Dear Members of the RIT Community:

It is time for RIT to poise itself for our Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) decennial reaccreditation—the single most important standard of accreditation and the measure of academic excellence against which higher education institutions in our region are judged.

The decennial evaluation consists of an extensive institutional self-study process that produces a written self-study report highlighting both RIT’s significant strengths as well as possible challenges going forward. This report and the newly revised accreditation standards serve as the basis for an on-site evaluation by a team of peer evaluators. The MSCHE standards, which drive the self-study, center on seven areas: Mission and Goals; Ethics and Integrity; Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience; Support of the Student Experience; Educational Effectiveness Assessment; Planning, Resources and Institutional Improvement; and Governance, Leadership and Administration.

Those in our community who worked on the last reaccreditation process will recall that the entire process requires between 2 ½- 3 years of preparation. Given that our on-site evaluation occurs in 2016-2017, we are now in the preliminary planning stage. We are very pleased to report that we have appointed two very capable and experienced co-chairs for our Self-Study Steering Committee: Dr. Michael Laver, Associate Professor, History, College of Liberal Arts and Dr. Anne Wahl, Assistant Provost for Assessment and Accreditation, Academic Affairs. Anne and Michael will work together with Senior Associate Provost Christine Licata to coordinate the entire process.

While the Steering Committee exercises a vital leadership role throughout the self-study phase, much of the important work will be carried out by a number of working groups that will research and report on the questions and topics the Steering Committee identifies as important to the self-study. This is an inclusive community endeavor and as such, our goal is to have a broad cross section of the campus community engaged at every stage: in the steering committee, affiliated working groups, and the campus-wide discussions.
This reaccreditation process is enhanced significantly when membership on these committees reflects the diversity of the campus; includes individuals who are respected and well-connected to what is happening on campus; and represents seasoned as well as newer community members. This opportunity also represents a great opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from all corners of RIT.

In order to ensure such wide ranging participation, we invite you to consider nominating yourself or a colleague to serve on either the Steering Committee or on a working group. The work of the Steering Committee will begin in January 2015 and continue until Spring 2017: working groups will fire up in September 2015 and conclude in May 2016. Given the great importance of the accreditation process, this work will be regarded as service to the University of the highest order.

Please think about how you might be involved!

Send nominations by December 1, 2014 to: Karel Shapiro at kdsdfp@rit.edu.

Sincerely,

Bill Destler, Jeremy Haefner, Provost
President and Sr. Vice President for Academic Affairs