Innovation Ecosystem at RIT

1. Introduction & Background
The RIT vision states that it will lead higher education in preparing students for innovative, creative, and successful careers in a global society. This vision is made clear through the RIT mission.
- RIT provides a broad range of career-oriented educational programs.
- The RIT community engages and motivates students through stimulating and collaborative experiences.
- The RIT community is committed to diversity and student centeredness and is distinguished by our innovative and collaborative spirit.
- RIT is committed to mutually enriching relationships with alumni, government, business and the world community.

Under Key Result Area 2 of the RIT strategic plan, Goal 5 states that RIT will “provide opportunities for 100% of its students to experience innovation, creativity, and scholarship by 2012” and Goal 8 states that “100% of its faculty will participate in scholarship as defined by the RIT scholarship policy by 2012.”

Therefore, President Destler has branded RIT as The Innovation University. The following key words and phrases in the preceding RIT vision, mission, and strategic plan statements confirm the brand and lead to a set of challenges for the RIT organizational and operating structure.

- Innovation
- Creativity
- Leadership
- Collaboration
- Careers in a global society
- Emerging technologies & social conditions
- Internal and external partnerships
- Experiential learning
- Broad range of career-oriented programs
- Enriched relationships beyond RIT

Student definitions and expectations of a career are substantially broader and more dynamic than in previous generations. Whereas previous generations may have defined their careers in the context of a single industry, geography, or organization, today’s students will be engaged in careers that span the globe and cross the boundaries of numerous job functions and industries. Thus, students arrive at RIT with an expectation they will have opportunities to explore a range of career options and choices. They come expecting academic programs and co-curricular experiences, which will enlighten and strengthen their careers as inventors, entrepreneurs, researchers, and agents of social and political change. Supporting them will require academic programs that enable innovative thinking and the administrative infrastructure needed to support their scholarly and entrepreneurial ambitions. We must ensure that RIT possesses the organizational structures, facilities, services, and faculty expertise to support the student experience we seek to create. Many of these resources exist and simply need to be linked and illuminated as part of an innovation ecosystem. However, specific components are needed to fully enable the attainment of our stated goals of creating an academic culture of innovation.

In December 2009, a team of faculty, staff, and students was formed to review the curricula, programs, facilities, and organizational and operational structures that define RIT as The Innovation University; and to make appropriate recommendations for ensuring that RIT will lead education in preparing students for innovative, creative, and successful careers. The charge to the newly formed Innovation, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship (ICE) team was to:
1. Achieve shared agreement on an *Innovation Ecosystem* at RIT and identify differentiators, strategies, and operating plans for achieving RIT goals.

2. Identify current elements of the academic and extra-curricular activities of the *Innovation Ecosystem* along with their structure, management, plans, outcomes, intersection and their connecting pathways.

3. Identify missing elements, challenges, and roadblocks with recommendations for resolution.

4. Develop metrics and 5-year plans for success with milestones and goals.

5. Develop a marketing plan aimed at all constituents.

Section 2 of this report is a brief review of existing relevant programs for achieving the innovation vision as well as existing barriers and opportunities. Section 3 lays out the concept, structure, content and journey through the RIT *Innovation Ecosystem* as a unique mixture of academic and commercialization programs leading to successful careers for our graduates and to the contributions that they make to the local and global economies. Finally, Section 4 wraps-up with our recommendations and next steps.

### 2. RIT Innovation Programs and Resources

Although definitions of innovation vary by discipline, one might define innovation as the act of applying creative ideas to novel situations that result in social, aesthetic, or economic value. An RIT focus is on experiential learning where its students create and innovate individually or in collaborative teams.

**Programs supporting Innovation & Creativity:** RIT has traditionally integrated innovation and creativity concepts and practices throughout its discipline-oriented curricula. It has outstanding programs in the creative arts and crafts, a multidisciplinary degree program, and optional curricula in entrepreneurship and business creation. Capstone projects involving student teams are required or supported across many disciplines. Scholarship and research from faculty and their students have become a growing requirement in RIT and the global society.

In addition to the college-based curricula, programs, and facilities, there are university-wide programs, events, and facilities involving innovation and creativity that are available to all students, faculty, and staff. These include first year programs for new students, co-op programs, summer research fellowships, the Simone Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, the Center for Student Innovation, minor degrees in Innovation (proposed) and Entrepreneurship, a technology commercialization program, intellectual property licensing, a student Entrepreneurs Hall, a Business Development Lab for student-run businesses, and the Venture Creations program for incubating and launching new businesses.

**Barriers and Opportunities:** As RIT continues to grow and scale-up these programs to support innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship, and scholarship, it must also address its barriers and opportunities.

- The Simone Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SCE) was established in 2004 to promote education, training, and applied learning experiences for commercializing innovations through a student Business Development Lab supporting the development of new student run businesses. This effort resulted in the approval of a minor in Entrepreneurship. Then in 2009, the Center for Student Innovation (CSI) was created with the intent of providing a facility and programs for students and student teams to carry out innovation projects. The CSI leaders have now proposed a minor in Innovation. The major questions concerning the SCE and CSI are:
  - i. How does the CSI relate to the Simone Center? Where should each of these university-wide centers fit within the RIT structure?
  - ii. What are the programs, outcomes, and goals for each? Both centers have or are planning academic programs; how do these fit within the RIT curricula?
iii. What additional equipment, structures, or facilities are needed in the CSI? Note that a 3D Prototype Lab, a Design Lab and an Entrepreneurs Hall are under construction within the new Global Village. Where do these facilities fit within the RIT structure?

iv. The CSI and Simone Center are university-wide centers; what are the opportunities and incentives for students, faculty, and staff to use these centers for education and experiential learning? Which Center do students turn to for help? What are the processes for moving through the Centers?

v. The CSI facility is known to have poor acoustical properties; what needs to be done to improve the working environment for students, faculty, and staff?

- How can undergraduate and graduate research, co-ops, independent study credit, multidisciplinary programs, and other academic programs be used to provide opportunities for innovation and creativity?

- What motivates faculty to include innovation and creativity within their curriculum and to make use of the university-wide facilities such as the CSI and Simone Center? What role should the CSI and Simone Center play in curriculum development? Is innovation valued as an intellectual contribution?

- The Venture Creations (VC) incubator was established in 2004 as a facility and program to support newly incorporated start-up businesses formed by RIT students, faculty, staff, and alumni or start-ups from the community where there is a fit with RIT. The facility is also home to several student companies emerging from the Simone Center. Although there are several promising client companies at Venture Creations, RIT wishes to increase commercialization of its technology and innovations through start-up companies and technology licensing. To do so requires that issues at the incubator be addressed.
  i. There are operational and management difficulties at the Venture Creations facility.
  ii. There is a need to provide more one-on-one support to the client companies in all aspects of forming, operating, and growing a venture company.
  iii. Additional filtering and support of prospective companies is needed to ensure that they are prepared to become clients of the incubator.
  iv. More effort is required to widen the pipeline of prospective clients.
  v. There is no tracking of the growth and success of business ventures from their pre-seed phase through and after graduation from the incubator.
  vi. RIT provides a source of funding to support the annual operating budget of Venture Creations; however, other than rent, there has been very limited effort to seek additional sources of financial support for its operations or its clients.
  vii. The metrics of success and goals have not been well defined.

- The Intellectual Property Management Office (IPMO) captures the inventions of the faculty and staff, works with inventors to provide protection of the IP through patents, copyrights, and trade secrets, and then locates sources and negotiates technology transfer through IP licensing. As RIT grows its innovative activity, research, and scholarship, there are opportunities to increase technology transfer through new products and start-up businesses.

- The Rochester community is engaged in multiple efforts to increase its economy through growth in jobs and new company ventures. Recent efforts are encouraging more collaboration from RIT with High Tech Rochester, University of Rochester, the Greater Rochester Enterprise and other such agencies.

- To be successful, RIT must market its brand, activities and success as The Innovation University, internally and externally, to a variety of constituents.

- The structure, leadership, staffing, metrics, and funding for all programs and centers must be well defined.
3. The RIT Innovation Ecosystem

An ecosystem is defined as a system formed by the interaction of a community of organisms with their physical environment. A healthy ecosystem is one where the organisms can thrive and growth. In the case of RIT, the community of organisms consists of students, parents, faculty, staff, curricula, programs, alumni, funders, and the community. The elements of the physical environment are the Centers, laboratories, equipment, and funding that house and support these organisms. Our goal is to define an RIT Innovation Ecosystem that will achieve the RIT vision to lead higher education in preparing students for innovative, creative, and successful careers.

The Innovation Ecosystem we propose consists of two overlapping components. It utilizes existing facilities of the SCE, CSI, RIT Venture Creations Incubator; it makes recommendations for supplying missing elements; and it provides a bridge between the traditional academic and commercial arenas. The components are:

- The Academic component consisting of students, faculty, curricula, educational activities, and facilities that result in students with degrees within their chosen disciplines.
- The Commercialization component consisting of additional academic and support programs that result in economic and social development through entrepreneurial activities leading to new business ventures, social enterprises, and technology transfer.
- The intersection of these components forms the bridge that provides the differentiator for RIT’s leadership as an Innovation University.

Three Centers will form the nucleus of this Innovation Ecosystem. The detailed functions, programs, goals, and recommendations of each Center are described in Appendixes.
The **Center for Student Innovation (CSI)** is at the heart of the academic component, guided by a cross-college **Innovation, Creativity, & Entrepreneurship Team** of academic faculty chosen from the RIT colleges and institutes. Their function is to coordinate and support the interaction of the RIT academic programs within the CSI facilities and its laboratories (3D Prototyping Lab and Design Lab) as the hub of innovation projects involving students and multidisciplinary teams. (See Appendix 1)

The **Technology Commercialization Center (TC^2)** is the restructured commercialization component, under the leadership of a new director. The function of this new center is built on the outcomes of the SCE and RIT research to provide technology transfer and to manage and support incubation of successful profit and non-profit venture companies. (See Appendix 3)

The **Simone Center for Entrepreneurship (SCE)** is the bridge between the two components of the ecosystem. Guided by the cross-college **Innovation, Creativity, & Entrepreneurship Team**, its functions are to educate, train, and support student entrepreneurs and their business ventures. The Simone Center will allow student innovations, product ideas, and business ventures to migrate between the academic and commercial components. (See Appendix 2).

The academic components and commercialization components that are embodied in the three complementary centers: CSI, SCI, and TC^2, which must work together with the faculty from all disciplines to make RIT the leading Innovation University. Students must be able to navigate from the class room through these cooperating centers and emerge from the **Innovation University with innovative, creative, and successful careers in a global society**. The **Innovation Ecosystem** is designed to provide a natural pathway for students to integrate their academic program with their projects in the CSI, supported with entrepreneurial and commercialization education from the SCE, and to commercialize the results through the TC^2.

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**The Innovation, Creativity, Entrepreneurship Journey**

1. All entering students entering RIT
2. All students who complete the course work of their chosen discipline through out their RIT education.
3. Students who enter the CSI to conduct an innovation or creativity project driven by an idea, a problem to solve, a class project, or their research.
4. Students who wish to commercialize their innovations enter the SCE to develop and test their business plans while continuing to innovate.
5. Students who come with innovations to commercialize, enter the SCE to develop their business plans.
6. Students who are graduating and wish to start their own business and have an acceptable business plan enter the RIT incubator to form and grow their business. Students who wish to co-op with an entrepreneurial start-up company resident in the RIT incubator.
7. All students who graduate with or without an innovation experience.
8. Growing companies that successful graduate from the RIT incubator and continue to grow. Inventors who are receiving positive returns on their Intellectual Property
General Recommendation: Forming an Innovation Ecosystem: Making It Work

A management structure is required to form the Innovation Ecosystem that integrates and coordinates the programs, facilities, boards, and activities. This requires the participation of university administrators, the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, advisors, entrepreneurs, and sources of funding.

Goal 1: Establish a Center for Student Innovation (CSI) that interacts with the academic programs to maximize the opportunities for RIT students to gain experience in innovation, creativity and research activity.

Goal 2: Establish a Center for Entrepreneurship (SCE) that provides opportunities all students who wish to commercialize their innovations, product and business ideas.

Goal 3: Establish a Technology Commercialization Center (TC$^2$) for those students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community entrepreneurs who partner with RIT and who wish to make use of their education, innovations, creative work and research experiences to create economic or social value through start-up businesses, innovative products or services, intellectual property, or social enterprises.

Specific Recommendations:

- The Innovation Ecosystem will be led by a Senior Director of Innovation under guidance and leadership of an Innovation Steering Committee (*See note at end section 4). Membership of the Innovation Steering Committee will include the President, SVP & Provost of Academic Affairs, SVP of Finance & Administration, VP for Research, one or more Trustees, and one or more Entrepreneurs. The Senior Director and Center Directors will be non-vote members of the steering committee. Its role will be to provide oversight of all RIT innovation components.

- The Senior Director will report to an RIT officer and with a limited staff to provide the following functions:
  - Advocate for the Innovation, Creativity, Entrepreneurship and Commercialization within the University, the Rochester community, and the world.
  - Supervise the managing directors of each of the three Centers: CSI, SCE, and TC$^2$;
  - Form a Cross-College Innovation, Creativity & Entrepreneurship Team of faculty members and students chosen by the leadership of each academic unit to provide guidance support and promotion of the three Centers.
  - Maintain a single point of contact for students and others that act as a helpdesk.
  - Coordinate and maintain annual budgets of the Innovation Ecosystem and its Centers.
  - Lead and participate in fund raising efforts for each Center.
  - Establish and report annual University-wide goals for the Ecosystem supported by the metrics and goals for each Center.
  - Support RIT branding and marketing efforts, including the annual RIT Imagine Festival.
  - Lead in community outreach and support the economic growth of the Rochester Community through the commercialization of technology and new businesses that create jobs and wealth.

- The Directors of CSI, SCE and TC$^2$ will be responsible for defining and managing the programs and operations of their centers. The CSI and CSE directors will be tenured faculty members while the director of TC$^2$ will likely be an experienced entrepreneur. They will be supported through their interactions with the Cross-College Innovation, Creativity & Entrepreneurship Team and other external advisors and advisory boards as appropriate. As described in the appendices, each center will have the annual plan of work with goals and metrics. An annual report of innovation and creativity activities and accomplishments for each will be published.
- Rochester has a rich history of innovation and creativity, and it continues to be one of the per capita leaders in producing patents. There is little doubt that the economic future of the greater Rochester region will continue to depend on its ability to cultivate the innovations and inventions emerging from its universities and corporate labs. The Rochester Community has a number of entities working to improve the local economy through formation and growth of new companies. RIT has participant in many of these initiatives through various boards, funding, and activities such as workshops, contests, seminars, and others. Recently, there have been requests for more partnering through active collaboration with UR, HTR, GRE … by leveraging its *Innovation Ecosystem* to support Rochester’s economy. A plan for appropriate collaboration with selected Rochester economic development initiatives must be formulated.

- The *Innovation Ecosystem* will only be successful if it efforts and success in achieving its goals are understood both internally by the RIT community and externally throughout Rochester and the world. Therefore it is important that all constituents be identified and a set of materials and marketing plan be developed.

### 4. Next Steps

In this report, recommendations for an RIT as the structure for achieving RIT’s vision to *lead higher education in preparing students for innovative, creative, and successful careers*. The academic component interacting with the commercialization component establishes the pathway for commercializing the innovations and technology created by the RIT students, faculty, and staff. The is supported by three new or updated centers that are supported through the leadership of cross-college teams of faculty and staff. General recommendations and goals for the *Innovation Ecosystem* and for the individual Centers have been made. Therefore the following steps are required to implement these recommendations:

- Gain agreement and approval of the *Innovation Ecosystem* model and structure
- Establish the Innovation Steering Committee
- Hire the Senior Director of *Innovation* (*See note below*)
- Hire Directors of CSI and TC^2; maintain Richard DeMartino as Director of SCE
- Review each goal for feasibility and update the quantitative metrics as appropriate.
- For each center (CSI, SCE, TC^2):
  - Establish structure, staffing, operations, metrics, and funding requirements
  - Determine roles, job descriptions and requirements, establish positions
  - Establish operating plans and funding for each center
- Develop an appropriate plan for collaborating with Rochester economic development agencies
- Develop *Innovation Ecosystem* marketing plans & materials
  - Roll out internally and externally

* Hiring a Senior Director of the *Innovation* is not a unanimous recommendation from the ICE review team. Several members of the team believe that the *Innovation* Steering Committee is sufficient and that the Center Directors should report directly to the Provost and VP for Research as appropriate.
Appendix 1
Engaging Academics for Innovation:
A Culture of Innovation & Creativity

RIT has a substantial array of programs that provide innovation experiences for students. These programs create opportunities for students to conceptualize new approaches to problems, to design new products, to envision new policies and organizational structures, and to create new businesses and non-profit entities which deliver economic value. *It might be enough to simply elevate the visibility of these experiences and programs to give meaning to the vision of an Innovation University. However, we believe RIT can go beyond a simple exercise in aggregation and arrive at a truly breakthrough definition of what it means to be the Innovation University.*

Innovative capacity will be reflected in the ability of all students to engage in both *divergent* and *convergent* thinking. Divergent thinking is the capacity to ask questions on a conceptual level and diverge from facts to consider all the unknown possible answers to a question. Divergent thinking is enabled by bringing together students from diverse and multidisciplinary backgrounds to challenge conventional wisdom and approaches. It is the capacity to think broadly and freely. In contrast, convergent thinking is systematic and progresses toward a narrowing of possible answers to a given question. A key to innovation is “divergent thinking” where multiple ideas and approaches are explored and evaluated, converging on an innovative outcome. The ability to engage in both types of thinking is embodied in the archetypal “T-shaped” person—a person who possesses broad knowledge but who also has depth in a discipline. Having breadth lends itself to the ability to engage in divergent thinking while having depth means the person is equipped with sufficient disciplinary skills to converge on a reasoned answer to a question. Our goal is to define those support systems and administrative structures needed for these two modes of thinking to flourish and pervade the culture of RIT.

**General Recommendation 1: Teach Innovation**

If RIT is to be the *Innovation University* we must have curricula and programs which are clearly identified as opportunities for students to learn and experiment with innovation, creativity and extend that learning into their discipline-specific programs. They must be given the physical space to explore the front end of the innovation process and have the programmatic structures in place which allow them to advance their ideas to a finished state.

**Goal 1:** Every student will have opportunities to progressively build upon their ideas and have them culminate in innovation and creativity experiences.

**Goal 2:** Increase the number of faculty participating in innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship activities across the campus by 20% within the next five years.

**Specific Recommendations**

- The innovation curriculum developed by the cross-college innovation curriculum committee contains a new course, *Exploring Innovation*, which could provide every student an innovation experience. The course will be administered and offered through the Center for Multidisciplinary Studies.
- Require at least one innovation and creativity course in the general education program of every student. Clearly identify additional courses which satisfy the general education innovation and creativity learning outcome requirement and promote them in a unified way.
- Advance the proposed minor in Innovation.
- Promote and broaden access to the minor in Entrepreneurship.
- Identify, document, and celebrate the outcomes of innovation and creativity experiences from across the university.
- Charge the Center for Student Innovation (CSI) with serving as a clearinghouse for experiences and with developing a website dedicated to university-wide capstone outcomes.
- Allow students to undertake innovation, creativity, research, and entrepreneurial projects as cooperative education. Conduct regular workshops for faculty on how to engage with the entrepreneurial activities of student companies.
- Include faculty participation in student innovation and creativity projects, and entrepreneurial endeavors, in annual faculty plans of work by explicitly incorporating these activities in the University definition of scholarship.

General Recommendation 2: Enable Collaborative Innovation
There are tangible activities and measurable outcomes of the innovation culture, which are derived from both divergent and convergent thinking. Ideation activities, breakthrough thinking exercises, sense making, and pure creative expression are common ways of stimulating divergent thinking. These activities, and the associated learning, are best done by creating opportunities for cross-disciplinary exchange of ideas and by enabling students and faculty from different disciplines to work together in teams.

RIT can become the Innovation University by helping its students collaboratively synthesize their deep and diverse strengths in engineering, science, technology, creative arts, liberal arts, and business to address societal and economic challenges. Cross-disciplinary teaching and program development have historically been difficult due to the rigidity of academic programs; the absence of a supporting administrative structure; and the absence of common spaces for collaboration.

Goal 3: Schedule classes, presentations, projects, and innovation and creativity related programming, which results in 5,000 people annually utilizing the Center for Student Innovation.

Specific Recommendations:
- Encourage and enable cross-disciplinary teaching and learning by charging the Center for Multidisciplinary Studies with the responsibility for supporting multidisciplinary collaboration among students and faculty with a curricular focus on innovation and creativity.
- Set specific fundraising goals for the directors of the Center for Student Innovation and Simone Center for Entrepreneurship.
- Establish a budget for the Center for Student Innovation. Acquire the staff, equipment and support for the Center and its laboratories (Design Lab and 3D Prototyping Lab) located in the Global Village.
- Provide support for faculty who teach multidisciplinary approaches to innovation and creativity. Consider making the Provost’s Learning Innovation Grants (PLIG) grants focused on teaching collaborative innovation and creativity.

General Recommendation 3: Make Innovation and Creativity Tangible
RIT students produce tangible artifacts of their innovative and creative work. Some will develop products and services, which result in patents and copyrights, and some of these results, may become the basis for a new business. Others will create images, written works, designs, and artwork. We have defined a clear pathway for those who wish to commercialize products and develop businesses. In fact, RIT has substantial resources dedicated to the commercialization of the campus’ intellectual property through the Simone Center...
for Entrepreneurship and the Technology Commercialization Center. The Simone Center is critically important in supporting student progression from idea to commercialization and business venture. It is the formal pathway for students to the Technology Commercialization Center.

Goal 4: Achieve $300,000 annually in external funding for a Student Venture Fund to support entrepreneurial team projects; innovation and invention projects; team based creative works and other student centered collaborations.

Goal 5: Increase the number of student, faculty, staff, and alumni companies eligible for seed funding by 10% over the next five years.

Specific Recommendations:

- Allow students to undertake innovation, creativity, research, and entrepreneurial projects as cooperative education. Conduct regular workshops for faculty on how to engage with the entrepreneurial activities of student companies.
- Include faculty participation in student innovation and creativity projects, and entrepreneurial endeavors, in annual faculty plans of work by explicitly incorporating these activities in the University definition of scholarship.
- Provide “help desk” style services for faculty and students interested in moving their ideas toward commercial products and services. The Center for Student Innovation and the Simone Center for Entrepreneurship should work in tandem with the Innovation, Creativity & Entrepreneurship Team to define these services.
- Charge the Senior Director of Innovation Ecosystem to annually report on the level of commercial and non-commercial activity.
Appendix 2
Maintaining the Simone Center for Entrepreneurship (SCE):
Educating and Supporting Student Business Teams

The Simone Center for Entrepreneurship is an enabling organization that fosters a continuum of programs, events, courses, entrepreneurship, and innovation with an emphasis on *experiential learning* and *multidisciplinary activities*. While its primary objectives are academic in nature, the center also promotes commercial outcomes. The Center’s activities are primarily targeted to students but include programs for faculty, staff, and other RIT stakeholders. It is collaborative in nature, working closely with the academic programs, the Center for Student Innovation, and the Technology Commercialization Center. It has an existing management structure, which should be maintained.

**General Recommendation 4: Teach Entrepreneurship**
The Simone Center is a pathway within the RIT *Innovation Ecosystem* that introduces all students to entrepreneurship for commercializing their innovations product and business ideas. RIT will be recognized as a national leader in entrepreneurship education integrating its unique strengths in experiential learning and its diversity of technology, design/art, and business programs.

**Goal 6:** Increase the participation in the interdisciplinary minor in Entrepreneurship administered by Saunders College of Business by 100% over the next five years.

**Goal 7:** Maintain student residence in the Entrepreneurs Hall at its capacity. Increase the participation of student and student/faculty teams conducting business and commercial projects through the Business Development Laboratory by 100% over the next five years.

**Goal 8:** Increase the number of student teams that enter the RIT incubator as incorporated businesses by 100% over the next five years.

**Specific Recommendations:**
- Continue the Business Development Laboratory program, which enables student and student/faculty teams to develop mature business and commercialization projects. Toward this goal, student teams (may) gain course or coop credit, coaching, and space.
- Continue the new Entrepreneurs Hall program under the leadership of the Simone Center as a living learning community composed of undergraduate students from diverse academic programs. Students living in the new Global Village complex, earn an entrepreneurship minor, and gain assistance maturing a business concept.
- Continue to recruit business/entrepreneurship mentors, typically RIT alumni, to mentor advanced student teams.
- Continue to collaborate with RIT Colleges and the Rochester community to define and support a variety of events such as workshops, conferences, speaker series, and business plan contest that target students, faculty, staff, and alumni.
- Continue to provide MBA consultants to a select group of promising early stage entrepreneurs.
- Continue to co-locate the Business Development Laboratory in the RIT High Technology Incubator facility and also in the Center for Student Innovation.
Appendix 3
Reimagining the Technology Commercialization Center (TC\(^2\));
*Taking It to the World*

The focus of the commercialization programs is on those students and faculty who wish to make use of their education, innovations, creative work and research experiences to create economic or social value through start-up businesses, innovative products or services, intellectual property, or social enterprises. The RIT *Innovation University* must now expand its commercialization programs to be a major economic contributor. Therefore a third component of the *Innovation Ecosystem* is a new Technology Commercialization Center (TC\(^2\)) that brings together RIT intellectual property and its high technology incubator (Venture Creations) with a new and expanded roll. TC\(^2\) is to be a catalyst for commercialization of RIT technology resulting in positive returns to RIT and economic development of the Rochester community and beyond.

**General Recommendation 5: Commercialize RIT Intellectual Property**

RIT faculty, students, and staff are developing a culture and strength in conducting leading edge scholarship and research. This will result in a growing portfolio of protected intellectual property (innovations, patents, copyrights, etc.) that can be commercialized through licensing, new products, new companies, or equity deals.

**Goal 9:** Identify, evaluate, and protect invention disclosure resulting from RIT scholarship and research. Increase the number of student, faculty, staff, and alumni applications for patents and copyright by 30% over the next five years.

**Goal 10:** Identify opportunities for commercializing RIT intellectual property through company start-ups or new products through licensing or equity deals. Increase the number of start-ups or new products initiated containing RIT intellectual property by 20% within five years.

**Specific Recommendations**

- Provide education and training to faculty, students and staff on the discovery and protection of IP. Locate funding to continue a technology commercialization support program supported by the Simone Center. This program, currently supported in part by the State of NY, supervises graduate students in developing commercialization plans for small technology companies and university derived IP.
- Provide incentives to faculty and staff for disclosure of inventions and discoveries that appear to be worth RIT protection. Provide rewards for filing and receiving patent protection.
- Support RIT incubator staff to evaluate and form new business ventures around RIT IP.
- Maintain and track expenses and return from commercializing of RIT’s portfolio of IP.
- Develop materials and market RIT’s portfolio of IP.
- Support F&A and the new BOT Venture Funding Committee on equity investments in a company using RIT intellectual property.

**General Recommendation 6: Launch Start-up Businesses**

If RIT is to be the leading private university in New York in creating commercial value from its role as *The Innovation University*, it must provide training, incubation facilities and support for its students, faculty, staff, alumni, friends and other entrepreneurs to design, form, execute and launch successful venture businesses.

**Goal 11:** Locate and evaluate start-up company ideas as potential incubator clients. Within five years, evaluate a minimum of 100 company ideas per year with acceptance rate of 15%.

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Goal 12: Provide and manage a business incubator facility and services for resident clients. Provide individual assistance to clients in the formation, growth and launch of their companies. Allow only those companies progressing to success to maintain residence in the incubator. Within five years, launch at least 10 successful companies per year.

Goal 13: Participate in funding opportunities to support operations, endowments, and to establish pre-seed/seed funds through grants, contracts, and gifts. Achieve $500,000 per year from grants, gifts, and IP within the next five years.

Specific Recommendations:

- Provide education and training to start-up clients on the formation, operations, marketing and growth of a successful new business.
- Make it clear to all resident companies of the conditions for residency including leasing fees, insurance, and equity for services provided.
- Require that RIT be given equity in all resident companies with additional for each year they remain in the incubator.
- Secure and maintain access to RIT services and external services required by the clients. These services include laboratory access, faculty advisors, and student teams, financial services, legal services, HR services, and marketing.
- Recruit successful entrepreneurs and form advisory boards to support clients.
- Review, track progress and maintain access to all resident, virtual and graduated clients. Measure ongoing growth through revenues, profits, and jobs created.
- Support RIT’s High Tech Incubator Board of Directors as required.