

STUDENT AFFAIRS  
ASSESSMENT

# Closing the Loop

Fall 2005

## Methods of Assessment: Benchmarking

Benchmarking is a commonly used method of assessment in which a program, department or institute compares its outcomes with those of other similar institutions. In some cases, benchmark institutions are determined by examining others who are "most like" you. In other cases, comparison schools are determined based on evidence of "best practices". In either case looking beyond the walls of the Brick City is an excellent way of understanding the relative degree of success of the programs and services offered on our campus. People across campus often ask "who are our benchmark schools?". This can be a complicated answer as it depends

on the type of program you are assessing, but as a general guideline it may be helpful to review the list of institutions used by Human Resources in their benchmarking process.

- Carnegie Mellon University
- Case Western Reserve University
- Clarkson University
- Cornell University
- Drexel University
- Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
- Gallaudet University
- Illinois Institute of Technology
- Ithaca College
- Kettering University
- Lehigh University
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Milwaukee School of Engineering
- New York University

- Northeastern University
- Penn State University
- Polytechnic University of New York
- Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology
- Stevens Institute of Technology
- SUNY Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo & Stony Brook
- Syracuse University
- The Cooper Union
- University of Rochester
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
- Worcester Polytechnic Institute

See articles on page three for two examples of how Student Affairs is using benchmarking to improve programs and services to students at RIT!

## New Division Goals (Proposed)

During the summer of 2005, Dr. Mary-Beth Cooper charged a division-wide task force to examine the Student Affairs Goals in light of the new strategic plan and ongoing assessment efforts.

The task force worked for many months and recently unveiled the following proposed model at the October division meeting. Development of the goals was based on the RIT Vision, RIT Mission, RIT Strategic Dimensions, RIT Core Values and the Student Affairs Mission Statement.

Please review the proposed goals and division-level objectives on the back cover of this edition of *Closing the Loop*. The task force encourages your feedback and comments!

### Goals Task Force

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## International Student Services

International Student Services (ISS) at RIT serves a growing student population, guiding them through the ever-expanding complexity of laws, policies and procedures involved with enrolling in a college in the United States. In addition to the excellent work that the staff does with advising, programming and general support offered for hundreds of students, faculty and staff each quarter, they are also responsible for overseeing immigration related issues. Successfully completing this

work involves effective use of and compliance with the federal tracking program SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System).

During the 2004-05 academic year, the staff of the International Student Services office undertook an evaluation of the SEVIS system in an effort to limit the financial and personal impact of immigration rule changes on RIT students and the ISS budget. After a thorough business case evaluation, recommendations for im-

proved service were outlined and submitted to division leadership. Outcomes of this survey lead both to approval of a new half-time position (SEVIS Coordinator) and served as the backbone for training for the individual serving in this position.

WELCOME TO

Patty DiPassio,  
SEVIS Coordinator  
with International Student  
Services



## ASC: College Restoration Program

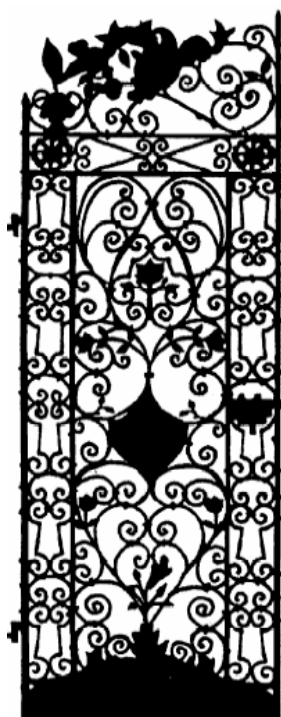
The College Restoration Program (CRP) is an offering of the Academic Support Center that focuses on service to RIT students who are on academic probation or suspension and who are recommended by their departments for participation. Program objectives include:

- To assess students' most significant areas of interference to their academic success in the RIT environment
- To provide skills instruction and guided practice in various areas (math, writing, reading, time management, study skills) to increase students' ability to accurately perceive, actively process, critically evaluate, and meaningfully consolidate college-level material for long-term retention
- To equip students with the ability to set and accomplish specific and real-

istic weekly goals

- To coach students in developing greater academic autonomy through increased self-awareness, self-responsibility, self-discipline, and self-regulation
- To increase students' self-esteem by managing effectively their day-to-day lives, doing well academically, and persisting positively in the face of challenge and adversity
- To develop meaningful interpersonal relationships with peers and instructors, and to strengthen their ability to work with people different from themselves
- To guide students in being proactive and making conscious choices that will maximize their options and allow them to be more in control of their own lives.

Annually the CRP program conducts assessment examining the referral and intake process, the curriculum and mentoring role, and the re-integration of post-CRP students back into RIT. The methods used in completing this assessment range from intake assessment tools such as MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Inventory) and LASSI (Learning and Study Strategies Inventory) to subject specific pre-post tests in reading, writing and mathematics. Additionally, a comprehensive student program evaluation is implemented each quarter and student performance and retention data are tracked. Each year the program evolves as a result of this assessment with recent changes reflected in the curriculum offerings, the intake qualifications, and the development of a transition seminar for students moving on from CRP.



## Benchmarking Apartment Life

The Center for Residence Life administered a benchmarking satisfaction survey for apartment residents in the spring of 2005. This national survey was administered on over 50 campuses and allows a glimpse at not only how RIT students feel about their experience living on campus, but also how RIT's apartment life compares to programs on other campuses as well. This particular survey has information on the quality of interaction with neighbors, how safe students feel on campus, and their satisfaction with the condition of their apartments.

One particular area that Residence Life will be pursuing based on the feedback will be "Personal Growth Areas." RIT students' satisfaction with the impact of apartment living effect on their ability to meet people, study, manage time, adopt a healthy lifestyle and appreciate different cultures is just one factor that has a strong relationship with their overall satisfaction with living on campus.

Since the 2001 administration of the survey, students' overall satisfaction in this area has improved (On a 7 point scale, a mean improvement of .14). The one criteria that has gone down since 2003 is student satisfaction in campus living's

ability to foster an appreciation of different cultures. Given the University's mission to prepare students for a diverse workforce as well as the wealth of opportunity to interact that on-campus living provides, this trend will be explored and addressed further by the Residence Life staff.

Looking at student perception of Overall Program Effectiveness (satisfaction with apartment living, recommending living on campus to a friend), RIT has improved since 2001. Satisfaction in Overall Program Effectiveness peaked in 2003 and data from 2005 is not as high on average. Overall, RIT is seeing positive trends in students' experience on campus.

~ Thank you to Cha Ron Sattler,

Center for Residence Life for submitting this summary.



## Benchmarking in the Student Alumni Union



The Center for Campus Life administered the Educational Benchmarking College Union Survey for the first time in 2003 and again in the spring of 2005.

The factors where the most significant gains were made included how we publicize the Union and promote the campus and the Union as a source of entertainment.

Specifically, the greatest increase was in how we publicize activities sponsored by the Union. Institute-specific questions revealed banner/fliers and word of mouth remain the most frequent way students find about campus events and programs (both at 29%), but the weekly All Announce events email, a new publicity strategy since 2003, is used by 26 percent of students to find out about campus events and programs.

The second greatest increase was the Union being a source for reasonably priced entertainment. It should be noted that the College Activities Board made a number of adjustments in their programming last year. Thursday Night Cinema Series and Friday Night in the RITz are now weekly events. In addition the Thursday night movies are free and the live bands in the RITz only cost \$1. As in 2003, the factors where the SAU ranked the highest were "the Union is a place where I feel safe" and "the Union is a place where I feel welcome".

One area where there was a slight drop from 2003 (5.01 to 4.92 on a seven point scale) was in the availability of the Union staff. In addition to regularly scheduled drop-in hours, the Center for Campus Life has scheduled a Staff Drop In Hours three times during the winter quarter where the entire staff will be available in the lobby of the Student Alumni Union, in an effort to increase availability. They will serve pizza and be available to answer questions from students.

~Thank you to

Andrew Quagliata,

Center for Campus Life, for submitting this summary!

## Using Instant Messenger for Publicity!



Students, faculty and staff interested in knowing more about events on campus can sign up on the Events at RIT buddy list! !

**STUDENT AFFAIRS  
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**If you have  
feedback about  
these goals we  
encourage you  
to contact the  
task force chairs  
by November  
18th!**

## **Goals and Division Level Objectives (Proposed)**

**Student Success: Provide an experiential learning environment that facilitates and supports students' academic, personal, and professional success.**

- Promote the development of personal responsibility, wellness and ethical decision-making.
- Cultivate positive relationships among students, faculty, and staff in order to facilitate the creation of a learning environment that maximizes each student's unique potential.
- Provide programs, activities and instruction that support academic, personal, and professional development.
- Provide opportunities for students to contribute to and shape their individual learning as well as the collective learning process.
- Cultivate a sense of meaning and purpose to student learning that encourages both reflection and application of knowledge.

**Global Society: Create opportunities that foster a living, learning and working environment where international and domestic students, faculty, and staff interact in order to develop cross-cultural awareness.**

- Create and support a welcoming and accessible environment that values diversity and encourages the exchange of ideas and information to bridge traditional boundaries.
- Create, enhance and evaluate current and future global programs and activities.

**Community: Provide and enhance programming, services and opportunities that contribute to the creation and support of a strong RIT community.**

- Provide and promote curricular and co-curricular events for community building, interaction, and engagement of the campus community in support of campus spirit, pride, and traditions.

**Career: Promote the development of a learning environment that enhances the professional preparation and career education of students.**

- Develop effective curricular and co-curricular programs, services, and instruction to assist with the development of professional skills that facilitate current learning and the lifelong career success of students.

**Scholarship and Quality Practices: Provide continuous opportunities and support to division faculty and staff for the advancement of scholarship, professional development, quality practices and institute service.**

- Foster a culture in which scholarly endeavors are encouraged, supported, and consistently shared with division, institute and external colleagues in an effort to enhance and inform professional practice in Student Affairs.
- Systematically assess and continuously improve the delivery of educational, social, and support programs and services through the reflection and application of best practices, scholarly endeavors, professional development, and technology.
- Exercise responsible stewardship of resources in order to create and sustain effective programs and services.