

Brick City Festival and Alumni Weekend 2004

State of the Institute

Good morning everyone and welcome to our Brick City Festival and Alumni Weekend. This is a special year for RIT because we are also celebrating our 175th anniversary. It is wonderful to have so many parents and alumni together to join us in these festivities. We consider ourselves a family at RIT – students, faculty, staff...and parents and alumni are certainly a big and important part of our family.

The RIT family certainly has a lot going for it. We are undeniably a university on the move. See for yourself as you tour the campus this weekend. You will discover classrooms with exciting new courses in the hottest careers. You will find partnerships with business, industry and government prospering. You will find new facilities on campus, most notably the 160,000-square-foot Gordon Field House and Activities Center, which we just dedicated in September.

Let me review some of our significant accomplishments of the past year and some exciting new initiatives for the coming year:

- In the past year, RIT began partnering with the American University in Kosovo, located in Pristina. Studies focus on business, economics, computers and the application of management and technology. The university is RIT's third Eastern European venture, joining the American College of Management and Technology in Dubrovnik, Croatia, and the U.S. Business School in Prague, Czech Republic. A special task force, led by one of our trustees, is developing a long-term strategy for RIT's global program development.
- Many activities for this special weekend will be held in our new Gordon Field House and Activities Center. The Field House has the flexibility to host a variety of events and accommodate more than 8,000 people. The multi-purpose facility will enhance student life, campus traditions and events including commencement, concerts, guest lectures and intramurals. Special events, such as the presentation by Robert Redford and show by comedian David Spade, will also be held in the Field House later today.
- RIT is dedicated to diversity. In the past three years, the percentage of faculty hired who were of African American, Latino American, or Native American background was 31 percent, 31 percent and 26 percent respectively. Given the national percentage of minority faculty in the disciplines we recruit is 6 percent, these are outstanding results.

- In terms of enrollment, more than 15,300 students call RIT home. Enrolled students come from all 50 states and 1,400 international students hail from more than 90 countries.
- Our students are among the best and brightest. SAT scores for freshmen entering RIT this fall matched last year's record high. The new class had a mean combined SAT score of 1220, about 200 points higher than the national average.
- We are adding a Master of Science degree in computer security and information assurance. This is certainly an area that will grow as cyber crime increases. We have also added several new programs for bachelor and associate degrees and now have 340 professional and career-oriented programs.
- We are now in the review process for a proposed Ph.D. degree program in computing and information sciences. This program will be a complementary and synergistic partner with our two existing Ph.D. programs in Imaging Science and Microsystems.
- The world's best-known technology companies are focused on an RIT discovery that makes smaller and faster microchips. Professor Bruce Smith, director of our Center for Nanolithography, is leading this groundbreaking work. Engineers from IBM, Motorola, Intel and others are visiting here to observe our techniques for making radically faster and smaller microchips.
- PEN International, a grant program housed at RIT's National Technical Institute for the Deaf – NTID - landed another \$1.2 million to steward a worldwide network to improve education and career opportunities for deaf men and women. Thanks to RIT/NTID's expertise, deaf college students in Japan, China, Russia, the Czech Republic, Thailand and the Philippines continue to benefit through improved curriculum, increased access, new technology and trained faculty. To date, The Nippon Foundation has awarded PEN-International more than \$4.5 million dollars for this effort.
- As stated earlier, RIT is celebrating its 175th anniversary. The celebration will continue through the 2004-2005 academic year. Our theme is Education, Exploration and Innovation. These three words aptly describe RIT's history dating back to 1829. These words also clearly define RIT's future with our vision to lead higher education in preparing students for successful career development in a global society.

Student success, of course, always remains a top priority.

From an extracurricular point of view, RIT supports active membership for 140 clubs, 24 intercollegiate athletic teams, 28 fraternities and sororities, an active Student Government, a daily radio program, an active weekly student-run magazine, and an ESPN TV sports program. There are 9,000 programs offered directly in the residence halls. Needless to say, with a rigorous academic workload, we think there is plenty to do here on campus.

Let me now turn to safety issues. Many parents may have heard about a recent disturbing incident that took place on campus earlier this month.

On a recent Monday morning, three armed and masked men entered our Crossroads dining facility and demanded money from three of our workers who were opening up for the day. Before fleeing the scene, one of the suspects shot two of the workers. The victims were treated at the hospital, and thankfully, released later that day. These employees are now at home recuperating with their families. RIT Campus Safety worked with the Monroe County Sheriff's Office to investigate this incident and two arrests have been made. Police are searching for the third suspect. These arrests are now in the hands of the Monroe County District Attorney's Office. It is my hope, when all facts and evidence have been reviewed, that justice will prevail.

This is an unusual occurrence at RIT, and we believe this was an isolated case. I must stress that we have a very safe campus.

As a precautionary measure, we have increased patrols on campus. We have also re-evaluated procedures and protocol involving university-based businesses on campus. And we have a plan to expand criminal background checks on new employees.

In short, we have taken swift and appropriated measures to ensure the safety of our students, faculty and staff. I assure you.... Safety is our top priority.

Now...let me tell you about our most ambitious initiative to date aimed at securing vital resources for RIT.

A few years ago, some of our most committed Trustees and generous donors launched "Powered by the Future: The Campaign for RIT" with a goal of raising \$300 million by the year 2006. Thanks to our thousands of donors and hundreds of volunteers, The Campaign currently stands at \$208 million. Through these funds, we are committed to continuing to grow and enhance the academic opportunities for our students in five key areas.

First, RIT will focus on students. To attract outstanding students and assist those who may not be able to afford the cost of attendance, our goal is to add \$75 million to the endowment to increase merit scholarships, graduate fellowships and student financial aid.

Equally important is our second campaign focus of reinventing the campus. As you will see throughout the weekend, our campus has changed a great deal in the past few years. New landscaping and gathering places, new buildings, student study spaces and an overall warmer environment have transformed "Brick City" into a new community with a vital spirit. The campaign includes \$70 million in campus improvements and new facilities.

Our third initiative: recruiting and retaining the best faculty for our leading academic and research programs. In order to successfully recruit faculty with the critical combination of outstanding knowledge in their field and a strong desire to teach, we also must provide them with facilities and resources to expand their knowledge. This means new laboratories, graduate students, and resources to pursue innovative academic and research programs. Our goal is \$50 million.

Supporting applied research and learning is our fourth key initiative, and is instrumental in ensuring RIT's leading academic position as well as building on our already outstanding relationships with industry and government. New programs such as micro-optical systems, photonics, bioinformatics and microsystems engineering are leading the way toward success in this area. The impact of \$75 million will make this happen.

Finally, RIT must increase unrestricted giving to the university – a \$30 million initiative – to ensure our agility to pursue important opportunities as they arise. For example, having the flexibility to create a cutting edge academic program to meet the needs of an emerging industry is critical to our continued success.

Preparing today's students for the business world of tomorrow is the key to our Powered by the Future Campaign.

So what does the future hold? Let me tell you about our new Strategic Plan for RIT.

RIT will lead higher education in preparing students for successful careers in a global society.

RIT's new vision statement sets the tone for a new Strategic Plan that will chart the university's future through 2015. We seek to become "A Category-of-One University," meaning that RIT will stand alone in the eyes of its constituents. For students, parents and employers who seek what RIT is and what RIT does, RIT will be the standard of comparison to which others aspire.

Being mindful and proud of our 175-year legacy, and clear in our vision and mission, RIT now has a specific opportunity to build on current momentum as we launch ourselves to new heights as a "Category of One" university.

To be more specific about what that means ... imagine 10 years from now – when the 100 best students in the country graduate from high school. One-third of them apply to the best traditional universities, like Harvard, one-third apply to the best research universities, like MIT, and one-third apply to the best "career-focused universities." And RIT is at the top of that list.

These students apply to RIT because RIT is different from the Harvards and the MITs, and these students prefer what RIT represents!

With the support of our campus community, our friends and our alumni, we will raise RIT to the next level of excellence. In the end, RIT students succeed because RIT blends experiential learning into its academic programs in a comprehensive and innovative fashion that no other university can match, and because at all times, RIT holds the educational welfare of its students above all else.

These are some of the highlights I wanted to share with you today about where we are and where we are going.

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.

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!