Colleagues,

RIT’s commitment to international education and global engagement is well established and a focal point in the 2025 Strategic Plan, “Greatness Through Difference.” This commitment has evolved over the past 20 years to include ensuring global and international learning outcomes in our curricula, increasing the number of international students studying at RIT, and offering academic programs at international sites. Throughout this evolution, the Board of Trustees and the academic community have encouraged us to foster strategic partnerships in Asia, with special emphasis on China and India. As many of you know, these efforts have progressed substantially over the past 3 years as we developed a strategy focusing on highly reputable national universities with academic portfolios similar to RIT’s within those countries. We have also given extensive consideration to the geographic location of each partner and the extent to which the partnership would be complemented by local industry, culture, research infrastructure, and alumni connections.

I am pleased to report two partnerships in China have progressed to the point where we will be making major announcements during the 2015-2016 academic year. Both partnerships have been led by colleges with considerable faculty involvement, and each aligns with the respective college’s strategic plans for growth and development. We have consistently updated and engaged the Trustees and the academic community as each partnership has advanced.

Following from a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed in April of 2012, our partnership with Beijing Jiaotong University (BJTU) has resulted in one of our most comprehensive international partnerships. The partnership has been led by the Saunders College of Business. It includes active faculty and student exchanges, articulation agreements for “2+2” and “4+1” transfer of BJTU students to RIT, and joint degree programs. The joint degree programs are the undergraduate Management Information Systems (MIS) degree, and the graduate program in Entrepreneurship and Innovative Ventures. The programs have been approved by the China Ministry of Education and we have notified our accrediting agencies of our intentions. The MIS degree will be delivered in partnership with BJTU at their satellite campus in Weihai, Shandong Province. We anticipate approximately 116 students enrolling in the program this fall semester. The graduate program will be delivered at the main BJTU campus in Beijing. We anticipate as many as 25 students enrolling in a cohort program that will begin in October.

The other major partnership is with Hunan University. The partnership with Hunan has been led by the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences, School of Design. The MOU with Hunan was initially signed in August of 2013 and has many of the same provisions as the partnership with Beijing Jiaotong University—student and faculty exchanges, transfer articulation agreements, and joint degree programs. The MOU also explicitly references the possible creation of a joint design school to be located in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province. Throughout the past year we have been working with our partners at Hunan and with the Municipality of Shenzhen to lay the groundwork for developing the joint design school. As of this past June, we had completed all of the necessary steps to submit an application to the
China Ministry of Education. The application has not yet been approved and we anticipate knowing by the end October whether we will move forward with the project.

Jim Myers, Associate Provost for International Education & Global Programs, will communicate more on each of these partnerships throughout the coming year. The communication will include a Global Programs website on each partnership, presentations at the Academic Senate, a Town Hall Meeting, and regular email updates. Please contact Jim (jamisr@rit.edu) if you have any questions on these partnerships and associated programs.

Jeremy Haefner
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

For more information on this and other topics, please visit http://www.rit.edu/provost/