

State of the Institute
Brick City Homecoming 2009

Thank you Matt for your gracious introduction. Good morning everyone and welcome to RIT's Brick City Homecoming and Family Weekend. It is wonderful to have so many parents, alumni and friends joining us for this magnificent weekend. The RIT family has a great story to tell as the university enters its 180th year. Today, the convergence of innovation and creativity on this campus clearly gives RIT an unfair advantage. When our "left brain and right brain" students engage with RIT's outstanding faculty, a learning environment is created where innovation and creativity flourish. Matt, by the way, is fine example of the RIT experience. He is an information technology major with a communications minor from Grafton, Mass. This summer, he completed a co-op assignment for an online company in Hollywood where he gained valuable experience in product management.

As you tour the campus this weekend, you will discover exciting new courses in the most relevant career fields. You will find partnerships with business, industry and government prospering. You will explore new laboratories and facilities throughout this thriving campus.

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

- First, our enrollment has set records in several categories:
 - Nearly 17,000 students call RIT home, an all-time high. This is not just in Rochester, but also in satellite campuses around the world and even students studying on-line.

- RIT is now among the top dozen largest private universities in the nation, in terms of undergraduate enrollment.
- This year's freshmen class of 2,640 is an all-time high and is more talented and more diverse than last year's, making RIT one of the nation's most selective universities.
- Applications to our graduate programs grew by 14 percent to almost 5,000.
- Consider these two statistics as we live in a more technological and global world:
 - RIT is now the third largest producer of undergraduate degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics among ALL private universities.
 - We are now the number one producer of undergraduate computing degrees among ALL institutions nationally, public or private.
- The hallmark of an RIT education for more than 90 years has been experiential learning. Last year, more than 3,500 students alternated periods of study on campus with paid employment in more than 1,900 firms across the U.S. and overseas. For eight straight years, *U.S. News and World Report* has singled out a few universities, including RIT, as the elite internship/co-op schools across the land.
- Let's address other highlights throughout the campus:
 - This past year we initiated a number of new undergraduate academic programs in areas as diverse as journalism, chemical engineering, 3D digital graphics, and philosophy, an M.S. degree in Criminal Justice,

and a new Ph.D. program in Sustainability, our sixth doctoral program at RIT.

- For the first time this fall we admitted undecided students to a “University Studies” program to support those students who are undecided to a major when they enroll.
- We completed our first year of operation of our fledgling campus in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and are growing enrollments there in a number of engineering and business programs. This complements our existing campuses in Croatia and Kosovo and other relationships we have with more than 60 countries across the globe.
- Federal funding for the National Technical Institute for the Deaf increased to \$68 million last year, and enrollment is at an all time high of about 1,450 students.
- Two years ago, we launched the Golisano Institute for Sustainability with the announcement of a \$10 million gift from Trustee Tom Golisano. Last year, funding for our research programs in this area exceeded \$13 million, and we will soon begin construction of a new facility to house this growing research activity. The campus can also boast of many other faculty working in areas such as environmental science, sustainable engineering, green transportation, and environmental policy.
- Speaking of sustainability, RIT students, faculty, and staff have joined together to design and build a sustainable Habitat for Humanity house for a deserving family in downtown Rochester. Students, including those from the group “Engineers for a Sustainable World”, have completed the design, and construction is to begin this month. I encourage all of you to look for the “Sign a Stud” table on the quarter

- mile and contribute to the costs of this project. All contributions to this project are considered contributions to RIT, and we need to raise \$70,000 to cover material costs associated with the construction.
- RIT's Climate Change Action Awareness Week, to be held Oct. 19 through 24, is an opportunity to increase overall public understanding of the need for stronger policies and government action to reduce emissions and prevent drastic environmental damage caused by climate change. It also allows us to engage members of the RIT community with like minded individuals around the world who will be undertaking similar activities as part of 350.org's International Day of Action on Oct. 24.
 - We initiated a major new alliance with the Rochester General Health System which is already bearing fruit in terms of expanded research opportunities for our faculty and students, increased co-op and internship opportunities for our students, and an expanding academic program inventory in the fields of biomedical science and engineering.
 - Sponsored research activity grew by 17 percent last year to almost \$60 million, not including the federal funding we receive in support of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf.
 - Private gifts to RIT last year totaled more than \$25 million despite the global economic crisis that made fundraising more difficult than ever before.
 - We held our second "Imagine RIT: Innovation and Creativity Festival", with over 400 exhibits, demonstrations, and performances displaying the extraordinary range of creative and innovative work produced by students, faculty, staff. Over 25,000 people attended,

and we look forward to an even bigger festival next spring ... Save the date for our next Festival - May 1!!

- **As you explore the campus you will notice several construction projects.** We recently completed construction on our second certifiably green building, the new University Services Center and Center for Student Innovation. The space for student innovation will help spawn new technologies, innovative products and services, for-profit businesses and other enterprises that address societal challenges and produce creative works of art and scholarship.

We also started construction on a new building for the School for American Crafts, on the Vignelli Design Center - a world-class facility to house the entire archive of world-renowned designers Massimo and Lella Vignelli - and on Global Village, a retail marketplace and housing complex that will bear a resemblance to the street-side cafés of Europe. In addition, we are almost finished with a complete renovation of part of the Student Alumni Union to accommodate growing student demands for organizational and recreational space.

- **Speaking of student life, we have a very vibrant campus with many success stories:**
 - We offer diverse programming with nearly 200 active clubs and organizations.
 - We have 24 varsity sports, including Division I men's hockey. We will join the Liberty League next year for all of our Division III intercollegiate sports competitions. The Liberty League, which consists of Clarkson, Hobart/William Smith, Rennselaer, University of Rochester, St. Lawrence, Skidmore, Union, and Vassar, was unanimous in its recommendation to invite RIT to

join. We also plan to move our women's hockey team to Division I status, joining our men's team at that level.

■ **We have some amazing students, and here are just a few recent examples of their great work:**

- Lindsay Berkebile (**pronounced Burkee-bile**), a film and animation student, is the winner of a 2009 Princess Grace Award. The Princess Grace Foundation-USA, named in honor of Princess Grace Kelly of Monaco, gives annual awards to aspiring artists from across the country in theater, dance and film.
- Shukria (**SHOE-crya**) Amani is an Afghan woman who taught at Kabul University, was jailed by the Taliban and now considers herself lucky to continue graduate studies in the United States. Amani now lives in Rochester and recently completed her MBA degree from the E. Philip Saunders College of Business.
- This summer in California, the RIT Formula SAE racecar team took first place overall among 81 teams in the 2009 Collegiate Design Series. Led by faculty advisor Alan Nye, this was the first time the RIT team placed first overall on American soil and swept the individual categories.

■ **Let's have these students stand and be recognized
(Applause)**

■ **Now...let me talk a bit about some of the conversations we've been having on campus about the future:**

I would be remiss if I did not address how RIT has handled this past year's global financial crisis. To the campus community, I proposed that we would

make protecting the quality of our educational programs and protecting the students, faculty, and staff our highest priorities as we navigated these uncharted waters. I am pleased to report that we have accomplished these goals. We moved additional funds to financial aid to ensure that those students who are facing special economic hardships as a result of the current economic crisis are able to complete their programs. We have also, unlike many other colleges and universities, managed the crisis to date without any layoffs of faculty or staff.

Going forward, RIT is well positioned to take a leading role in academia. 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. Our combination of intellectual assets 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 programs in science, technology, 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. I like to say: Imagine RIT, not as just a "teaching university" or a "research university", but as the first "innovation university."

If we can continue to move RIT in this direction during the years ahead, RIT will quickly take its place among the nation's finest universities, public or private. And we will have accomplished that goal for the best of reasons – we will have worked for the benefit of our students, our community, our nation, and the world, and perhaps had some fun along the way.

- **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 homecoming activity is just one example of the programming 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. Last year, I visited more than 25 cities across the nation in an attempt to re-connect our alumni. What I find on these trips is an increasingly proud group of alumni who are eager to help build this wonderful university. I will continue these trips and work with our alumni to find new ways in which they can contribute. I am proud that we now have more than 106,000 alumni living in 123 countries. The true measure of RIT success is not the graduation of students, but rather the success of our alumni!
- **These are some of the highlights I wanted to share with you today about where we are and where we are going.** My wife, Rebecca, and I are so grateful to all of you for giving us the opportunity to think big about what we can accomplish together, and 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 Jimmy Wales. Ranked by *Forbes* Magazine as a “Web Celeb”, Wales is a U.S. Internet entrepreneur and wiki

pioneer, best known as the founder of Wikipedia, the collaborative free content encyclopedia on the Web.

And tonight we start a new tradition by having our Division I hockey team play during this Brick City Homecoming. Tonight, the Tigers open the season vs. Colgate in downtown Rochester's Blue Cross Arena. Let's fill the arena with a sea of Orange!

Thank you for being a part of our family and sharing this special weekend with us. There are more than 10,000 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!

(Go to Question and Answer session with Audience)