Support students to build resiliency

1. Team, Dimension and Objectives
Students with the ability to recognize, face, and manage challenges are more resilient and better equipped to navigate today’s changing world. The Division of Student Affairs provides programs and services that support the development of self-awareness and a resilient mindset, positioning students to successfully navigate transitions into, through and beyond college. The capacity to enhance student resilience begins with a resilience conscious campus community through the development of a shared common language between faculty, staff, and families.

Resiliency, sometimes referred to as grit, refers to the ability to recognize, face, and manage or overcome problems and challenges; to see failure as an opportunity to be strengthened, rather than defeated. Learning experiences of all kinds, both inside and outside the classroom, help students develop the ability to harness stress and face adversity in mature and healthy ways. Resilient students take intellectual and creative risks. Resilient graduates better navigate today’s changing and uncertain economic, employment, and career environments. (adapted from A Strategic Primer on College Student Mental Health, Douce & Keeling, 2014).

- **Objective 2.1**: Enhance knowledge of scholarship on resiliency, develop a common framework and language, and extend skills for engaging in educational dialogues by establishing communities of learning for division staff and paraprofessionals.
- **Objective 2.2**: Fortify campus support systems by examining existing programs and services using a common framework of resiliency to determine strengths and gaps in direct support, peer to peer systems and partnership opportunities.
- **Objective 2.3**: Expand community support for students through enhanced communication and collaboration with parents and families, faculty and staff outside of Student Affairs, and other regional professionals and service providers.
2. Membership

**Co-Chairs:** Laurie Ackles, *Spectrum Support Program*
Wendy Gelbard, *Student Health, Counseling, and Wellness*
David Reetz, *Counseling and Psychological Services*

**Members:** Rob Eckhardt, *College Restoration Program*
Megan Jaros, *Case Manager*
Alyson Jones, *Disability Services Office*
Susan Joseph, *International Student Services*
Sharon Kompalla-Porter, *Center for Residence Life*
Chelsea Petree, *Parent and Family Programs*
Donna Rubin, *Student Wellness*
Cha Ron Sattler, *Center for Women & Gender*
Shelley Zoeke, *Disability Services Office*

3. 5-Year Vision Statement

With RIT’s innovative spirit and shared values, students, parents, faculty and staff will embrace a growth mindset and identify failure as an opportunity to develop resiliency and create success. The RIT community will have an innovative way of looking at failure. Failure at RIT will be normalized as part of success.

4. Metrics

**Metric 1:** Substantial adoption by student affairs departments of a consistent framework and language of student resiliency. *(Objective 2.1)*

Proposed methods:

i. Participants from the outreach efforts will be asked to complete a short survey at the end of the session, as well as a second survey three to six months after the session. The survey will measure the extent to which participants know the resiliency language/framework and are using that language/framework in their student interactions.
ii. An annual scan of the electronic and physical environment at RIT for use of the common resiliency language and framework, including links to the GRIT website to be created by this committee.

**Metric 2:** Enhance and expand campus support systems (direct service, peer to peer and partnerships) that develop resiliency in students. *(Objective 2.2)*

Proposed method:

i. Evaluate programs, services and policies in the Division that develop student resiliency on a rubric which assesses their adoption of the resiliency framework. (e.g. none, partial, full). Evaluate services and policies in year 1, 3 and 5 with a goal of increasing the adoption of the framework by Divisional efforts already focused on resiliency. In addition, increase the number of Divisional efforts which identify building resiliency as a focus of their work and thus the number of programs included in this analysis.

**Metric 3:** Parents/families and campus partners will actively support students in building resiliency. *(Objective 2.3)*

Proposed method:

i. Embed questions on use of resiliency concepts in supporting their students in the annual parent/family survey. Develop a survey for student support staff outside of Student Affairs to assess their use of resiliency concepts when working with students.

5. **Year 1 Summary of Activities with Associated Outcomes and/or Measures**
   - Subcommittee met 10 times plus 8 co-chair meetings
   - Set up MyCourses to share resources
   - Year 1 Primary focus: Objective 2.1
   - Brainstorming: What is resiliency? Used Fishbone Diagram to organize the ideas and look for common themes.
• Reviewing research regarding resiliency: GRIT, Growth Mindset, Protective Factors, Vulnerability and Failure as a Pathway to Success (Carol Dweck, Brene Brown, Angela Lee Duckwork, Elizabeth Gilbert)

• Subcommittee members participated in webinar from Higher Ed Hero “Cultivating Grit: Keys for Success in College Classroom & Beyond”

• Discussions and brainstorming sessions regarding development of common language: How do we frame distress at RIT (normalizing)

• Use of National Research Consortium Study to establish baseline by identifying protective and risk factors specific to RIT student body and RIT campus.

• Discussions regarding balancing failure as a pathway to success (imperfect progress) with university goals related to on-time graduation

• Created Outreach and Marketing subcommittees to guide future work

6. Baseline Data for Metrics from Year 1

   \textbf{Metric 1:} Substantial adoption by student affairs departments of a consistent framework and language of student resiliency. (Objective 2.1)

   An environmental scan of both offices and websites in 15 Student Affairs departments, Admissions, Office of Cooperative Education and Career Services, and all Academic Colleges including NTID, University Studies, GIS, and SOIS was performed. This was to look for key words and phrases about resiliency. Key words searched included success, resilience, resilient, GRIT, hard work, achievement, failure, and help. Subcommittee was divided into 2-3 person teams to review websites and personally visit each department searching for visual displays, signage, printed materials, and brochures to identify clear evidence of the use of resiliency language.

   There was a varying amount of relevant language noted. While most areas had some supportive language; only one area, the Academic Support Center, demonstrated outstanding use of this language. In addition, the supportive language used was not consistent across platforms areas, colleges, and divisions. The choice of words was often weak and without conviction. There
was no common language across the RIT campus demonstrating commitment to the idea of student resiliency.

7. **Year 2 Plan**
   Outreach and Marketing subcommittees established to lead the implementation of Year 2 work.

   The Outreach group will work on creating the framework for outreach efforts and professional development programs that target faculty, students, staff, parents/families, advisors to share resiliency language in student interactions.

   The Marketing group will begin defining a common language that can be used across disciplines and throughout the RIT community. In addition, they will work on creating a slogan to aid in promotion and awareness. Initial brainstorming took place in summer.

   **Outreach:**
   - David Reetz, Chair
   - Rob Eckhardt
   - Sue Joseph
   - Chelsea Petree
   - Donna Rubin
   - Shelley Zoeke

   **Marketing:**
   - Wendy Gelbard, Chair
   - Laurie Ackles
   - Megan Jaros
   - Alyson Jones
   - Sharon Kompalla-Porter
   - Cha Ron Sattler

8. **Year 3-5 Plan (Overview/High Level)**
   - Establish solid data set that can be used to predict at-risk students and determine protective factors to build a more resilient student body (National Research Consortium)
   
   - Develop effective scholarship, professional development and programming around an RIT resilience framework using common language related to failure as an opportunity for resiliency and success
   
   - Embed common language across all student service and academic areas
   
   - Develop a website and campus wide activities