex Inc. and RIT trustee. The Golisano Institute will expand our initiatives in education, research and technology transfer in areas related to sustainable design, life-cycle engineering, remanufacturing and pollution prevention.

- Now let's address Academic Affairs: We've added our fourth doctoral program, a Ph.D. in the field of color science. This program will be a complementary and synergistic partner with our three existing Ph.D. programs in Imaging Science, Microsystems, and Computing and Information Sciences.
- We are now in the review process of examining Ph.D. programs in astrophysics in the College of Science with arguably the nation's strongest faculty in this field. We are also planning a doctoral program in sustainability, with the start of the Golisano Institute.
- We have also added several new programs at the master and bachelor degree levels. These include:
 - M.S. in Innovation Management.
 - B.S. in Game Development & Design (We already have a master's degree program in this field...so don't think your kids are wasting time playing computer games. Think again: This is a billion dollar industry and RIT is a leader!)
 - B.S. in Information Security & Forensics
 - B.S. in Consumer Finance
 - B.S. in Cultural Resource Studies
- As you walk around campus, you will see a few construction projects, either just starting or wrapping up:
 - The Kate Gleason College of Engineering recently dedicated a new research wing of the James E. Gleason Building. The wing houses the Department of Computer Engineering, the Brinkman Machine Tools and Manufacturing Laboratory and space for student project work through the college's multidisciplinary senior design program. The construction was funded through the efforts of

several donors including the Gleason Foundation, the Brinkman Family Foundation and Harris Corp.

- The College of Applied Science and Technology Engineering Technology Building is coming along quickly. The \$8.5 million, 33,600-square-foot building has two features made possible by a \$2 million grant from the William G. McGowan Charitable Fund: the McGowan Student Commons, a gathering space for students and special events, and the William G. McGowan Center for Telecommunications.

- You may have noticed a mini-village popping up on the northeast corner of the campus. Often referred to as “College Town”, Park Point at RIT is a \$72 million commercial venture that will bring a variety of shopping, dining and housing to the 60-acre parcel. Park Point, being developed by Wilmorite Corporation, is going to change the face of this campus. It will enhance the RIT experience and be an extension of the university.

Some features of the project include:

- Retail space with dozens of stores, including a Barnes and Noble bookstore.
- A variety of housing with room for more than 900 occupants.
- Theme restaurants.
- Galleries highlighting arts and crafts from students and faculty.

We expect to Park Point to open a year from now.

- We have a very vibrant campus in terms of student life. We offer diverse programming (9,000 programs within Residence Life, for example) with 163 active clubs and organizations. We have 24 varsity sports, including Division I hockey. The Tigers are the defending Atlantic Hockey Association regular season champions and we play the

likes of Minnesota, Boston College, Air Force and Army this year. We are also excited to host Cornell in downtown Rochester on Oct. 27.

- On a serious note, RIT has taken steps to improve campus safety in the wake of the Virginia Tech tragedy. This includes an enhanced emergency alert system. In a few short weeks, we will be rolling out a new system that will allow us to employ a variety of communication methods, including text messaging, instant messaging, e-mail and voice calls to cell phones and dorm phones. The safety of the RIT community is certainly among our top priorities.

Now...let me tell you about some ambitious conversations we've been having on campus the past few months.

In our lifetimes, we have seen global competition force the virtual elimination of the kind of jobs in this country that once allowed hard-working individuals to support their families even if they did not have a college degree. With all this change and global competition, does America still possess any significant competitive advantages that we can exploit to both sustain and advance the quality of life here? I think the answer to this question is a resounding yes, and happily, RIT is well positioned to take a leading role in these efforts. The wide-ranging talent of RIT faculty, staff and students is ideally suited to meet the needs of industry for new technologies and new ideas for businesses, products, and services. This unique combination of intellectual assets also places RIT in a strong position to become a national leader in addressing complex social problems such as global warming or sustainability. RIT's unique program mix of the traditional "institute of technology" programs in science, engineering, and business combined with its strong programs in the liberal, design, and creative arts and the unique diversity provided by NTID, gives the university

the potential to become a national center of creativity and innovation unlike any other.

Indeed, RIT has an unfair advantage! So let's look to the future:

Imagine a "Category Of One" university that not only educates its students for productive careers, but reinforces America's greatest competitive advantages by expecting creativity, invention, and innovation of every student before graduation. Imagine a university that teaches scientists and engineers how artists envision and create new works. I envision a university that uses diversity as a creative engine in this process and where the barriers between the hearing and the deaf dissolve in the face of this innovative energy. We are currently planning the first student innovation center on the RIT campus and an innovation festival each year at RIT at which these efforts, hundreds of them, would be showcased (Please save May 3rd on your calendars for our inaugural Innovation and Creativity Festival). Imagine RIT, not as just a "teaching university" or a "research university", but as the first "innovation university."

Imagine a "Category Of One" university with close ties to the corporate sector that decides to make its faculty and staff, graduate and undergraduate students, and facilities available to companies to carry out short and medium term corporate research and development projects at low cost and without the usual intellectual property fights that usually derail such efforts. We are looking for business and industry feedback related to a "Corporate R&D at RIT" program in which hundreds of companies discover that they can once again afford to do new product research and development, while identifying future employees at the same time.

Imagine a "Category Of One" university in which complex social problems are not attacked by individuals working in disciplinary silos, but

rather by teams of students and faculty from all disciplines who, from the outset, benefit from the ideas and contributions of those from very different perspectives. Imagine RIT being the home of the first “Team Ph.D.” program. Imagine how exciting that would be and how much fun it would be to shake up the world of higher education with these ideas and others.

Imagine how much fun we can have working together to make RIT the university that captures the new high ground in higher education....

Let me take just one more moment on the topic of alumni, and this affects current alumni as well as our “alumni-in-training”, our students. This weekend’s reunion activity is just one example of the new programming recently added to our alumni relations program. We recognize the important role our alumni will play in the continued growth of RIT. That is why we are making a greater effort to enhance our alumni relations programming, services and benefits over the next several years. We will also be looking for more ways to engage our alumni with current students – as mentors, guest lecturers, and career advisors. I invite you all to get involved as we continue enhancing our RIT family connections.

I am proud that we now have more than 100,000 alumni living in 103 countries. The true measure of RIT success is not the graduation of students, but rather the success of our alumni!

I will be on the road quite a bit in the coming year, visiting alumni in 30 cities across the nation. I encourage your feedback. Please visit my website at rit.edu/president for more information and how to reach me.

These are some of the highlights I wanted to share with you today about where we are and where we are going. Rebecca and I are so grateful to all of you for giving us the opportunity to think big about what we can accomplish together. We are honored to be a part of the RIT family.

We have a full weekend planned for you, so we hope you will take this opportunity to participate in the variety of activities. We encourage you to visit any one of the eight colleges to mingle with faculty, administrators and staff. Enjoy yourselves at some of the signature events, including a presentation in the Gordon Field House by Steve Wozniak, co-founder of Apple Computer and a Silicon Valley icon. And don't forget tonight's show, also in the Gordon Field House, by comedian Howie Mandel, host of NBC's "Deal or No Deal."

Thank you for being a part of our family and sharing this special weekend with us. There are nearly 4,000 of you here this weekend. We hope that you will leave here feeling a stronger connection to RIT and to each other.

Thanks again and have a great weekend!