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RIT sets goal of more research

Simone says strategic plan wouldn't shortchange students.

Matthew Daneman
Staff writer

(September 19, 2004) — HENRIETTA — Rochester Institute of Technology plans to make research a greater priority over the next decade.

That is one of the goals set in the university's new 2005-2015 strategic plan, titled Category of One University. The plan was approved by RIT's board of trustees this summer after committees of students, faculty and staff spent much of last school year hashing out what direction the university should take.

The strategic plan, like most such documents, is largely broad brushstrokes of goals and objectives such as "teaching students how to learn." But a substantial section of the plan revolves around plans to boost the amount of scholarship — such as research and writing — done by faculty.

"The shift, while not major, will have an impact," said Mike Lutz, a professor of software engineering and president of the Academic Senate. "And while faculty generally approve of the strategic plan and the greater emphasis on research, there's also concern that it could change RIT. Most of us are here because we're teachers."

However, he added, the strategic plan so far "seems reasonable."

The university's goal now is to find a way to accommodate more research, said President

What's at stake

With more than 15,000 students, RIT is the area's largest four-year college. While the nearby University of Rochester is one of the nation's major research institutions, RIT's focus has been overwhelmingly on teaching. Now, RIT wants to beef up its research.



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Albert Simone.

"We will not put undergraduate education in second place," he said. "But we're going to have graduate education and we're going to have research."

By 2015, RIT will have perhaps five doctoral programs, "not 35, not 45," Simone said. And its research will stay in "targeted areas" where RIT already does research work, such as imaging science, computer science and possibly biotechnology.

Meanwhile, according to the strategic plan, undergraduate students have to be woven into the greater research push.

Other goals set out by RIT include boosting its overseas presence.

RIT also will hire a marketing consultant to "brand" RIT, Simone said.

The cost of the changes, such as more research labs and equipment, could exceed \$12 million, Simone said.

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