



**Teaching, Scholarship, and Service at RIT:  
Expectations and Enablers**

by

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## **EXPECTATIONS**

What are the expectations of faculty at RIT with regard to their teaching, scholarship, and service activities? I would like to initiate a discussion of these expectations, from my perspective, in what immediately follows.

### **Teaching**

The student is the “most important” individual on campus. Teaching is the most important activity or function of the faculty. Student learning and success are the most important outcomes of the teaching function. Learning involves collaboration between faculty and students and among students. Often, faculty learn as much from this interaction as do the students.

It goes without saying, that faculty are expected to be prepared and organized for their classes. They should present and discuss information which is relevant and up-to-date with regard to the discipline, the profession, the student major, the career for which the student is preparing, and living a life in all of its aspects.

In addition to presenting the subject in a comprehensive and coherent fashion, the faculty member has a special charge to sharpen the analytical and critical thinking abilities of the students. It is this aspect that, in all likelihood, will have the most lasting impact on students after they graduate. In addition, the faculty member should be working hard to sharpen the communication skills of the students, so that their ability to express ideas improves as the students progress through the course.

The faculty should maintain an attitude that reflects their role as mentors for students, leaders in the classroom, and colleagues and partners with the students in the overall learning effort. The faculty member is expected to advise and counsel students on matters relating to the course, academics in general, and the profession for which the student is preparing. I would hope that the faculty member, to the extent possible, would take a personal interest in the welfare of his or her students outside of the campus and even outside of academia itself.

Finally, the faculty member should reflect a positive attitude about teaching, learning, and student life in general at RIT.

### **Scholarship**

Every faculty member is expected to be **at** the frontier of knowledge in his or her field. This means the faculty member is expected to read current journals, attend conferences, present papers at conferences, and interact with professionals in the field and colleagues at RIT and other universities.

In addition, a number of faculty members are expected to **extend** the frontier of knowledge in their field. This takes the form, typically, of applied research. The research will involve solving problems identified by industry and government partners, as well as anticipating

issues that industry and government partners are expected to face. Evidence of applied research takes the form of publication in the leading professional journals and receipt of grants and contracts from government and industry. Often, the research will take place in teams, which include students and faculty from RIT, industry and government colleagues, and faculty from other universities.

Scholarship, defined as being on the frontier of knowledge and, especially, extending the frontier of knowledge, enhances and enriches teaching. This enhancement and enrichment occurs both because of the ideas presented and the direct involvement of undergraduate and graduate students in the research and scholarly inquiry.

## **Service**

Faculty service takes numerous forms. For example, service can include participation in a professional organization as an officer of the organization, appointment as editor or a member of the board of editors of scholarly and professional journals, and participation in national task forces to study issues of importance to the profession and the discipline.

On campus, service takes the form of serving on and chairing committees at the department, college, and university levels. Examples include department, college, and university promotion and tenure committees and the Strategic Planning and Agenda for Action committees.

Because of RIT's history and prominence in the Rochester community, service in the community as a whole is also highly regarded. This service can take the form of serving on the Board of Directors of a hospital or on key committees and boards of not-for-profit organizations such as the United Way, museums, and other community organizations.

Especially important at RIT is the work of faculty in the governance process. The key vehicles for faculty governance are the Academic Senate and the Institute Council, as well as various ad hoc and standing committees that are appointed by the president and vice presidents. Faculty input and counsel are vital to the shaping and implementation of policies and strategies that affect the university as a whole.

It is assumed, as far as governance and campus service activities are concerned, that the faculty members do not merely take up space or do not see themselves primarily in the role of an "outside critic". Rather, it is expected that faculty will be committed to being on the team and to getting things done, as well as to speaking their mind as an individual or as a representative of the faculty. It is expected that faculty will very much be a part of the solution and not obstacles to change. As the university transforms itself and changes its culture, faculty participation, commitment, and ownership are critical. While faculty need to be deliberate and reasoned in their participation, they also need to balance these inclinations with the need to arrive at decisions on a timely basis.

## **ENABLERS**

I shall discuss a number of enablers in what follows.

### **Salary**

Salaries are determined by demand and supply by discipline. We are familiar with the situation that has prevailed for many years. For example, faculty in the College of Business and the College of Engineering will command higher salaries at all ranks, on average, than professors in the College of Liberal Arts or the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences. This does not mean that individual faculty in a given rank in the College of Liberal Arts might not command a higher salary than faculty in a similar rank in the high demand colleges. This would occur if the faculty member in the College of Liberal Arts, for example, was contributing at a particularly high achievement level relative to the faculty in the other colleges.

This leads to the concept of demand and supply within a given discipline and rank. For example, faculty members at a given rank in a given college will typically earn different salaries. In some cases, the salary differential may represent time in rank. In other cases, the differential will reflect the fact that some faculty members are performing at a higher level than others and, therefore, deserve a higher salary, and this generally would be reflected by demand and supply. In a given college at a given rank, those faculty members who perform at the highest level will be able to command a higher salary than those who perform at a lesser level.

None of the above should be news. I would like to make the point that, as far as I am concerned, demand and supply provides a floor to salaries for individual faculty members. For example, there may be a faculty member who has developed a record of consistent and exceptional teaching and service at RIT. The demand and supply salary for that faculty member outside of RIT may be lower than the worth of that faculty member to RIT. In these cases, salaries should reflect not only demand and supply, but also the value and worth of the individual to RIT, and this could be a higher salary than one might expect from the operation of demand and supply alone. This is an issue of fairness and recognition.

There should be no expectation of automatic raises. Raises will be merit-based. For those individuals who are performing at a satisfactory or above level, there will also be cost of living adjustments as we move along.

The expectation is that faculty in the different disciplines and ranks will be compensated, on average, at salaries that place them at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile of the reference group of 29 universities that we have identified. Where appropriate, supplemental benchmarks can be employed. The objective is to have our faculty, on average, be at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile of a relevant – even a stretch – benchmark group.

### **Full-time Faculty**

The expectation is that the use of adjuncts will be minimized. At any time, we may not be at the optimum balance point. Adjuncts (by that I mean part-time faculty who do not have

permanent status at RIT) are utilized to provide expertise in a particular area that is not available in the faculty at present. Adjuncts are also used to cover courses which cannot be covered by regular faculty because of an unexpected increase in enrollment and student demand, inability to hire faculty fast enough, or because faculty are taken out of the classroom to engage in a high priority research or service activity.

### **Facilities and Equipment**

In general, I believe our faculty and students, particularly at the undergraduate level, have access to the best equipment and facilities, on average, anywhere in the country. That certainly is our goal. At the same time, I recognize that with the advent of new technology and the rapid obsolescence of existing technology, and with the expensive nature of new technology, at any time a particular program may lag behind. We have to keep working to make sure that RIT, as a technological university, maintains a status of facilities and equipment which is at the national benchmark.

### **Start-up Funds**

In certain disciplines, particularly in engineering and the sciences, significant start-up funds are required to provide the appropriate environment for applied research. These funds, which can amount to several hundreds of thousands of dollars, are used to support equipment, space, and outfitting for special purpose laboratories; support for graduate students or post-doctoral students; and travel funds.

### **Work Loads**

Every faculty member is expected to carry some level of service activities. Those faculty who choose, or were hired, primarily to teach and not to do a significant amount of research (while still practicing the scholarship described above), will carry a three-course teaching load. Those faculty members who choose and were hired to conduct major research activities, will be expected to carry a smaller teaching load, which could represent one or two courses per quarter. Adjustments will be made to reflect particularly heavy thesis or dissertation loads, particularly large classes, laboratory assignments, multiple preparations, and development of new courses and curricula in certain cases.

### **Integrity and Openness**

From the president's office through the vice presidents, deans, and department chairs, there will be a commitment to the most candid and honest discussion. There will be openness in everything that occurs at RIT. Throughout the campus, there will be a willingness and an opportunity to discuss, debate, and disagree.

### **CHALLENGES**

What challenges do we face in carrying out these expectations? One of the challenges will be to find the financial resources to do all of the above.

A second challenge is to make certain that we maintain an appropriate recognition and reward system for all faculty who contribute as described above.

Third and especially important, as RIT moves to another level among the family of universities, is that there not be two or three classes of faculty, but just one faculty. **This one faculty must be committed to student success, scholarship, and university governance.**

We must be certain that each faculty member is accorded respect and appreciation for a job well done across the spectrum of teaching, research, and service activities described above. Faculty will engage in different activities at any one time and over time. These activities could involve a teaching load reduction at one time and a full teaching load at another time.

In particular, a faculty member with a one- or two-course teaching load is not working less – he or she is doing more research than the faculty member who is teaching, let us say, three courses per quarter. Moreover, a faculty member who is teaching three courses is not doing more than a faculty member teaching one or two courses – he or she is just doing less research.

Most importantly, the faculty member emphasizing research is not more (or less) valued than a faculty member emphasizing teaching. At RIT, teaching is the first priority, and research is the second priority. Scholarship is required of everyone because without it, neither teaching nor research can be up to standard. Service is required of every faculty member.

The challenge of maintaining collegiality, teamwork, and a family orientation is difficult when there will be different salaries reflecting demand and supply and when there are work loads that reflect different balances of teaching, research, and service. I believe that RIT's history, mission, and culture will enable it to meet this challenge.

## **SUMMARY**

This discussion, in many ways, has defined RIT as an educational institution: what it does, why it does it, and how it does it. RIT is a member of the family of universities. At the same time, RIT has its own distinct attributes.

These remarks are meant to be the initiation of a conversation. I would appreciate and welcome any comments, feedback, and, especially, a continuation of the conversation.