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Certification Statement:
Compliance with MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation and
Federal Title IV Requirements
Effective November 8, 2011

Rochester Institute of Technology
(Name of Institution)

is seeking (Check one):
   ___ Initial Accreditation
   ___ Reaffirmation of Accreditation through Self Study
   ___ Reaffirmation of Accreditation through Periodic Review

An institution seeking initial accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation must affirm that it
meets or continues to meet established MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation and federal
requirements relating to Title IV program participation, including the following relevant
requirements under the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008:

- Distance education (student identity verification)
- Transfer of credit
- Assignment of credit hours
- Title IV cohort default rate

This signed certification statement must be attached to the executive summary of the institution’s
self-study or periodic review report.

The undersigned hereby certify that the institution meets all established Requirements of
Affiliation of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and federal requirements
relating to Title IV program participation as detailed on this certification statement. If it is not
possible to certify compliance with all requirements specified herein, the institution must attach
specific details in a separate memorandum.

___ Exceptions are noted in the attached memorandum (Check if applicable)

__________________________
(Dr. William W. Destler, President)

May 10, 2012
(Date)

__________________________
(Donald N. Boyce; Chair, Board of Trustees)

May 10, 2012
(Date)
Chapter 1: Executive Summary

1.1 Institutional Overview

As one of the world’s leading technological institutions, Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) is a vibrant, connected community that is home to over 17,600 diverse, ambitious, and creative students from more than 100 countries. RIT offers a vast array of academic programs; a diverse, committed, and accessible faculty; sophisticated facilities; and a strong emphasis on experiential learning.

RIT is guided by the following vision and mission:

**Vision:** RIT will lead higher education in preparing students for innovative, creative, and successful careers in a global society.

**Mission:** To provide a broad range of career-oriented educational programs with the goal of producing innovative, creative graduates who are well-prepared for their chosen careers in a global society.

Complete mission statement is found at: [http://www.rit.edu/president/mission.html](http://www.rit.edu/president/mission.html).

RIT is internationally recognized as a leader in engineering and technology, business, computing, imaging, the visual arts, science, and health sciences, and as the home of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID). RIT offers 226 academic programs across nine colleges and two degree-granting units: [http://www.rit.edu/colleges.html](http://www.rit.edu/colleges.html).

Recognized by *US News & World Report* as a top regional northern university for the past 20 years, RIT is ranked in the top ten schools nationally for cooperative education and internships. Numerous RIT academic programs have been acknowledged by leading college guides, industry, and internationally respected publications: [http://www.rit.edu/overview/rankings-and-recognition](http://www.rit.edu/overview/rankings-and-recognition). RIT also has been recognized by the Chronicle of Higher Education in the “Great Colleges to Work For” Program.

As a leader in experiential education, RIT’s cooperative education program is the fourth oldest and one of the largest programs in the world. More than 3,500 students annually participate in cooperative education (co-op), which is full-time, paid work experience directly related to students’ course of study and career interests. Additionally, many students participate in internships, research opportunities, and study abroad experiences.

RIT has a diverse student body and inclusive campus community, attracting more than 2,500 students of color and over 1,800 students from other countries. Additionally, more than 1,300 deaf and hard of hearing students are enrolled at RIT and supported by NTID.

RIT has an established history of global education, offering undergraduate and graduate degree programs in Dubrovnik, Croatia and Pristina, Kosovo since 1997 and 2003, respectively. In 2008, RIT established a location in Dubai in partnership with the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHESR). In 2011, RIT established a second location in Croatia in the capital of Zagreb. Across all international locations, nearly 1,200 students enrolled in programs in fall 2011.

1.2 Preparation of the Periodic Review Report (PRR)

President William W. Destler and Provost Jeremy Haefner charged Senior Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, Dr. Christine Licata, with leading the University’s Middle States Periodic Review Report process. An 11-member Periodic Review Steering Committee was established, consisting of representatives from Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Institutional Research, Budget and Financial Planning, Enrollment Management and Career Services, the Office for Diversity and Inclusion, and instructional and administrative faculty from the colleges. A full list of Steering Committee members is available in Appendix A1. Because the Periodic Review Report occurred concurrently with major calendar and student information system conversions, the University utilized existing committees (e.g., the University Assessment Council, Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee) where possible and created additional subcommittees as needed.

The University allocated a significant portion of the Periodic Review Report process for community review and feedback. In December 2011, the Steering Committee shared portions of the Periodic Review Report with the senior leadership team and the University’s three shared governance groups – Academic Senate, Staff Council, and Student Government. In February 2012, the full Periodic Review Report was posted to the web and the entire RIT community – faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the Board of Trustees – was asked to review and provide feedback using a web-based tool. In April, the Board of Trustees (BOT) reviewed the PRR at its quarterly meeting, reported out the feedback of various BOT subcommittees at its general session, and discussed the report in executive session. The Board
members took the PRR process very seriously and used the Periodic Review Report as a springboard for discussion about strategic accomplishments and future direction. After the BOT meeting, the PRR committee members incorporated feedback received from the BOT and other constituent groups, made final revisions, and presented the report to President Destler for his approval in May 2012. The Periodic Review Report process and timeline are outlined in Appendix A2 and on the Accreditation website: http://www.rit.edu/provost/accreditation.

1.3 Summary of Major Institutional Changes and Developments

Leadership Changes. In July 2007, Dr. Destler became the University’s ninth president, following the retirement of Dr. Albert J. Simone, who had led the University since 1992. Prior to RIT, Dr. Destler served as the senior vice president for academic affairs and provost at the University of Maryland at College Park. RIT also welcomed Provost Haefner in July 2008, following the retirement of Provost Stanley McKenzie, who had served in that role for 14 years. Since 2007, new deans have been appointed in eight of the nine colleges, largely due to retirements and promotional opportunities. Additionally, several new senior administrators have joined RIT, including the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, Senior Sustainability Advisor, Assistant Vice President and Chief Information Officer, Vice President for Research, Dean of Graduate Studies, and Vice President/Dean for Institute of Health Sciences and Technology.

Updated RIT Strategic Plan 2005-2015: Imagine RIT. In 2007, the University’s Strategic Plan was modified to consolidate the 32 goals and 132 objectives of the 2005 plan and align with the vision of President Destler and the trustees’ priorities for the new administration. The Strategic Plan, which can be found at the president’s website, http://www.rit.edu/president/strategicplanning/plan.php, identifies four Key Result Areas (KRA), 14 goals, and 20 performance targets for the University. The KRAs reflect the major University priorities and the areas in which we must be successful in order to realize the vision and mission of the University:

- **KRA 1: Be renowned for student success.** The extent to which students obtain an education that prepares them for the challenges and opportunities awaiting them in a rapidly changing and diverse global society.
  - Goal 1: Improve student retention and graduation rates.
  - Goal 2: Achieve best in class diversity levels for minority student, faculty, and staff populations.
  - Goal 3: Increase student participation in global initiatives.
  - Goal 4: Increase percentage of graduating students with employment offers or graduate school acceptances.

- **KRA 2: Maximize opportunities for innovation, creativity, research, and scholarship.** The extent to which the educational experience is characterized by opportunities to develop and apply creative and innovative approaches to learning and problem solving.
  - Goal 5: Achieve 100% student participation in innovation, creativity, and scholarship activities.
  - Goal 6: Increase sponsored research awards.
  - Goal 7: Increase the number of students, full-time faculty, and research faculty in the Golisano Institute for Sustainability.
  - Goal 8: Achieve 96% faculty participation in scholarship.

- **KRA 3: Execute with organizational/operational excellence.** The extent to which we achieve the organizational mission in the most cost-effective/efficient manner.
  - Goal 9: Maintain a balanced annual operating budget.
  - Goal 10: Grow the RIT endowment.
  - Goal 11: Demonstrate educational excellence through the achievement of student learning, academic effectiveness, student placement goals.

- **KRA 4: Achieve the highest levels of stakeholder satisfaction.** The extent to which the requirements and expectations of key stakeholder groups are met or exceeded by RIT, including students and their families; alumni; RIT faculty and staff; business community; government; donors.
  - Goal 12: Through brand enhancement strategies, increase undergraduate applications; out-of-state undergraduate applications; and graduate applications.
  - Goal 13: Grow fundraising by increasing annual fundraising; alumni giving; number of annual donors; and actively engaged alumni.
  - Goal 14: Achieve best-in-class stakeholder satisfaction levels as measured by regularly administered faculty, staff, and student satisfaction instruments.

Academic Program Growth. Since 2007, RIT approved 38 new academic programs and currently offers 226 academic programs. This growth has been strategic, occurring in areas of emerging technology or markets with significant
growth. The new programs are academically rigorous, enhance RIT’s program portfolio, and advance RIT’s strategic goals. RIT applied for a substantive change to Middle States and received approval for a charter amendment from the New York State Board of Regents to offer a Master’s in Architecture degree beginning in fall 2011, demonstrating RIT’s expanding academic profile. Other selective new programs include: Game Design and Development, Biomedical Sciences, Biomedical and Chemical Engineering, Sustainability, and University Studies (first year exploration program). Currently, a moratorium on new program development is in effect until 2013-2014 when the University transitions to a semester calendar.

**Emphasis on Research and Scholarship.** Expectations for faculty research and scholarship have continued to grow over the last five years. The creation of Key Result Area 2, “Maximize Opportunities for Innovation, Creativity, Research, and Scholarship,” is a visible demonstration of the University’s growing commitment in this goal. In the last five years, expectations for research and scholarship have been integrated into University practices and processes, including faculty workload portfolios, recruitment criteria for new faculty, and expectations for tenure and promotion. The University has committed substantial human and financial support for research and scholarship activities, as demonstrated by new research labs and facilities, University-funded release time for research and scholarship, seed grants, and additional support for the Office of Sponsored Research Services. Sponsored research funding has grown from approximately $5M per year to over $50M in the last decade. RIT now ranks in the top 50 private colleges and universities in regard to total research expenditures. Much of this growth has been achieved through the leveraging of our traditional strengths in imaging, sustainable manufacturing, and computing, as well as through the establishment of a number of research centers of excellence (e.g., Center for Integrated Manufacturing Studies, Golisano Institute for Sustainability, NanoPower Research Labs, Center for Computational Relativity and Gravitation, Digital Imaging and Remote Sensing Laboratory, Center for Detectors). Another significant factor in the growth of sponsored research at RIT has been the development of applied and interdisciplinary Ph.D. programs at the institution, including Color Science, Imaging Science, Computing and Information Sciences, Microsystems Engineering, Astrophysical Sciences and Technology, and Sustainability.

**Expanded Global Education.** RIT has identified global intelligence as a critical outcome of an RIT education, with the expectation that graduates will be well-prepared to lead successful careers in a global society. The focus on global education is consistent with RIT’s vision and mission statements and Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan to increase student participation in global initiatives. The provost’s plan to expand global education includes three primary objectives:

- **Foster global intelligence:** Every graduating student will be able to understand and function in an increasingly multicultural and international environment
- **Offer RIT education globally:** RIT will deliver its unique form of career-oriented and experiential education to select parts of the world
- **Provide meaningful global experiences:** RIT will offer a full range of meaningful experiences for students and faculty – ranging from study and cooperative education abroad to immersing all students in meaningful cross-cultural educational experiences

The plan includes growing academic programs at RIT’s international locations, expanding opportunities for RIT students to study and work globally, and increasing students’ global awareness and understanding. The creation of an Office for Global Education and the recruitment of an Associate Provost for International Education and Global Programs are underway to provide the leadership and infrastructure for global education efforts. Goals for global education include increasing international location enrollment to 1,300 by fall 2013, increasing RIT students studying abroad to 500 students per year by 2013, and achieving 10% international cooperative education placements by fall 2013. An outline of Provost Haefner’s full global education continuum can be found in Appendix A3.

**Focus on Innovation and Creativity.** RIT’s reputation for innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship was crystallized in 2007 with President Destler’s conceptualization of RIT as an Innovation University. Since then, numerous efforts have been undertaken to realize this vision. The Albert J. Simone Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship promotes and enables entrepreneurial education through cutting edge and interdisciplinary course curriculum, applied entrepreneurial experiences, and various entrepreneurship-related programs. The Center for Student Innovation (CSI) provides inspirational space for student projects leading to products and process with impact. RIT Entrepreneurs Hall is a holistic entrepreneurship program that combines residential campus living, courses, mentoring, unique entrepreneurial co-ops, and access to the student incubator. Imagine RIT: Innovation and Creativity Festival is an annual showcase of over 350 interactive and cutting-edge exhibits by students, faculty, and staff. The festival has quickly become a campus tradition, attracting 32,000 visitors last year, and is directly aligned with Key Result Area 2, “Maximize Opportunities for Innovation, Creativity, Research and Scholarship.”
Growth in Sustainability. Spearheaded by President Destler, who signed the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment in 2008, RIT is moving toward becoming a world leader in sustainability education, research, and practice. RIT has developed a comprehensive portfolio of programs in sustainability and houses one of the world’s first doctoral level sustainability programs. The Golisano Institute of Sustainability, established in September 2007, is a multidisciplinary academic unit whose mission is to undertake world-class education and research programs in sustainability, with major foci on sustainable production, energy, mobility, architecture, and ecologically friendly information technology systems. RIT has committed that all new buildings will be designed to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) specification with a minimum achievement of LEED Silver certification. Two buildings have achieved Gold and Platinum certification and three others are pending a LEED rating. RIT’s sustainability efforts are being led by the newly created position of Senior Sustainability Advisor to the President. More information about the University’s sustainability efforts can be found at http://www.rit.edu/sustainability/.

RIT-Rochester General Health System Alliance. In 2008, RIT and Rochester General Health System (RGHS), a major health care provider in the greater Rochester area, formed a strategic alliance to leverage combined resources and create new collaborative partnerships. The cornerstone of this alliance is the newly created College of Health Sciences and Technology, which was formed in fall 2011 and provides a focused, interdisciplinary approach to health care education: http://www.rit.edu/overview/chst. The College of Health Sciences and Technology is part of the larger Institute of Health Sciences and Technology. In addition to the college, the Institute includes the Health Sciences Research Center and the Health Sciences Outreach Center. These three entities serve to educate future health care professionals, meet workforce and community needs, and apply innovative technologies in health care delivery.

Enrollment Growth and Facilities Expansion. As outlined in Chapter 4, “Enrollment and Financial Trends and Projections,” RIT experienced substantial enrollment growth in the last five years. Since fall 2007, headcount enrollment has increased by 10% and full-time enrollment (FTE) by 11%. RIT’s facilities have expanded in response to this growth and to academic program expansion. Ten buildings, encompassing nearly 900,000 square feet, have been built or expanded between 2007-12 to support academic and research needs and to enhance students’ experiences on campus. Construction projects are chosen strategically and based on University priorities, such as student success, sustainability, innovation and creativity, and global education. Selected new facilities are highlighted in Appendix A4.

Semester and Student Information System (SIS) Conversion. RIT currently operates on a quarter system. Effective August 2013, RIT will convert its academic quarter calendar to a semester calendar, with fall and spring semesters, a January intersession, and summer term. We believe the conversion to semesters will have a number of benefits for students, as outlined on our semester conversion website: http://www.rit.edu/~w-conver/faq.php. Concurrent with the calendar conversion, RIT is converting a 25+ year old mainframe student information system to PeopleSoft Campus Solutions, effective September 2012. We believe we are the only university that has concurrently undertaken an SIS and calendar conversion within three years. A significant amount of human and financial resources have been devoted to these changes over the past two years and will continue through the 2013-14 academic year.

1.4 Highlights of the Periodic Review Report

The Periodic Review Report presents a comprehensive picture of RIT’s progress toward achieving its mission, vision, and goals and in addressing the recommendations from the 2007 MSCHE decennial review, which focused largely on institutional assessment and the assessment of student learning.

Since 2007, RIT has made remarkable progress in the areas of institutional assessment and the assessment of student learning, a key element of this Middle States Periodic Review Report. Chapters 2 and 5 outline the creation of an assessment infrastructure, consistent assessment processes across campus, and a growing culture of assessment throughout the University. The chapters articulate a number of assessment accomplishments, including the creation of a Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Office and incremental staffing to spearhead university-wide assessment efforts, implementation of a university-wide student learning assessment model, identification of university-wide general education outcomes and a general education assessment plan, an academic program profile that articulates essential outcomes for every program, development of an assessment framework for administrative and academic support units, implementation of a web-based assessment management system to track assessment activities, development of a comprehensive set of assessment resources and tools, accessible through the University’s assessment website, and numerous examples of ‘closing the loop’ – e.g., using assessment results to improve programs, services, teaching and learning, and to inform budgeting and resource allocation. These assessment efforts have resulted in well-defined goals at the University, college, and program levels, including goals for student learning. RIT’s strategic plan and unit level plans now include the assessment of both institutional effectiveness and student learning outcomes.
Chapter 3 identifies RIT’s major challenges and opportunities in the next five years in the areas of revenue and resource diversification, student success, diversification and globalization, and internal and external forces of change. Like many other institutions, RIT faces challenges related to a declining Northeast student population and resource demands for strategic priorities. RIT continues to capitalize on its opportunities, demonstrated by continued enrollment growth, rising retention and graduation rates, increased global market presence, and continued investments in facilities and infrastructure.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the University related to its enrollment and financial performance. Analysis of enrollment trends provides significant evidence that, not only is RIT growing, it is also increasingly selective, more diverse, and well positioned to achieve its enrollment goals in the future.

The University currently enjoys a very stable financial position, evidenced by a reaffirmation of its A1 rating by Moody’s in August 2010 and its favorable comparison to other institutions using Moody’s benchmark financial ratios. RIT’s recent and projected results provide evidence of a solid financial foundation to support student success, innovation, operational excellence, and stakeholder satisfaction.

Chapter 6 outlines the linkages between institutional planning and budgeting processes. The chapter outlines RIT’s budget planning process and the alignment of resource allocation with the University’s Key Result Areas.

1.5 The PRR Process: A Confirmation of Change and Progress

The Periodic Review afforded the University the opportunity to reflect upon, assess, and articulate our progress over the last five years in relation to the Middle States standards and our mission and vision as a university. As a result of the PRR process, we recognize the magnitude of change and extent of accomplishments realized over this five year period. Coupled with this recognition is the additional awareness of the degree to which the University is mission-centric, with a clear alignment between strategic goals, strategies, and outcomes across all levels of the University. In the area of assessment, we recognize the significant progress made since 2007, including the creation of an assessment infrastructure; the integration between planning, assessment and resource allocation; and the embodiment of an assessment culture on campus which promotes assessing what we value and valuing what we assess! This PRR process has enabled campus stakeholders to have confidence that the University is strategic, forward-looking, and well-positioned to respond to anticipated challenges and opportunities. The PRR also enabled us to affirm our brand promise as one of the world’s leading technological universities. RIT is an intersection of disciplines, a hub of innovation and creativity, and a vibrant community teeming with students and faculty pooling together their individual talents in service of important projects and big ideas.
Chapter 2: Summary of Institution’s Response to MSCHE Recommendations (2007) and Institutional Self-Study Recommendations

This chapter provides a summary of RIT’s response to the recommendations made by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) decennial site visit team and the recommendations made by RIT in the 2007 decennial evaluation Self-Study. The chapter is divided into two major parts. The first part addresses the five MSCHE recommendations and related RIT Self-Study recommendations. The second portion of this chapter is devoted to the remaining RIT recommendations which are grouped thematically in “clusters” consistent with the 2007 RIT Self-Study design. We discuss these clusters and highlight key actions taken.

A detailed summary on the status of every recommendation is provided in Appendix B1 (an Excel Workbook) and includes a status indicator for each, characterized as either “Completed” (one time event based on the recommendation), “Initiated and Ongoing” (initial action taken with continued progress) or “No Action Taken.” Table 1 provides an overall summary of all recommendations and current status.

| TABLE 1: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM 2007 MSCHE DECENTENNIAL SELF-STUDY |
|-------------------------|----------------|------------|
| RECOMMENDATION          | MSCHE | RIT |
| # of Recommendations    | 5     | 49 |
| • Completed             | 5     | 14 |
| • Initiated and Ongoing | 0     | 35 |
| • No Action Taken       | 0     | 0  |

Response to Commission Action. Following the decennial review, Middle States required that a progress report be submitted by April 1, 2009 which documented “implementation of an organized, sustained process to assess the achievement of the institutional program level and general education learning outcomes.” RIT’s progress letter was provided and accepted by MSCHE in November 2009.

2007 MSCHE Visiting Review Team and Related RIT Self-Study Recommendations. In the closing portion of the 2007 MSCHE Visiting Team Summary Report, the team distilled its recommendations into the following statement to the University: “RIT has made substantial progress toward the goals expressed in Middle States’ Standards 7 and 14, but much remains to be done. We recommend that RIT work assiduously and aggressively to reach those goals. Specifically, we recommend that RIT move rapidly to define explicit student learning outcomes for all its programs, including most particularly general education, and that it institutionalize assessment responsibility and expertise in an university-wide administrative organization that can and will support and encourage the development and application of assessment tools by all of RIT’s colleges and administrative units.” (Final 2007 Report of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education Visiting Team, p. 18.) In this overarching guidance, the Visiting Team recommendations centered on three (3) accreditation standards: Standard 7: Institutional Assessment, Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning, and Standard 12: General Education.

When compiling our response to the actions taken on the RIT recommendations, it was noted that a great deal of overlap existed specifically between the five MSCHE recommendations and 11 of the RIT Self-Study recommendations. To effectively and concisely address these 16 assessment-focused recommendations, responses have been carefully grouped and aligned to the MSCHE standard in question.

Table 2 shows the alignment between all of the assessment-related recommendations. MSCHE recommendations are grouped into three categories: central coordination/tools/leadership for institutional assessment, institutional assessment infrastructure, and general education. Related RIT Self-Study recommendations are aligned to these same MSCHE recommendation categories.

It is also important to note that the detailed discussion and evidence related to assessment presented in this chapter foregrounds the material presented in Chapter 5 (Organized and Sustained Processes to Assess Institutional Effectiveness and Student Learning). Both chapters work together to substantiate that RIT has implemented organized and sustained processes to assess the achievement of institutional, program level, and general education learning outcomes.
**TABLE 2: MSCHE AND RELATED RIT SELF-STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS STATUS SUMMARY (2007)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MSCHE RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>RELATED RIT SELF-STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Coordination, Tools, Leadership for Institutional Assessment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Create a central office responsible for all institutional assessment, with leadership that is well-versed in the development and use of assessment tools.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 14: Student Learning</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>14b. Establish a single office or person responsible for facilitating and overseeing the assessment process, coordinate assessment requirements across colleges with multiple accrediting bodies, establish a systematic repository for storage and retrieval of assessment data at the college, division and University levels.</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Leadership and expertise in assessment be recruited, to coordinate the several assessment efforts into a more unified entity with one leader that is advised by a campus-wide council.</td>
<td>Initiated and ongoing</td>
<td>14c. Increase financial resources directed towards the design and implementation of training programs of faculty, both new and continuing, in assessment process and practices in order to take assessment of student learning to the next level.</td>
<td>Initiated and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional Assessment Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 7: Institutional Assessment</td>
<td>Initiated and ongoing</td>
<td>7a. Connect assessment practices and results to the budget process. For it to be meaningful, assessment must be applied to initiate change in business practices as well as student learning. The assessment of business units must be tied more directly to educational outcomes.</td>
<td>Initiated and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Significantly enhance institutional assessment infrastructure in order to support existing assessment work within the colleges and other institutional units, as well as whatever additional programs are needed.</td>
<td>Initiated and ongoing</td>
<td>7c. Enhance the assessment of student learning outcomes in non-academic areas, where appropriate.</td>
<td>Initiated and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 14: Student Learning</td>
<td>Initiated and ongoing</td>
<td>14a. Embed the importance of assessment of student learning in the life of the University at all levels, encourage academic leadership to mandate ongoing assessment of curriculum and instruction, and require it at the institutional level as the basis for storage and retrieval of assessment data at the college, division, and University levels. Provide the resources needed for training and implementation of assessment at the college level.</td>
<td>Initiated and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. An organizational and sufficient resources be allocated to provide sustainable progress in the development of a student learning assessment model, a program review process, and the linkage of findings to decision making and budget allocation and reallocation. For example, a standing committee might guide and monitor assessment for undergraduate and graduate academic programs.</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>7d. Provide Information and Technology Services (ITS) and Institute Research and Policy Studies (IRPS) with the financial and other resource support they need to systematize services across the University and to provide on-demand assessment data as needed. Consider implementation of centralized data warehousing to facilitate information exchange, compliance assessment, and benchmarking.</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 12: General Education</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>12a. Clarify connections and relevancy between General Education curricula and student majors.</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A mechanism to settle on explicit Institute-wide General Education goals and objectives be identified as soon as possible.</td>
<td></td>
<td>12b. Establish a process for rigorous assessment and oversight of General Education curricula.</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12c. Review all General Education courses to ensure that they reflect RIT’s stated emphasis on ethics, values, and diversity. Make the language more visible within working documents, stated curricula, and course descriptions.</td>
<td>Initiated and ongoing</td>
<td>14d. Once a comprehensive plan for General Education has been finalized, design and implement an assessment plan with clear indication of accountability.</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2012 Periodic Review Report

Rochester Institute of Technology
2.1 Institutional Assessment: Processes and Elements

We begin by introducing RIT’s Institutional Assessment Framework which provides an overview of our core assessment processes and elements. The framework, developed over the last two years, has four integrated elements which power RIT’s institutional assessment efforts: Strategic Vision, Planning for Assessment, Implementation, and Use of Results for Continuous Improvement. This framework guides our institutional thinking and provides context for this chapter and Chapter 5, “Organized and Sustained Processes to Assess Institutional Effectiveness and Student Learning” (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Institutional Assessment Framework

Strategic Vision. One of RIT’s strengths is the vision and strategic direction provided by its administrative and academic leadership with respect to institutional assessment. RIT has a Strategic Plan with corresponding Key Result Areas (KRAs) and measurable goals that operationalize its mission. The administrative and academic leadership at RIT values and demonstrates strong support for assessment, which in turn fosters a sustained focus on institutional effectiveness and student learning. There is support for the Strategic Plan at multiple levels as Division and college goals and outcomes are aligned to the University’s Strategic Plan. Our strategic vision is informed by our internal and external stakeholders, including students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni, employers, business, government, donors, community partners, and funders.
Leadership and Coordination. Institutional assessment is driven by the president, provost, vice presidents, deans and department heads. Two university-wide offices: Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) and Institutional Research and Policy Studies (IRPS) provide the coordinating infrastructure to support the various assessment processes. Four university-wide committees (University Assessment Council, Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee, General Education Committee, and Institutional Research Advisory Council) also provide coordination and help guide discussion of results and analysis of how results impact annual budgeting cycles and larger institutional plans.

Planning for Assessment. The campus has established expectations for specific planning cycles and required assessment plans. In addition to RIT’s Strategic Plan, we are currently using a common effectiveness planning template for divisional administrative and academic support units known as an Institutional Effectiveness Map. Academic programs are developing or refining and implementing their assessment plans using RIT’s Program Level Assessment Plan template. General Education assessment is also guided by an assessment plan. Core institutional processes were planned and implemented to reflect our ongoing commitment to embedding assessment at all institutional levels.

Implementation. Institutional structures and processes have evolved and are now geared to sustaining our institutional assessment culture. We are systematically collecting data to provide evidence on the achievement of expected goals and outcomes. Advancements in technology at RIT, like our new Assessment Management System (TaskStream), provide a strong foundation for promoting and sustaining a culture of evidence including data collection and analysis.

Use of Results for Continuous Improvement. This intentional “closing the loop” stage sets the expectation that units will use results and evidence to make improvements to programs, services, processes, or practices. We are connecting and synthesizing the results of assessment processes to produce timely reports and communicate information that helps leaders make improvement decisions across the campus and provide evidence of achievement of the University’s goals.

Response to Recommendations from MSCHE and Institutional Self-Study

2.2 Central Coordination, Tools, Leadership for Institutional Assessment

| Standard 7 - MSCHE Recommendation #1: Create a central office responsible for all institutional assessment, with leadership that is well-versed in the development and use of assessment tools. |
| Standard 7 - RIT Recommendation 7b^1: Consider designating a single office with responsibility for ensuring compliance with university-wide assessment goals and practices. Establish systems for sharing of assessment tools and strategies across divisions and departments. |
| Standard 14 - MSCHE Recommendation #5: Leadership and expertise in assessment be recruited, to coordinate the several assessment efforts into a more unified entity with one leader that is advised by a campus-wide council. |
| Standard 14 - RIT Recommendation 14b: Establish a single office or person responsible for facilitating and overseeing the assessment process, coordinate assessment requirements across colleges with multiple accrediting bodies, establish a systematic repository for storage and retrieval of assessment data at the college, division, and University levels. |
| Standard 14 - RIT Recommendation 14c: Increase financial resources toward the design and implementation of training programs of faculty, both new and continuing, in assessment process and practices in order to take assessment of student learning to the next level. |

Action: Central Office Coordination and Leadership. The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) Office was established and a full-time director was hired in January 2009. The Director of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment has extensive assessment experience and credentials and provides leadership in the implementation of the institutional assessment framework. This assessment office has expanded its role and responsibilities to meet the assessment needs of the University and in addition to student learning outcomes assessment also supports institutional assessment. Since 2009, the SLOA Office has increased its coordination and capacity with the addition of permanent staff (1 position) and two semester conversion temporary positions. The director works closely with faculty, staff, and administrators and collaborates with the office of Institutional Research and Policy Studies and other divisional assessment professionals, deans, and faculty to ensure the University meets its own continuous quality improvement goals and the assessment standards required for Middle States accreditation. The director is housed in the Provost’s Office, reporting to the senior associate provost, who has oversight for the outcomes assessment,

^1 Because RIT Recommendation 7b aligns closely with MSCHE Recommendation #1, it is discussed prior to RIT Recommendation 7a.
academic program management, and accreditation functions. The director is advised by two campus-wide councils, which are detailed on page 11.

**Action: Permanent Budget Assigned.** A permanent budget was established for the SLOA Office in fiscal year 2010 which helps to provide resources to facilitate faculty training related to the assessment of general education student learning outcomes, program level outcomes assessment, and assessment of administrative unit goals. The SLOA Office offers development assessment workshops and provides ongoing funding of faculty stipends for summer course and program assessment work.

**Action: Assessment Resources and Tools.** The SLOA Office is a centralized support unit that serves as an assessment resource to the University community. The office communicates, consults, shares, and educates community constituents on all aspects of assessment, including how to assess student learning and institutional effectiveness, and most importantly how to act on the results for program improvement and enhanced student outcomes. A sample of resources and services offered to the campus community by this office include:

- Workshops related to all aspects of assessment
- Assistance with use of university-wide data
- Assistance with design of manageable program level assessment plans
- Assistance with design of course level goals and associated student learning outcomes
- Assistance with design of rubrics or other instruments to measure student learning goals or unit specific objectives
- Assistance with the development of non-academic unit Institutional Effectiveness assessment Maps
- Specialized consulting related to assessing student learning outcomes with individual chairs and directors, entire departments, and/or college level committees

For additional assessment tools and resources, please review the SLOA Office website link: [http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/outcomes/faculty_resources.php](http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/outcomes/faculty_resources.php).

To track institutional effectiveness and progress, RIT relies on a variety of university-wide data sources and benchmarks. A sample of the data sources used are identified in Table 3 and aligned to the corresponding Middle States Standards. A future goal is to integrate additional data sources with the Assessment Management Tracking system. The Assessment Management System is described in detail on page 12.

### TABLE 3: DATA SOURCES AND RELATED MIDDLE STATES STANDARDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT DATA SOURCES</th>
<th>MIDDLE STATES STANDARDS</th>
<th>ADMINISTRATION SCHEDULE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admitted Student Questionnaire Plus (ASQ+)</td>
<td>8 (Student Admissions)</td>
<td>Biannual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program level Assessment Learning Progress Report</td>
<td>14 (Assessment of Student Learning)</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative Work Experience Supervisor Evaluation</td>
<td>14 (Assessment of Student Learning)</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware Study</td>
<td>10 (Faculty)</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIT Faculty and Staff Engagement and Climate Survey</td>
<td>7 (Institutional Assessment)</td>
<td>Biannual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Program Census</td>
<td>7 (Institutional Assessment)</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIT Enrollment &amp; Retention Data Dashboards</td>
<td>7 (Institutional Assessment)</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity Profiles</td>
<td>7 (Institutional Assessment)</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Survey of Student Engagement</td>
<td>1 (Mission and Goals), 7 (Institutional Assessment), 9 (Student Support Services), 12 (General Education)</td>
<td>Biannual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey</td>
<td>1 (Mission and Goals), 7 (Institutional Assessment), 9 (Student Support Services)</td>
<td>Biannual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni Surveys</td>
<td>7, (Institutional Assessment), 11 (Educational Offerings)</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment Budget Projections and Forecasting</td>
<td>2 (Planning, Resource Allocation), and Institutional Renewal, 3 (Institutional Resources)</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Audits</td>
<td>3 (Institutional Resources)</td>
<td>Ongoing (rotates among departments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space Utilization Study</td>
<td>3 (Institutional Resources)</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Evaluations of Teaching</td>
<td>7 (Institutional Assessment), 10 (Faculty)</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Research Data</td>
<td>1, 2, 7 (Institutional Assessment)</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to data sources, key partnerships across the institution are also vital resources. The development and sharing of resources was a primary reason for the creation of the University Assessment Council. (See description of University Assessment Council membership and function below.)

A crucial resource for all divisions and colleges is the Institutional Research and Policy Studies (IRPS) Office. The IRPS director is a member of the University Assessment Council and now co-chairs the committee with the Director of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA). The SLOA Director provides guidance and support related to institutional assessment and promotes a cohesive and comprehensive culture of assessment. The IRPS Office has extensive experience in collecting data and analyzing results. This office also oversees the University’s Data Warehouse as well as coordinates and disseminates university-wide survey data. In the last five years, the IRPS office has created tools and revamped processes to increase the availability and accessibility of institutional data through web-based data warehouse dashboards, deans’ and associate deans’ file shares, and the electronic distribution of reports.

The Wallace Center, which houses the Teaching and Learning Services (TLS) unit, is another key source for engaging faculty in professional development. The Wallace Center, TLS staff, and the SLOA Office collaborate to offer course level assessment workshops for faculty.

**2.3 Institutional Assessment Infrastructure**

In addition to the central coordination, tools and leadership for institutional assessment described in 2.2, other major enhancements to the assessment infrastructure have been made to support existing assessment work within the colleges and administrative units. The action items below provide evidence of the development and use of an administrative planning assessment tool, assessment network/resource base and a dedicated budget to support assessment activities.

| Standard 7 - MSCHE Recommendation #2: Significantly enhance institutional assessment infrastructure in order to support existing assessment work within the colleges and other institutional units, as well as whatever additional programs are needed. |
| Standard 7 - MSCHE RIT Recommendation 7a: Connect assessment practices and results to the budget process. For it to be meaningful, assessment must be applied to initiate change in business practices as well as student learning. The assessment of business units must be tied more directly to educational outcomes. |

**Action: Assessment Network and Resource Base.** The assessment infrastructure has been significantly improved, most notably through the establishment of a series of coordinating committees, technology enhancements, establishment of budget, and other related resources:

**Coordinating Committees:**

- **Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (SLOAC)** – The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (SLOAC) was created as an ad hoc committee (formerly the Academic Outcomes Assessment Task Force) in 2005 to facilitate and support program level assessment efforts in each college and within the Student Affairs Division. As part of RIT’s commitment to student outcomes assessment, the committee was moved from ad hoc to standing committee status in fall 2007. The committee is comprised of representatives from the nine RIT colleges and the Director of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment. The SLOAC members provide assessment leadership and liaison support to their individual colleges and provide guidance and advice to the SLOA Director. The committee developed an assessment work plan that responds to the needs of the University and unique needs of particular programs within each college. (See Appendix B2 for SLOAC Work Plan).

  For the past two years, the committee’s primary work has been to support college level program outcomes assessment and help with the transition of program level assessment from a quarter calendar to a semester calendar. A critical outcome of semester transition planning was the development of a common program level assessment planning template which provides structure and consistent outcomes reporting across all academic programs (further description provided on page 13). In addition, the committee developed and implemented RIT’s first annual student learning outcomes assessment progress report which provides key stakeholders with information related to achievement of expected outcomes. (See Chapter 5 page 42 for further information).

  - **University Assessment Council (UAC)** – The UAC was established to serve as an advisory body on assessment and institutional effectiveness in support of the work of administrative and academic support units. This council also provides guidance to the SLOA Office and helps coordinate data collection and reporting across divisions. The council is comprised of a representative from each of RIT’s divisions and chaired by the Associate Vice President and Director of Institutional Research and Policy Studies, and the Director of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment.
• **Institutional Research Advisory Council (IRAC)** – the Institutional Research Advisory Council is comprised of senior level University leaders and guides institutional priorities for research and analysis. The Council was created in 2008 in response to an external Institutional Research review, which recommended such a body to support data-informed decision making, policy development, and the development of information repositories and data policies and practices.

**Action: Centralized Assessment Management System.** To further strengthen the infrastructure, RIT purchased an assessment management system (TaskStream) in July 2010. The Assessment Management System (AMS) is an online tool which provides a communication and resource hub for all of the institution’s assessment, and continuous improvement initiatives at both the academic and administrative levels. AMS supports the implementation and sustainability of program level assessment plans, Institutional Effectiveness Maps, and the General Education Assessment Plan. This database is maintained and coordinated through the SLOA Office.

**Action: Planning and Assessment Tool for Administrative Units.** The Institutional Effectiveness Map (IE Map) was designed by the University Assessment Council (UAC) as a self-directed planning tool to help units, administrative offices, programs, and services assess outcomes and tie results to their planning and budgeting processes. (See Appendix B3 for IE Map Template.) The Assessment Management System has the ability to track budget resources and allocations by goals and outcomes in the “Actions and Status” section. (See Figure 2, Actions & Status section.) This component prompts managers to determine which actions are needed based on their outcomes, and indicates associated budget needs. Administrative offices are also able to align their budget requests to division and University level goals and outcomes. Use of the IE Map to closely articulate with resource allocation and budgeting is in the infancy stage and will require additional time to bring to full implementation. (See Appendix B4 for sample IE Maps.)

Figure 2: Operational Plan Details for Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (TaskStream)
Standard 14 - Recommendation #4: In organizational infrastructure and sufficient resources be allocated to provide sustainable progress in the development of a student learning assessment model, a program review process, and the linkage of findings to decision making and budget allocation and reallocation.

Standard 14 - RIT Recommendation 14a: Embed the importance of assessment of student learning in the life of the University at all levels, encourage academic leadership to mandate ongoing assessment of curriculum and instruction, and require it at the institutional level as the basis for storage and retrieval of assessment data at the college, division, and University levels. Provide the resources needed for training and implementation of assessment at the college level.

**Action: Support for College Level Assessment – Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Model.** Under the provost’s leadership, every new program proposal now contains a program level assessment plan with learning outcomes, measures, and benchmarks. This requirement is embedded in the University guidelines and processes for new program design and approval. All new programs must submit the Program level Assessment Plan using the template designed by the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (SLOAC) with their program proposals. (See Appendix B5 for Program Level Outcomes Assessment Plan Template.)

**Figure 3: Program Level Outcomes Assessment Plan Categories Template**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Goals</th>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Academic Program Profile</th>
<th>Data Source/Measure Curriculum Mapping</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Data Analysis Key Findings</th>
<th>Use of Results Action Items and Dissemination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please list program-level goals</td>
<td>Students will be able to: (task, capability, knowledge, skills, and dispositions) Use measurable verbs.</td>
<td>Alignment to the five RIT essential outcomes - check all that apply: Double click on the check box and find the Default Value and click Checked to check the box. To uncheck, the box, double click and then click Not Checked.</td>
<td>Assessment opportunity (course/experience) method (measure) assignment/rubric</td>
<td>Standard, target, or achievement level usually a % Statement of student Success</td>
<td>Identify when and how data are collected, aggregated, and analyzed</td>
<td>Identify who is responsible and list key findings</td>
<td>Identify how results are used and shared. List any recommendations or action items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An Academic Program Assessment Planning Guide, developed by SLOA, provides in-depth information to programs and departments on each of the elements in the program level plan. (See Appendix B6 for Planning Guide.)

**Action: Academic Program Review and Management Processes.** In response to the need to regularize oversight of new and continuing academic programs since 2007, the following new processes were put in place.

**Expedited Academic Program Review:** An expedited academic program review screening process, adopted specifically in preparation for calendar conversion, was implemented in 2010 and resulted in reallocation of resources as follows:
- Deactivation of 9 programs (5 Bachelor level, 1 Master’s level, 1 Dual Degree (BS/MS), 2 Certificates)
- Discontinuation of 47 Programs (27 Associate level, 2 Bachelor level, 3 Master’s level, 4 Dual Degrees, and 11 Certificates)
- Consolidation of 8 programs into 4: 6 at Bachelors level into 3 modified Bachelor’s Degrees, and 2 at Masters level into 1 Master’s degree

**Program Tracking Tool:** Every new academic degree program is tracked over the first five year period to assess whether enrollment projections and revenue assumptions are on target. The provost, dean, and department chair use this tool to determine whether changes in recruitment or revenue expectations are warranted, if program viability is a concern, and if it is, what actions will be taken.

**New Academic Portfolio Blueprint for Criteria and Parameters:** In order to enhance the connections between the overall academic portfolio of degree programs with the vision, mission, values, and strategic direction of the University, a task force is currently developing a set of recommendations that will help define the scope and domains for new academic programs at RIT for the period of 2013 to 2018. In order to intentionally and thoughtfully support the strategic goals of student success, academic quality, research and scholarship, the task force will recommend criteria and parameters to manage the academic program portfolio. The task force expects to submit the report to the provost and the academic senate for approval in the fall of 2012.
**Academic Program Review:** A new process for academic program review was developed within Academic Affairs, vetted, and approved in fall 2009 by Academic Senate. This process will begin in 2015 (after RIT has completed two years in the semester model) and centers on external peer review and a self-study that assesses centrality to mission, program demand, financial viability, and academic quality. In the academic program quality criteria area, programs must submit program level student learning outcomes assessment data results and associated actions implemented as a result of findings in their self-study narrative. (See Appendix B7 for full Academic Program Review Process.) This ties the program level learning outcome assessment process directly to academic program review to facilitate continuous improvement.

**Standard 7 - RIT Recommendation 7d: Provide Information and Technology Services (ITS) and Institution Research and Policy Studies (IRPS) with the financial and other resource support they need to systematize services across the University and to provide on-demand assessment data as needed. Consider implementation of centralized data warehousing to facilitate information exchange, compliance assessment, and benchmarking.**

**Action: Alignment of Institutional Research with University’s Information Needs.** In 2007, RIT’s Institutional Research and Policy Studies office was charged with becoming more anticipatory and proactive, increasing its emphasis on the analysis and interpretation of data versus data compilation, and becoming an information partner in the analysis and understanding of University issues. To accomplish this, the IR office completed a self-assessment, which included outreach to campus IR consumers, and an external review by two experienced IR practitioners. Based on the assessment, the IR office revised its mission statement, priorities, and objectives. The office improved its reporting processes and embarked upon new initiatives to increase the availability of information to decision makers, including the creation of a centralized data warehouse, implementation of a data mining study focused on student retention, and participation in the Delaware Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity. The staff also increased its involvement on major University committees. An additional 1.5 FTE staff were hired to focus on data warehousing, analytics, and information support to key decision makers across campus, including the Provost/Academic Affairs, Colleges, Enrollment Management, Student Affairs, and Finance and Administration.

Each of the action steps taken to date as described above significantly enhance the assessment infrastructure and provide the support RIT needs to collect and use data for planning and resource allocation and to effect meaningful changes and program improvement in different areas of the University.

**Action: Centralized Data Warehouse.** Beginning in 2007, the University invested in a data warehouse and business intelligence program, aimed at providing assessment and other institutional data for decision making and policy development. The University’s data warehouse currently contains enrollment and retention data and will significantly increase in scope to include admissions, student financial, and course and grades data with the implementation of the PeopleSoft student information system in September 2012. Oracle (OBIEE) dashboards provide web-based, interactive analysis of the data warehouse data. The dashboards are the way we monitor our progress toward many of our Strategic Plan goals, including those related to enrollment, diversity, and retention. The warehouse was recognized as a 2010 Honors Laureate by Computerworld as an advanced academic reporting system.

**Standard 7 - RIT Recommendation 7c: Enhance assessment of student learning outcomes in non-academic offices where appropriate.**

**Action: Development of Student Learning Outcomes in Student Affairs.** The Division of Student Affairs provides significant programming and services keyed to academic support learning outcomes. For example, the Academic Support Center, Disability Services Office, and English Language Center each respond to specific student learning and development outcomes. Most recently this division has intentionally embedded assessment of student learning and development within its 2011-2015 divisional strategic goals. Each unit within the division is to develop and utilize an outcomes-focused assessment plan based upon chief program functions. Each department in Student Affairs has an assessment coordinator with responsibility to manage the assessment plans of the department. The Student Affairs Office of Assessment and Research supports this effort centrally through the Assessment Training Series, a formalized assessment education program for division staff. The Division of Student Affairs developed a Curriculum Review Committee which reviews all non-credit bearing courses in the division for well-developed and appropriately aligned student learning outcomes. Additionally, the Student Affairs Learning Outcomes Committee is charged with the development of divisional learning outcomes to be operationalized and assessed at the department level. These outcomes will be finalized in June 2012.
As evidenced earlier in this chapter, an infrastructure and resources have been put into place to support a student learning assessment model. In addition, the following additional actions were taken related to general education learning outcomes.

### 2.4 General Education (Standard 12)

**Standard 12 - MSCHE Recommendation #3: A mechanism to settle on explicit institute-wide General Education goals and objectives be identified as soon as possible.**

**Standard 12 - RIT Recommendation 12b: Establish a process for rigorous assessment and oversight of General Education curricula.**

**Action: General Education Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment.** In order to move the effort to re-conceptualize RIT’s general education student learning outcomes forward, in fall 2008 the provost, in collaboration with the Academic Senate, charged a university-wide task force to develop a final set of general education learning outcomes to be acted upon by the campus community. The task force included faculty who had served on previous general education committees and the new Director of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment. The task force’s final proposal built upon a considerable body of previous work and in the end recommended a set of five outcome domains, nineteen specific measurable student learning outcomes under these domains, and a sustainable assessment plan. The task force’s recommendations were reviewed by RIT’s Intercollegiate Curriculum Committee in April 2009 and presented and approved by RIT’s Academic Senate in May 2009. (Please see Appendix B8 for the General Education Student Learning Outcomes and Appendix B9 for the General Education Assessment Plan.) These outcomes are currently in place and being measured per the timeline in the assessment plan.

**Action: General Education Committee:** In March 2010, for the first time in RIT’s history, a General Education Committee (GEC) was established as a standing committee of the Academic Senate to provide faculty oversight for general education. The committee reviews curriculum and general education course proposals from a university-wide perspective to maintain appropriate inter-college relationships with regard to general education matters. This committee ensures that there is ongoing monitoring and assessment of the general education courses, and there is an ongoing review of the general education curriculum framework to determine any need for modification. The GEC includes faculty representatives from each of the nine colleges, the Council of Deans, Academic Senate, the Provost’s Office, and the Director of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment.

**Action: Establishment of New General Education Framework and Curricular Review Approval Process.** The decision by RIT to change to a semester calendar offered a unique opportunity to reconsider the general education requirements in place for well over 20 years. The General Education Committee was tasked to design a new General Education Framework for RIT which incorporated the general education learning outcomes approved in 2009 and referenced above. In consideration of a new framework, the General Education Committee focused on best practices that would complement RIT’s mission and values and support contemporary liberal education.

The new framework (to be implemented in fall 2012) moves away from a strictly distributive model to a more outcomes-based and integrated learning model which offers students **Foundational** courses (e.g., First Year Writing), seven **Perspective** course categories, and a required three-course **Immersion** sequence. (See Appendix B10 for a complete description of General Education Framework.) One of the keys to the design of the new framework was to ensure that all RIT students have the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the General Education Student Learning Outcomes approved in 2009.

To facilitate integration, the General Education Committee mapped the General Education Student Learning Outcomes to the required Foundation and Perspectives categories of the Framework. This ensures that each general education course proposed demonstrates the expected general education outcomes in order to receive approval from the General Education Committee. (See Appendix B11 for Perspective/Outcome Alignment.) In addition, with the implementation of the new Student Information System (SIS), faculty and students are able to search by Perspective categories for courses that meet specific outcomes. In the new SIS there is direct articulation of which courses are aligned to the General Education Student Learning Outcomes. The General Education Committee established a review and approval process for all general education courses. This process requires substantiation that each course meets a specific learning outcome goal.

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2 Because RIT Recommendation 12b aligns closely with MSCHE Recommendation #3, it is discussed prior to RIT Recommendation 12a.
Action: Appointment of Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Education. The position of Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Education was created in 2009 to help oversee all aspects of general education. The assistant provost is a voting member on the General Education Committee and provides support and resources for general education programming.

Standard 14 - RIT Recommendation 14d: Once a comprehensive plan for General Education has been finalized, design and implement an assessment plan with clear indication of accountability.

Action: General Education Assessment Plan. The General Education Assessment Plan was developed in 2009 and implementation is underway. The most recent review and update by the General Education Committee occurred in November 2011. The committee reviews the plan annually. The plan describes three phases of assessment: 1) planning, 2) implementing, and 3) improving and sustaining. The plan also identifies reporting strategies and a communication plan. (See Appendix B9 for General Education Assessment Plan.)

Standard 12 - RIT Recommendation 12a: Clarify connections and relevancy between General Education curricula and student majors.

Action: Align General Education Student Learning Outcomes to Course Level Outcomes. Following the approval of the new General Education Framework, and in order to clarify the connections and build foundations between the general education courses and program (majors) courses, faculty now use a newly developed RIT Course Proposal Form to align general education student learning outcomes to undergraduate course student learning outcomes. This mapping or connection is further articulated in the explanatory text accompanying each course proposal. See Appendix B12 for a sample Course Outline Form. This form is used by programs for proposing courses for approval at the college and University levels.

Standard 12 - RIT Recommendation 12c: Review all General Education courses to ensure that they reflect RIT’s stated emphasis on ethics, values, and diversity. Make the language more visible within working documents, stated curricula, and course descriptions.

Action: General Education Framework Requirements: Ethical Perspective and Global Perspective. Beginning in AY 2012-2013, as part of the new General Education Framework, every new undergraduate student will be required to take a course from the Ethical perspective category and from the Global perspective category.

Courses in the Ethical category focus on ethical aspects of decision-making and argument, whether at the individual, group, national, or international level. Because RIT expects its graduates to be leaders in their careers and communities, these courses provide students with an understanding of how ethical and rational issues can be conceived, discussed, and resolved. At a minimum, these courses will enable students to identify contemporary ethical questions and relevant stakeholder outcomes.

Courses in the Global perspective category encourage students to see life from a perspective wider than their own and to understand the diversity of human cultures within an interconnected global society. At a minimum, these courses will enable students to examine connections among the world’s populations and understand that acting wisely as global citizens requires the ability to imagine how one’s choices affect other people.

Summary

The first part of this chapter provided a detailed report on RIT’s response to all MSCHE recommendations and the corresponding RIT Self-Study recommendations that were focused on assessment. Each of these recommendations has been addressed and all of the MSCHE recommendations have been completed. The second part of this chapter provides a summary of our response to the 38 remaining RIT Self-Study recommendations.

2.5 Additional 2007 Institutional Self-Study Recommendations

The design of RIT’s 2007 Self-Study reflected the University’s mission, vision statement and recently completed Strategic Plan (2005-2015). Because student success is central to everything RIT does and RIT’s vision centers on preparing students for successful careers in the world community, the Self-Study emphasized two specific dimensions of RIT’s Strategic Plan (Student Success and Global Society).

The RIT Self-Study was further organized into five thematic areas, each encompassing specific MSCHE standards. The five areas focused on the degree to which RIT had been successful in addressing the relevant accreditation standards and concluded with specific recommendations based on findings and statements of fact.
Here we provide a summary of each of the five major themes or clusters outlined in the 2007 Self-Study and highlight only selected actions within each area that carry the broadest institutional impact and center on student success and global society objectives. Please note that for more information *Appendix B1* is an Excel workbook that details actions taken on every recommendation.

**Institutional Value Proposition and Governance (Standard 1: Mission, Goals and Objectives; Standard 4: Leadership and Governance; Standard 6: Integrity).** Recommendations in the institutional value proposition and governance category centered on the identification and documentation of goals, objectives, and metrics for the University’s Strategic Plan and college/divisional plans, enhancing communication processes within shared governance, and additional reporting about academic conduct to the provost. Of the seven recommendations in this area, three have been completed and the remainder have been initiated and are ongoing.

Selected actions taken that carry the broadest institutional impact and center on student success and global society include:

- Websites and other external communication regarding RIT’s Mission and Vision now reflect explicit statements pertaining to strategic goals including student success and global society. The provost and Academic Affairs Division web pages have specific sections on Inclusive and Global Education and the RIT Global website (http://www.rit.edu/fa/global/) is active.
- The University “policy project,” which entails the complete review of the Institute Policies and Procedures Manual in light of significant changes in the academic calendar, addition of a ninth college, and emphasis on the University’s commitment to the concept of a global society.
- Shared governance and enhanced communication practiced by groups such as Academic Senate and Staff Council through open meetings and reports and minutes posted to their websites.
- Three groups established to support RIT’s commitment to Global Education including:
  - The Academic Senate Ad-Hoc Committee on Global Education charged with reviewing global learning outcomes and international and global education across the curriculum
  - The Global Education Committee, a cross-divisional committee of deans and vice presidents, charged to review and develop administrative policy issues for the campus
  - The International Education Working Group, a cross-divisional management team, charged to address operational issues associated with RIT’s Global locations, international exchanges, and study abroad policies
- A new position, Associate Provost for International Education and Global Programs, was created to be responsible for guiding the strategic growth and direction of international education and outreach at RIT.

**Resources and Allocation (Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal; Standard 3: Institutional Resources; Standard 5: Administration).** The recommendations within this particular category focused on ways in which the University’s strategic goals of student success and global society can be linked to measureable outcomes, strategies to increase opportunities for external funding, how the University could fully utilize technology capabilities and better understand future technology requirements, and how to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the current administrative structure. Of the nine recommendations in this area, one has been completed and the rest are initiated and ongoing.

Selected actions taken that carry the broadest institutional impact and center on student success and global society include:

- The creation of a governance and oversight infrastructure for global locations that includes the board of the Global Delivery Corporation, the board of each of the international locations, and the International Education Council as part of the Academic Leadership Council. Each plays a role in forecasting the resource requirements and developing appropriate budgets and procedures for RIT’s Global locations.
- RIT’s Student Auxiliary Services area has and will continue to develop new revenue sources. Some recent examples include the use of repurposed space for new food establishments in Global Village (Salsarita’s and Global Market), Nathans convenience food offerings added in the Student Alumni Union, Artesano’s (bakery) and Bytes on the Run (convenience store).
- Initiation of a marketing campaign for dining plans targeted for commuter students, and the consolidation/simplification of summer housing rates to more effectively compete with external landlords.
- Implementation of an Information and Technology Services (ITS) Strategic Plan and roadmap, including establishment of Academic Technology Advising Council to provide advice and policy guidance to ensure technologies and security requirements meet instructional needs of students, faculty, and staff.
Enrollment Management and Student Support (Standard 8: Student Admissions; Standard 9: Student Support Services; Standard 13: Related Educational Activities). The recommendations here focused on suggestions for ways to improve graduation rates and outreach to recruit special student populations, strategies to improve student support services including adoption of university-wide best advising practices, and ideas for enhancing the effectiveness of related educational enhancement offerings. Of the 11 recommendations in this area, one has been completed and the rest are initiated and ongoing.

Selected actions taken that carry the broadest institutional impact and center on student success and global society include:

- Implementation of a new advising model premised on a cadre of professional advisors with centralized oversight within each college and coordination and training through the Institute Advising Office; hired ten new professional advisors
- Adoption of mandatory advising for first-year and transfer students (fall of 2010)
- Establishment of 41 new endowed student scholarships since 2008 with $2.5 million dollars in funding
- Growth in the number of women in the freshman class over the past three years as a result of new recruitment and marketing approaches that included:
  - New academic options and programs aimed at increasing the number of women students (biomedical and chemical engineering and journalism)
  - Recruiting and supporting excellent female faculty through a new faculty mentoring program
  - Encouraging gender diversity in special events such as guest lecturers as well as in student organizations and publications
- Continued increase in the number and variety of programs encouraging AALANA student enrollment

Faculty and Curriculum (Standard 10: Faculty; Standard 11: Educational Offerings; Standard 12: General Education). Recommendations here are centered on how to recruit a diverse faculty; develop expectations regarding adjunct faculty hiring, training, and availability to students; establish a more consistent method of administering student evaluations; study the impact of learning communities; and develop a rigorous academic review process. Four of the 13 recommendations in this area have been completed and the rest have been initiated and are ongoing.

Selected actions taken that carry the broadest institutional impact and center on student success and global society include:

- New faculty professional development such as faculty learning communities, new publishing and scholarship workshop blogs, an annual teaching/learning conference, and an university-wide mentoring program for all new tenure-track faculty
- A complete review and update of all AALANA faculty recruitment policies and strategies with implementation of a mid-search review
- Development of an adjunct faculty orientation program, offered each quarter to all new adjunct professors
- The development of a comprehensive program review process, approved by Academic Senate for implementation in 2015
- Reforms related to general education as outlined in Chapter 5 pages 46-47

Assessment (Standard 7: Institutional Assessment; Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning). The recommendations have been discussed in the first part of this chapter. In addition, Chapter 5 contains a complete report of RIT’s institutional assessment activities.

2.6 MSCHE Visiting Review Team Suggestions

While Middle States does not require that a response to their suggestions be included in this report, RIT found the 13 suggestions offered by the visiting team to be very helpful. Each was fully examined and four have been completely implemented by the University (See Appendix B1 for status report on each suggestion). The suggestion we reference here that has had the most far-reaching and potentially important impact on the campus was the suggestion that RIT revisit the benefits of the quarter system as compared to a semester model. The University took this up in 2009 and conducted a thorough analysis. After university-wide deliberations, a decision was made by the president in February 2010 and fully supported by the governance bodies to convert to a semester calendar effective fall of 2013. The University is currently ensconced in calendar conversion activities.
Summary

RIT faculty and staff worked assiduously and aggressively to make substantial progress toward the recommendations made by the 2007 MSCHE review team and in RIT’s Self-Study. Institutional assessment and the assessment of student learning have increasingly become priorities and are embedded in all corners of the University. We have moved beyond the foundational need for a common set of outcomes and are now integrating and exploring assessment at more advanced levels. We are able to provide and support a common language and best practices in assessment and value and appreciate unique discipline needs, faculty perspectives, and student demographics at RIT. We are now driving towards more systematic and cyclical approaches to collect, document, and archive evidence of institutional effectiveness and student learning. Our future work will focus on implementation of processes to support academic and administrative units in setting benchmarks and analyzing and using data to make improvements.

The detailed discussion and evidence related to the assessment recommendations presented in this chapter supports the information presented in Chapter 5 (Organized and Sustained Processes to Assess Institutional Effectiveness and Student Learning). Both chapters work together to substantiate that RIT has implemented organized and sustained processes to assess the achievement of institutional, program level, and general education learning outcomes.
Chapter 3: Major Challenges and Opportunities

RIT is an institution with a history of meeting its challenges head-on and quickly responding to opportunities. This chapter of the Periodic Review Report builds primarily upon RIT’s ongoing strategic goal setting efforts. It includes information from the institution’s Strategic Plan, college level planning documents, as well as contributions from senior leadership, faculty, staff, and student governance groups.

Over the past five years, RIT has experienced significant growth in enrollment, reputation, and reach. While growth in enrollment presents opportunities to build our reputation both locally and nationally, it also challenges the institution to meet the needs of a student population that is larger, more diverse, and more technologically advanced, all while confronted with an unsettled economy. We have grouped our challenges and opportunities around the following five themes: Revenue and Resource Diversification, Student Success, Diversifying and Globalizing RIT, Transformations: Internal Forces of Change, and Transitions: External Forces of Change. The individual opportunities and challenges are discussed within each theme. As a University, we understand that the challenges we discuss must be addressed so that we achieve our goals. Similarly, our opportunities must be exploited to realize our full potential. We believe that our current opportunities can quickly become challenges if not considered and managed seriously. Although RIT’s Strategic Plan enables the institution to adeptly respond to challenges and opportunities, we must continue to be vigilant in order to maintain our momentum.

3.1 Revenue and Resource Diversification

Like most independent institutions, RIT is heavily dependent upon tuition revenue; this revenue source covers 83% of RIT’s operating expenses. In one respect, our tuition dependency was a silver lining in the difficult economic environment of the recent past. Our ability to grow our enrollment, along with conservative and responsible fiscal management, enabled us to weather the economic crisis without layoffs, construction limitations, or any other dramatic responses to that crisis. On the other hand, the University continues to look for strategic ways to transform itself and realizes that it can no longer rely so heavily on tuition revenue for new programs, services, construction, research centers, and other investments. Controlling costs and limiting unsustainable increases in college tuition are a challenge and are absolutely critical to our revenue and resource diversification efforts.

Our commitment to diversify our revenue streams is reflected in the fact that 50% of the goals contained in our current Strategic Plan, directly or indirectly, pertain to revenue diversification (and associate with Middle States Standards 1, 2, 3, 10, and 11). RIT Goals 5, 6, 7 and 8 are related to increasing sponsored research funding and opportunities. RIT seeks to increase sponsored research awards from its current level of $54M to $65M by FY 2013 (RIT Goal 6). Related to this goal, by FY 2015 RIT proposes to achieve 96% faculty participation in scholarship (RIT Goal 8), provide opportunities to 100% of its students to experience innovation, creativity and scholarship (RIT Goal 5), and to grow RIT’s reputation in sustainability education, research and practice (RIT Goal 7). RIT realizes, however, that increases in sponsored awards also mean increases in associated operating costs, highlighting the need for complementary revenue generation through philanthropy and fundraising. RIT Goals 9 and 10 call for a balanced budget and a target for endowment growth, respectively. RIT has a 40-year history of balancing its budget and has a conservative approach to the use of endowment earnings to support operating expenses, typically utilizing 5% of the average endowment value for the prior twenty quarters. Given the size of its operating budget and endowment per FTE compared to its peers, RIT must grow the endowment as one strategy to diversify its revenue stream. RIT has set a target for increasing its endowment from $635M in FY 2011 to $800M in FY 2015.

RIT Goal 13 sets specific targets for increasing philanthropy to RIT. With a relatively young alumni population (75% of our 106,000 alumni have graduated since 1980) and the ongoing global economic challenges, our ability to dramatically increase our annual fundraising totals has been limited. However, we have enhanced our overall development and fundraising infrastructure and overall strategy since 2007, including augmenting alumni relations operations and adding additional development staff.

The goals referred to above reflect the opportunities that RIT has identified to address the challenge of diversifying its revenue base. We have other opportunities to increase resources for reinvestment that are not specifically addressed in the Strategic Plan goals, but are being discussed across the campus as well. These include increasing revenue through expansion of online learning offerings and developing additional productivity and cost containment strategies. Additionally, we will carefully examine the potential revenue-generating opportunities afforded us by the calendar conversion, specifically intercession and summer session programming.
The University has recently launched four committees charged with making recommendations for prudent, planned, systematic changes in our expense base at a time when our financial footings are solid. The four teams will be focusing on the following areas: 1) Organizational Structure, 2) Employee Benefits, 3) Procurement, and 4) Information Technology. The committees are expected to make recommendations that will produce substantial cost savings; the Board of Trustees will review the recommendations at their July 2012 meeting.

### 3.2 Student Success

Student success is the core of our Strategic Plan, mission, and goals. Student success was a key element of both the 1995 and 2005 Strategic Plans, and was selected as one of two areas of emphasis for the 2007 Middle States Self-Study. Student success was defined in the 2005 Strategic Plan as “teaching students how to learn, how to integrate and apply that learning within professional and personal settings, and how to communicate that knowledge.” As RIT has grown, that definition of student success has been significantly expanded to include developing a greater sense of engagement and pride in RIT, as well as increasing rates of retention, graduation, and placement in graduate school or careers.

While RIT has made great strides toward enhancing student success and understanding why students leave, this continues to be a priority and there are still challenges. Improving student success is one of the four Key Results Areas in the Strategic Plan. Three of the goals in the current Strategic Plan focus on student success, and student success incorporates Middle States Standards 7, 8, 9, 10, and 14. RIT Goal 1 is to improve freshmen retention and graduation rates to 89% and 72% respectively by FY 2015. According to the Strategic Plan Scorecard, in FY 2011 second year retention was 87.7%, up from 85.2% in FY 2010 and the 6-year equivalent graduation rate was 69.5%, up from 68.3% in FY 2010 and 65.5% in 2009. RIT Goal 14 stipulates that RIT will achieve best-in-class stakeholder satisfaction levels by AY 2015 as measured by regularly administered faculty, staff, and student satisfaction instruments. RIT Goal 11 sets targets for demonstrating educational excellence through the achievement of student learning, academic effectiveness, and student placement goals.

RIT has established meaningful, manageable, and sustainable student learning outcomes assessment practices for the purpose of improving and increasing support of student learning, and ultimately, student success. Our efforts are described in detail in Chapter 5 of this report. Over the past four years, RIT developed specific learning achievement goals against which we now measure student success. This has led to RIT’s first annual program level student learning outcomes progress report for academic year 2009-2010. Maintaining the momentum and focus on outcomes assessment will continue to be a challenge because of competing priorities and limited resources.

During the past five years, several important initiatives have been implemented to address retention goals, including the creation of a university-wide Student Success Committee (2007), which assessed RIT’s existing retention practices and recommended needed enhancements. Enhancements already implemented include a new advising structure based on professional academic and faculty advisors, mandatory advising for all first year and transfer students, and changes to new student orientation. In 2009, the president commissioned a study to determine through personal interviews the reasons students in good academic standing have left RIT without graduating. This work continues and further informs planned retention strategies. In 2010 RIT started a data-mining project, which will assist in predicting at-risk first and second year students. Taken together, RIT continues to work to gain a deeper understanding of the factors affecting attrition, including which students are at risk. These data-driven approaches help identify opportunities for intervention. It is our expectation that the implementation of the new Student Information System will be another opportunity for RIT to capture these data and interpret them as a way to continue our commitment to enhancing student success in the future. Finally, the decision to move to a semester calendar and a new Student Information System were largely driven by student success considerations.

### 3.3 Diversifying and Globalizing RIT

Presently, colleges and universities are being called upon to prepare students for an increasingly international economic, political, and social world. This imperative creates both challenges and opportunities. Addressing the challenge of diversifying and globalizing RIT aligns with Middle States Standards 8, 9, 10, and 11. Additionally, three of the fourteen goals in our current Strategic Plan are focused on diversifying and globalizing RIT. Using a broad definition of diversity, RIT has set specific goals for ethnic and racial diversity that also incorporate gender balance and geographic diversity.

The relevant statistics show that RIT has experienced both successes and challenges in increasing diversity. RIT has seen its first-year AALANA student population grow consistently between FY 2008 (13.7%) and FY 2012 (16.3%). Yet,
the percentage of new female undergraduate enrollees has hovered around 34% between FY 2008 and FY 2012. (See Chapter 4 for additional information on steps being taken to increase the percentage of new female undergraduates.) The percentage of female tenure-track faculty has gradually trended upwards from 29% in FY 2009 to 31.6% in FY 2012. AALANA faculty in tenure-track positions have grown slightly from 9.1% in FY 2008 to 9.5% in FY 2011 and 9.6% in FY 2012. AALANA staff in exempt positions has grown persistently from 8.6% in FY 2008 to 10.3% in AY 2012. The precarious nature of these data prompts the entire RIT community to remain vigilant in enhancing diversity.

One area of diversity in which RIT has seen progress is in the expansion of its international student population. With nearly 1,900 international students studying at RIT, another 1,200 studying in our international locations, and the expansion in study abroad and co-op abroad activities, RIT is already, in many respects, a global University. RIT has embraced its place in the global community, in part, by establishing locations in Croatia, Dubai, and Kosovo. While this will likely position the institution as a global participant in higher education in the next five years, we recognize, however, that we must continue to expand our global reach if we are to achieve our goals and become a leader in this domain.

As part of an ongoing effort to connect RIT's diversity efforts to all aspects of the institution, RIT created and filled the position of Chief Diversity Officer in 2006. This position has created a more concerted focus on and awareness of diversity and inclusion initiatives. The Office for Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) infuses diversity into RIT’s recruiting, admissions, and hiring processes; into its curriculum and co-curriculum; and into its administrative structures and practices. This is affirmed in ODI’s 2010-2015 Inclusive Excellence Framework, which is a robust plan to assimilate diversity efforts into the core of RIT’s functioning in order to realize the educational benefits of diversity (http://www.rit.edu/diversity/excellence.html). In 2011, the Chief Diversity Officer position was elevated to Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, further emphasizing the crucial and central nature of this work.

Additionally, the Academic Senate established a university-wide task force on global education. This committee has been charged to assess the state of global education, advance recommendations for ways to move forward with internationalization on our campus, and define learning outcomes for global experiences such as study abroad and student exchanges. A new position of leadership, an Associate Provost for International Education and Global Programs, has been created to help the University push forward more aggressively with an international agenda.

Many future challenges remain. Higher education is facing declining numbers of high school graduates. The total number of all high school graduates is projected to decrease 3% between 2007-2008 and 2020-2021. The number of public high school graduates is projected to fall by 1% over the same period. This negative trend is projected to be particularly pronounced in the Northeast, from which RIT draws the vast majority of its students. The white and black populations of public high school graduates are predicted to fall by 11% and 2%, respectively over the same period. In contrast, the Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander populations are predicted to rise by 27% and 46%, respectively. These demographic shifts are likely to translate into increases in the percentage of college students who are first generation students, from low-income families, and less college-ready than in preceding decades. In light of these and other shifts, RIT must continue to remain attuned and firmly focused on meeting the needs of all students.

RIT faces increased competition from institutions with greater financial resources and well-established reputations for attracting and retaining talented students with diverse backgrounds, including international students, and diverse faculty and staff. Additionally, more affordable flagship public universities will continue to improve in quality and reputation, and community colleges are increasingly attractive to potential students because of their price, flexibility, and improving reputation. In the next five years, RIT will have to remain attentive to providing an affordable and appealing experience for a diverse student population.

### 3.4 Transformations: Internal Forces of Change

RIT is currently experiencing change to an extent that, with the exception of the move to the current campus location in 1968, is unprecedented in its history.

**Semester Conversion.** As mentioned in Chapter 1 of this report, RIT has begun the transition from a quarter-based academic calendar to one that is semester-based. This has required a comprehensive review of every academic degree program currently registered with the New York State Department of Education. This conversion process has called for tremendous institutional time, energy, and resources and has impacted almost every administrative and academic functional area. However, with a semester-based calendar, there is a potential for improved student satisfaction and opportunities for student engagement, both in and out of the classroom. The decision to move RIT to a semester-based calendar will likely position the institution as a global participant in higher education in the next five years, we recognize, however, that we must continue to expand our global reach if we are to achieve our goals and become a leader in this domain.

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3 Data from National Center for Education Statistics
based calendar and the opportunities it affords are discussed on the president’s website: http://www.rit.edu/president/semesters.html.

**Blueprint for New Programs.** RIT anticipates that the current moratorium on new program development, enacted because of calendar conversion, will be lifted in 2013-2014. In preparation, it will be critical that the RIT community have a clear understanding of the expectations for the type of programs that can and should be added to the portfolio. Charged by the provost, a faculty-led Academic Portfolio Blueprint Taskforce has been asked to recommend parameters and criteria that help define the scope and domains of RIT’s academic portfolio. This guidance will provide the community, particularly the faculty with whom the responsibility of the curriculum resides, with a clear sense of whether and to what degree a proposed program is a good fit with the University’s mission and its strategic goals. The committee will submit its report to the provost and academic senate in the fall of 2012. The Academic Portfolio Blueprint Taskforce charge can be found at http://www.rit.edu/provost/sites/rit.edu.provost/files/blueprint_taskforce_charge_approved.pdf.

**Student Information System.** RIT is replacing its current homegrown legacy Student Information System (SIS) with a new system using the Oracle Corporation’s PeopleSoft Campus Solutions and Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) products. The new system is being implemented in phases and will be fully in place in fall 2012. The purpose of this investment is to support the conversion to a semester system and to help transform RIT’s current Student Information System into one with capabilities to engage prospective students, facilitate student success, and build lifetime relationships with alumni and other University constituents. While the current Student Information System (SIS) is composed of over 50 independently operating systems, the new SIS will unify RIT’s many areas of student services under one system. This will allow for more centralized, efficient communication and operations.

The guiding principle behind the new SIS and conversion to semesters is to enhance student success and satisfaction. They are designed to be significant forces in improving student retention and graduation rates; encouraging student participation in innovation, creativity, research, and scholarship activities; and in contributing to educational excellence. These efforts correspond to Middle States Standards 8 and 9.

**RIT/Rochester General Health Systems (RGHS) Alliance.** There are several other forces for change that are having a deep impact upon the professional lives of RIT faculty/staff and upon the educational experiences of RIT students. The alliance between RIT and Rochester General Health System (RGHS) opens up many exciting opportunities for RIT to become a leader in the health sciences and technology field. The new Institute and RIT’s new College of Health Sciences and Technology provide support for many existing academic programs in areas such as medical illustration, biomedical sciences, diagnostic medical sonography, nutrition management and physician’s assistant. Further, RIT will have access to RGHS expertise and facilities to support research and additional academic program offerings. Research opportunities reside in bringing together the traditional RIT strengths in engineering, imaging, and computing to bear on the development of the next generation of health care delivery. A particular focus is on providing innovative approaches and technologies that can decrease the current costs associated with health care delivery. Further, the alliance will engage local community leaders in discussions about the management of the health and healthcare of the community. The details of the RIT/RGHS alliance are found at http://www.rit.edu/affiliate/rghs/.

**Changing Culture.** As a result of growth in our graduate programs, we anticipate that we will shift from a Masters level to a Research level Carnegie classification in 2015-16. This move will mean even greater and more focused comparisons with and competition from institutions that are already in this Carnegie classification. This will also place a greater emphasis on student and faculty research and scholarship as vital components of who we are as an institution. This shift in emphasis is already underway and it is significantly changing the faculty culture. Tenure and promotion criteria have been modified to reflect this paradigm shift as have the workloads of tenure-track faculty. There are heightened expectations for increased faculty scholarship, externally funded research support, and for providing additional undergraduate research opportunities. This presents an opportunity for RIT to reinforce the rigor and quality of its educational offerings in a manner that is consistent with students’ educational goals. However, it also significantly changes faculty expectations and stretches our current resources as we strive to provide sufficient facilities and equipment for scholarly research. RIT must continue to examine how the institution rewards faculty for engaging in research and scholarship, while also maintaining high teaching standards. This issue is associated with Middle States Standards 11 and 13. Undoubtedly, these are monumental changes for RIT. However, the institution will continue to approach this time of change as an opportunity for positive transformation.
3.5 Transitions: External Forces of Change

There are forces external to RIT that are potentially transformative of higher education in general. Rapidly increasing college costs are under greater scrutiny by students, parents, and the federal government. There are increased expectations from students and parents for premium educational programs, services, and living/learning environments. An increasing “customer service” mentality will influence what students and parents expect in their interactions with faculty and staff. Further, today’s college students have a level of technological competence not seen in previous generations. They have growing expectations for on-demand, any time, any place course delivery models that require such competencies. Faculty and staff at RIT must keep abreast of student expectations in the use of technology to engage them both in and out of the classroom.

Given students’ desire for greater flexibility, the continuing national and global economic malaise, and the rapidly increasing costs of a traditional bricks-and-mortar college education, online learning will likely become the preferred option for an increasing proportion of the college-going population. The growth of online and e-learning provides RIT an opportunity to build on the skills, training, and interests of its faculty and staff. In adapting to online models, there is a potential for instructors to redesign their courses so as to make learning even more collaborative and active. Expanding online learning has been an emerging topic of interest for faculty and senior leadership. In the next five years, RIT must be much more strategic about establishing a vision and incorporating this modality into programs for students on and off-campus.

Similar forces are at play in the economy external to the education industry. The US economy will continue to de-emphasize the traditional manufacturing sector. Advanced technology and sophisticated knowledge will continue to grow as driving economic factors. In line with this, both students and their potential employers will demand programs with more experiential learning and those that develop practical, job-enhancing skills. RIT has met this demand in the past by providing its students with well-established opportunities for cooperative education, internships, studying abroad, and through working with faculty on externally funded research projects. RIT’s strong reputation in technology-based programs continues to make RIT a very attractive option for career-focused college students, and this intentionality must continue to be emphasized. These relationships between technology, education, and industry correspond to Middle States Standards 11 and 13.

3.6 Summary

The challenges and opportunities that RIT faces in the next five years cut across the five areas discussed in this chapter. While this is not an exhaustive list, it highlights major issues that require our most serious and concerted attention or provide the greatest opportunities. RIT will continue to be strategic in providing vision for the future, while addressing challenges that are both expected and unexpected. This versatile approach has allowed the institution to adapt and thrive and continue to enhance student success.
Chapter 4: Enrollment and Financial Trends and Projections

This chapter provides an overview of the University enrollment and financial performance. Enrollment trends and projections are addressed first (sections 4.1 and 4.2), followed by a discussion of the University’s recent financial performance and position along with three-year financial projections (sections 4.3 and 4.4).

4.1 Enrollment Trends (2007-2011)

Institutional Context. Enrollment size and distribution will continue to be critical success factors for the University. It has been a major focus in key RIT documents: the 1994 Strategic Plan, the 1998 Diversity Plan, the 2001 Optimal Size document, the 2007 Middle States Self-Study, and is the focus of several of the University’s Key Result Areas found within our current Strategic Plan.

Since the implementation of the 1994 Strategic Plan, headcount enrollment has increased by 44% and full time enrollment by 65%. These results have been achieved by:

- A comprehensive and sophisticated recruitment and admissions program, supported by the implementation of recommendations from two branding studies (2006 and 2011)
- Careful and strategic use of financial aid and scholarships
- New program development (more than 80 since 2003 including three Ph.D. programs and a Masters in Architecture program)
- Improved undergraduate retention and graduation rates

An analysis of RIT’s enrollment trends since our 2007 MSCHE Self-Study provides significant evidence that, not only is RIT growing, it is also increasingly selective, more diverse, and well positioned to achieve its enrollment goals in the future.

Enrollment Growth. RIT’s total headcount enrollment for the most recent fall quarter (2011) was 17,652 students, and our total FTE enrollment was 14,573 students (See Appendix D1: Enrollment History 2007-2011). Total enrollment headcount has grown by 10.4% since fall 2007, and full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment has grown by 11.0% during that same time.

RIT’s growth during this five-year period has been driven primarily by growth in our full-time undergraduate and full-time graduate student populations. RIT’s part-time enrollments have decreased, in part due to a reduction in corporate support of education caused by a weakness in the Rochester area economy. Additionally, part-time enrollment has fallen because of a reduction of our online offerings.

Increasing Selectivity. Table 4 demonstrates that RIT has achieved significant growth in applications for undergraduate and graduate admission since the fall of 2007, and admission has become increasingly selective at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. The comprehensive application and acceptance data are provided on an academic year or

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 4: ANNUALIZED ADMISSIONS RESULTS*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APPLICATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate (Freshmen and Transfer students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total RIT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ACCEPTANCE RATE                         | 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 4 YEAR CHANGE** |
| Freshman                                | 62.9%   | 59.1%   | 60.1%   | 59.1%   | 57.7%   | -5.2            |
| Transfer                                | 48.1%   | 45.8%   | 43.8%   | 44.9%   | 40.0%   | -8.1            |
| Undergraduate (Freshmen and Transfer students) | 59.5%   | 56.1%   | 56.7%   | 56.2%   | 54.4%   | -5.1            |
| Graduate                                | 58.0%   | 55.1%   | 51.3%   | 53.4%   | 51.8%   | -6.2            |
| Total RIT                                | 59.2%   | 55.9%   | 55.5%   | 55.6%   | 53.9%   | -5.3            |

Source: Annualized Admissions Profile Report of corresponding year
*Excluding international locations
**NOTE: A decrease (-) in the 4 Year acceptance column indicates an increase in selectivity
annualized basis to reflect the significant number of transfer and graduate applications for RIT’s winter, spring and summer quarters.

**Increasing Quality.** The great majority (96%) of RIT freshmen enter during the fall quarter. Table 5 compares freshman profile information for the fall quarters 2007-2011, and demonstrates that the quality of our freshman class has increased with respect to mean SAT scores and high school rank.

**Increasing Diversity.** RIT has a long-standing commitment to diversity as evidenced by the approval of an inaugural Diversity Plan in 1998; this plan focused the University’s attention on increasing the ethnic and racial diversity of our students, faculty and staff, and has been updated in ensuing years. More recently, RIT’s Inclusive Excellence Framework defines diversity broadly and states that both individual and group differences are catalysts for institutional and educational excellence. At present, RIT’s Strategic Plan also focuses our attention on racial and ethnic diversity, gender balance, and geographic diversity by establishing benchmark goals.

**Ethnic/Racial Diversity:** Table 6 reflects changes in RIT’s total enrollment (undergraduate and graduate, full-time and part-time) by race/ethnic origin since the fall of 2007. We recognize that international students do not constitute a race or ethnicity; however, the data on international students enrolled at the Rochester campus are presented here to further demonstrate the growing diversity of our student population.

**TABLE 5: ENTERING FRESHMAN PROFILE* BACHELOR’S SEEKING STUDENTS (FALL QUARTER)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAT Math</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT Verbal</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT Combined**</td>
<td>1195</td>
<td>1196</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Rank Top 1/10</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Rank Top 1/2</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>92.4</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>92.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Admissions Profile Report of corresponding year
*Excluding international locations

**TABLE 6: PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ENROLLMENT BY KNOWN RACE AND ETHNIC ORIGIN* **

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AALANA (Underrepresented Minority)</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALANA (All Minority)</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International (Nonresident Alien)</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AALANA = African American, Latino American and Native American
ALANA = African, Latino, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Native American
*Excluding international locations

In 2002, The North Star Center for Academic Success & Cultural Affairs was established to enhance the student experience of African, Latino and Native American RIT students. Now, the Multicultural Center for Academic Success, its services include personal advising, advocacy, leadership development opportunities, diversity education, cultural programming and a connection to other campus and community resources.

In addition to the recruiting of underrepresented minority students, the AALANA Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Retention Committee was formed to recommend ways to achieve employee diversity. RIT seeks to be a university of choice for enrolling and retaining underrepresented minority students, and our demographic profile must be enriched through the addition of faculty, administrators, and professional staff from those populations who are fully integrated into the RIT community. As a result, RIT now has a Vice President for Diversity, who leads the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and an Office of Faculty Recruitment and Retention with an Executive Director who drives these goals.

**Increasing Gender Balance:** One of RIT’s strategic goals as represented in the Key Result Areas is to increase the percentage of women in the entering undergraduate population to 37% by 2015. This KRA provides additional focus and accountability on RIT’s on-going efforts to increase the number of enrolled women. Our current rate of female new enrollees is 32%.

Table 7 provides evidence that RIT has increased the number of women on campus by 14% (almost double the percentage increase in the number of men) over the past four years, and that 46.4% of RIT’s enrollment growth in the past four years has come from the growth in the number of women.
### TABLE 7: ENROLLMENT BY GENDER DETAIL REPORT – 2007 TO 2011*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>4 YEAR N CHANGE</th>
<th>4 YEAR % CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>3,887</td>
<td>4,234</td>
<td>4,263</td>
<td>4,363</td>
<td>4,477</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>871</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>911</td>
<td>952</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,758</td>
<td>5,124</td>
<td>5,174</td>
<td>5,315</td>
<td>5,431</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>8,653</td>
<td>8,690</td>
<td>8,818</td>
<td>8,864</td>
<td>9,177</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>1,570</td>
<td>1,678</td>
<td>1,647</td>
<td>1,785</td>
<td>1,772</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10,223</td>
<td>10,368</td>
<td>10,465</td>
<td>10,649</td>
<td>10,949</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University **</td>
<td>15,004</td>
<td>15,511</td>
<td>15,655</td>
<td>16,027</td>
<td>16,454</td>
<td>1,450</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Excluding international locations
**University total enrollment numbers reflect both students in the reported gender categories plus students for whom gender is unknown

In 2004, the President’s Advisory Committee on the Status of Women was established to review issues related to recruitment and retention. In 2008, President Destler renamed the group the RIT Commission on Women. In July 2009, the group presented a set of recommendations centered on two areas: institutional transformation and curricular-related initiatives. The following are among the Commission’s recommendations:

- Develop new academic options and programs aimed at increasing the numbers of female students
- Recruit and support excellent female faculty
- Encourage gender diversity in special events such as guest lecturers as well as in student organizations and publications
- Recognize people who champion gender diversity
- Foster traditions for women

Action on these recommendations is ongoing. Of particular note:

- Recognizing that our academic program portfolio is a key factor in enrolling a higher percentage of women, programs in biomedical and chemical engineering – engineering disciplines that attract a higher percentage of women – and journalism have been established.
- RIT’s Center for Women and Gender has created several events to foster traditions. “Lighting the Way,” which takes place during orientation week, is an annual ceremony begun in 2006 in which the light of knowledge is symbolically passed on to first-year women. The annual spring Women’s Career Achievement Dinner, sponsored by the Women’s Center, RIT Leadership Institute, and the Office of Alumni Relations, honors invited alumnae from RIT’s eight colleges and women students at RIT. Additionally the Center provides services such as Campus Advocacy Response and Support (CARES), an anti-violence program, and Gender Communication and Respect, which is presented as part of the First Year Experience program.

**Geographic Diversity:** In addition to increasing gender balance and greater racial and ethnic diversity, the University has established goals to increase the geographic diversity of its student population. Goals 3.1, 3.2 and 12.2 of the Strategic Plan establish targets for the number of international students studying at the Rochester campus, the number of students studying at our international locations, and the percent of out-of-state undergraduate applicants. Specifically, the targets are 2,000 international students at RIT by 2015, 1,350 students enrolled at our international locations, and 60% of freshmen applicants from outside of New York.

### 4.2 Enrollment Projections (2011-2015)

The enrollment projection process takes place annually. Enrollment planning is a collaborative process among the divisions of Enrollment Management and Career Services, Finance and Administration, and Academic Affairs. Enrollment Management and Career Services, in consultation with each of the deans, develops annual projections for incoming students utilizing prospective student data (inquiries, applications, and deposits), and provides collective information to the colleges and divisions for planning purposes, including budget planning. Enrollment projections are developed for each of RIT’s colleges and academic programs which are reflective of enrollment history, capacity, and market conditions impacting current and future enrollments.
In 2001, RIT’s Board of Trustees approved a strategic initiative to increase RIT’s total headcount enrollment by 14.5%, to a level of just over 17,000 students, by the year 2010. (Actual headcount enrollment in the fall of 2010 was 17,206.) These targeted enrollment levels were determined based on extensive discussions concerning the University’s optimal size, including an analysis of RIT’s existing resources and future resource needs. In addition, the Trustees approved a set of 14 principles underlying RIT’s growth strategy, and these principles continue to provide strategic direction as the University implements detailed plans for student recruitment and retention (see Appendix D2: Principles Underlying Growth Strategies).

More recently, discussions by Trustees and University administration resulted in targeting a headcount enrollment of 18,500 by the fall of 2015. We anticipate that enrollment growth at our international locations, the growth of recently added programs (e.g., biomedical engineering, chemical engineering), the addition of new programs, and continued improvement in our retention and graduation rates will contribute to the projected overall growth. Table 8 outlines RIT’s projected enrollment growth at the undergraduate and graduate levels for the years 2011 to 2015.

RIT is well positioned to achieve its targeted enrollment growth by 2015, and we believe that the University can continue to increase the quality and diversity of its students at the same time. RIT’s history of enrollment growth and our ongoing success in broadening RIT’s market appeal provide a number of reasons for optimism and confidence as we proceed. RIT offers an exceptionally broad portfolio of academic programs capable of appealing to a full range of potential student markets. The University also has a strong history of developing new academic programs to fit student interests and marketplace needs. In addition, RIT has made significant strides in improving its retention of freshman students through to graduation.

In addition to the enrollment target indicated above, we have established other strategic goals related to admissions and enrollment including:

- Become more selective
- Enroll more students from national and international markets
- Improve gender balance especially at the undergraduate level
- Enhance racial and ethnic diversity
- Continue to improve persistence and graduation rates

While we are fairly confident in our ability to achieve our enrollment and admissions targets, we remain cognizant of the external factors that may impact our ability to attain these goals. We recognize that, as our academic profile increases, we are competing for increasingly talented students with institutions that have firmly established reputations and financial resources greater than ours. Additionally, the decline in the number of high school graduates over the next three to five years coupled with the geographic and racial/ethnic shifts within student populations present challenges to our goals related to the racial/ethnic and geographic composition of our students. We are carefully monitoring both federal and state policies in order to assess their impact on our institution, and recognize that the ongoing economic malaise globally and nationally continues to constrain family resources as well as institutional initiatives.

### 4.3 Financial Performance (2008-2011)

**Overview.** In our most recently completed fiscal year (year ended June 30, 2011, i.e., FY11), RIT ended the year with a $12.0M unrestricted operating surplus – a 2.5% operating margin on $472M in operating revenues. This performance follows comparable surpluses of $11.8M, $18.7M, $11.9M in fiscal years FY08 thru FY10. This consistent bottom-line performance can largely be attributed to the rigor involved in the annual budget preparation process, during which incremental resource allocations are made to the various University operations and key initiatives (see Chapter 6). The result of each annual planning cycle is a balanced operating budget. The University has a legacy of being soundly and conservatively run, with FY11 being the 40th consecutive year with an operating surplus on a budgeted funds basis. Following is an analysis of the University’s financial performance and position. For more detailed information, please consult the audited financial statements, IPEDS financial submissions, and audit management letters included in Appendix D3-D13.
Revenues. Net tuition is the single largest component of the University’s operating revenues, accounting for 53% of the total operating revenues and 83% of discretionary revenues (excluding auxiliary operations and restricted grant and contract revenues). These proportions are slightly up from FY08 (50% and 81%, respectively). As such, enrollment predictability remains vital to managing the University’s financial resources. The Budget office works closely with Enrollment Management and Career Services, utilizing the annual enrollment projection figures as the basis for the preparation of the operating budget. FY11 gross tuition was up 6.9% on an undergraduate rate increase of 4.9% and higher enrollment. Figure 4 shows RIT’s undergraduate gross annual tuition per student and the annual percentage increase in tuition rate and student aid.

RIT tuition rate increases from FY10 through FY12 have averaged 4.6%, compared to 5.9% in the prior three years. The progress in reducing tuition rate increases has also coincided with having to increase allocations to unfunded student aid at an annual rate of 9.9% since 2007. The issue of affordability has been raised by the president and the University’s Board of Trustees as an action item moving forward, with the goal to continue to lower our increases so that they approach an appropriate rate of inflation. Notable in these efforts is that RIT’s published undergraduate tuition rate remains in the lower half of its peer group (Association of Independent Technological Universities). In furtherance of this trend, the FY13 tuition increase is 3.8%.

The University continues its drive for higher levels of funding for sponsored research. Total Government Grant and Contract revenue was $98.8M in FY11, up over 4.0% per year since FY08. This amount includes $66.0M from a congressional appropriation for operating the National Technical Institute for the Deaf. Excluding this appropriation, other sponsored program revenues were up 7.0% over that time frame—showing steady growth.

The University endowment has recovered much of its market value from the downturn in late 2008, ending FY11 at $641 M, within 5% of the peak year-end in June, 2008. As a result, the total spending distribution for FY11 was up $1.5 M (7%) from the prior year. We anticipate equivalent distributions going forward, but point out that this higher amount in FY11 still only represents 4.8% of total revenues. On an unrestricted basis, the endowment spending distribution is even smaller at 2.9% of unrestricted revenues. With a focus on diversifying our revenue base, the University utilizes the endowment value as a metric under the Strategic Plan’s Key Result Area of “Operational Excellence,” with a target of achieving a $750M endowment by FY14.

Operating Expenses. Like most institutions, salaries, wages and benefits constitute a significant portion of operating expenses—68.4% in FY11, up from 66.4% in FY08. Annual merit wage increase pools have been modest over this time frame, typically ranging from 2.0% to 3.5%. Included in this period was FY10 when there were no across-the-board adjustments, only selected increases for those employees earning less than $38,000 annually. This austerity was partly due to the decline in the endowment market value in late 2008 and the associated reduction in the income distribution to support operations. Becoming more significant is the cost of employee benefits. The bulk of these expenses are split among four major categories: health care, retirement plans, payroll taxes, and tuition benefits. Health care costs have increased at an annual rate of 10.0% over the past three years. Perhaps more surprising is that the increase in the cost to provide tuition benefits to faculty and staff has averaged 9.8% annually over the same time frame—reflecting not only tuition rate increases, but also greater participation rates. The most common budget funding request is for additional faculty and staff positions to support the University’s growth and new initiatives. Because salaries/wages are so sizable in our expense base and the relative difficulty of eliminating positions once created, managing these allocations is critical to the achieving the University’s goal of a balanced operating budget.

Reported interest expense in FY11 was $7.9M ($11.1M in interest payments less $3.2M in capitalized interest). Per Moody’s for FY10, RIT’s debt service coverage was 4.0 times and its debt service to operations was 3.71%. Both of these metrics compare favorably with the median A-rated University at 3.03x and 5.2%, respectively. RIT has a long-history of being careful to match debt duration with the assets being funded, which is manifested in a conservative amount of long-term debt (see External Agency Ratings and Benchmarks on page 30 for more information).
Financial Position. The University has a strong balance sheet, ending FY11 with nearly $1 billion in net assets—65% of which are in the unrestricted classification. Subtracting out our net investment in plant, over one-third of RIT’s net assets are expendable. On Moody’s definition, RIT’s unrestricted resources and expendable resources are .82 times and 1.0 times operating expenses, respectively. Both figures compare favorably with the median A-rated institution levels of .49x and .93x, respectively.

Cash balances at year-end FY11 were up $15M vs. prior year to $69M. This was largely due to debt proceeds being held by the bond trustee as construction progresses on the funded projects.

RIT continues to invest in campus facilities related to the University’s growth as well as key new initiatives. Evidence of this is the growth in net fixed assets which has increased an average of 6.6% annually since 2007. Recently completed projects include Global Village, a mixed-use complex, and a complete overhaul of the University’s infrastructure for heating and cooling. Facilities enhancements now underway include the Golisano Institute for Sustainability—funded almost entirely by federal, state, and private grants and gifts—and Institute Hall, which will house the two newest academic programs in the Kate Gleason College of Engineering and a state-of-the-art “Green” data center.

The University issued Series 2010 bonds in the amount of $83 million ($78M par) in November, 2010. The principal was used to advance refund (pay off in advance) the Series 2002A bonds in the amount of $42M, with the remainder primarily providing funding for the aforementioned Institute Hall. That new issue, coupled with scheduled principal payments, brought long-term debt to $228M at FY11 year-end, up $13M from prior year. By most measures, however, RIT still has a conservative amount of debt. Through FY10, two of RIT’s debt ratios as calculated by Moody’s are shown in Table 9.

External Agency Ratings and Benchmarks. In August 2010, Moody’s reaffirmed its A1 rating on the University’s outstanding revenue bond. In their analysis, among other factors, they noted the following strengths in RIT’s financial position: Debt service coverage; Expendable resources vs. debt; Consistent, steady enrollment growth; and Strength of the financial management team.

RIT’s goal is to maintain the Moody’s A1 rating on its outstanding debt both to realize lower interest rates when placing new debt and to act as a gauge on the level of debt in its capital structure. These overall ratings are based on many factors and RIT’s strengths become apparent when RIT’s metrics are compared to schools in the ratings categories immediately below or above RIT. Such universities would have ratings of Baa and Aa, respectively. The circles on the Figure 5 show RIT’s FY10 metrics when indexed between the median institutions rated Baa and Aa.

RIT is well positioned on the first four metrics which gauge the University’s total level of debt—approaching or meeting the Aa median level on all measures. On the next two operating margin measures, however, RIT is closer to the Baa median school. Finally, Moody’s gives RIT a very healthy rating for age of facilities, suggesting a lower exposure to required future investments in infrastructure. Together, the measures point to a currently strong financial base, but one in which managing operations has been and will continue to be important.

While reaffirming the A1 rating, Moody’s further noted challenges for RIT including a historically regional recruitment pool (see Chapter 6) and lingering impacts from the FY09 decline in the market value of the endowment portfolio. While market value losses in the endowment value do impact University operations, the endowment spending policy mitigates the impact of these swings. In FY10, the first budget year impacted by the downturn, the total endowment

**TABLE 9: RIT DEBT RATIOS (PER MOODY’S)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>RIT</th>
<th>Median A Rated Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Financial Resources-to-Direct Debt</td>
<td>2.50 X</td>
<td>2.05 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Debt-to-Total Capitalization</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5: Financial Metrics on Continuum between Median Baa- and Aa-rate (Private)**

While reaffirming the A1 rating, Moody’s further noted challenges for RIT including a historically regional recruitment pool (see Chapter 6) and lingering impacts from the FY09 decline in the market value of the endowment portfolio. While market value losses in the endowment value do impact University operations, the endowment spending policy mitigates the impact of these swings. In FY10, the first budget year impacted by the downturn, the total endowment
distribution dropped by approximately $3 million. The University was able to absorb this in that year’s budget cycle, in part, due to the aforementioned suspension of merit pay increases.


To support long-range planning, the budget office utilizes a forecasting model called “Future Perfect”. This planning tool, based upon generally accepted accounting principles, was created specifically for higher education entities and produces forecasted financial statements based upon the past five years financial statements and a detailed set of inputs. These forecasts are currently used to shape the annual budget process and provide longer-term context within which the coming years financial plans must fit (see Chapter 6). The inputs take two forms: planning assumptions and projects.

Financial Planning Inputs. Planning assumptions included in the model are typical for what one would expect for institutions of higher education: enrollment, tuition rates, etc. In addition to management decisions such as these, they also include forecasts of external factors, such as health care inflation, utilities inflation, the results of fundraising activities, etc. While there are literally hundreds of input variables, the major assumptions for the FY2013 through FY2015 are in Table 10, along with the current projected set points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 10: RIT PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition Rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionally-funded Student Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary Merit Increases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits Inflation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowment Returns &amp; Distributions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The other inputs to Future Perfect are significant University initiatives which take the form of “projects” in the model. These projects are each defined with their separate impacts on the University’s financial statements. Examples of these impacts include additions to long-term debt, interest expense from new debt, depreciation from capital investments, added employment as a result of the project (e.g. custodians required to maintain a new building), etc. Table 11 describes the significant projects that are included in the financial forecast shared later in this section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 11: SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS INCLUDED IN FINANCIAL FORECAST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golisano Institute of Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Institute&quot; Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hockey and Special Events Arena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of Health Sciences Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project GeneSIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Financial Projection Summary and Analysis. This analysis focuses on the projection for RIT’s unrestricted operating margin in the three fiscal years ending June 30, 2015, as a measure of the University’s continued financial health and the soundness of its financial plans. As mentioned above, the unrestricted operating surplus for the year ended June 30, 2011, was $12.0 million. In evaluating plans, the University aims to deliver an operating margin of at least 2.5%. (It should be noted that this measure is taken directly from the University’s audited financial statements and is, therefore, calculated in a different method than Moody’s uses.) With the planning inputs and incorporating the projects noted above, RIT’s baseline projected financial results are summarized in Table 12 (see page 32).
The forecasted surpluses are within 1.0% of the target in all years approaching the goal in FY15. While the short-term results are slightly short of the stated goal, they are within RIT’s ability to manage, given the size of its operations.

The University tests the sensitivity of its financial projections by changing various forecast parameters to ensure that its financial plans are robust, producing acceptable results even if one or more assumptions varies from the baseline estimates. Here we show the results of changes to three key inputs—enrollment growth, health care cost inflation and endowment returns—varied as noted in Table 13.

The inputs were applied to FY13 through FY15 and each test was done independently, isolating only the effect of one change on the results. For simplicity here, we report only the terminal year (FY15) results which show the cumulative impact of changing each assumption in Table 14.

One can see that the projected operating results are fairly insensitive to the test changes, never varying the projected operating surplus percent by more than .25%. As a final test, all three unfavorable scenarios were incorporated into one test case to see how taken together they would impact RIT’s projected surplus. The result was an unrestricted operating surplus of $9.8 M or 1.84% of revenues, indicating that RIT is well-positioned to resource its mission even should it face a more unfavorable set of circumstances than currently expected.

**Table 12: RIT’s Baseline Projected Financial Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Result - $ Millions</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Projected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition &amp; Fee Revenues</td>
<td>FY11</td>
<td>FY12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Unrestricted Revenues</td>
<td>$373</td>
<td>$394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>$461</td>
<td>$480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Operating Surplus</td>
<td>$12.0</td>
<td>$9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Operating Surplus - %</td>
<td>2.54%</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 13: RIT’s Baseline Projections with Changes to Key Inputs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input Assumption</th>
<th>Baseline Projection</th>
<th>Tested Sensitivities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment Growth (annual)</td>
<td>+125 Undergrad</td>
<td>+150 Undergrad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+20 Graduate</td>
<td>+25 Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+100 Undergrad</td>
<td>+15 Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care Inflation (annual)</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-Term Endowment Return (annual)</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 14: FY15 Projections with Alternate Inputs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Result - $ Millions</th>
<th>Baseline Projection</th>
<th>FY15 Projections with Alternate Inputs</th>
<th>Endowment Return</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition &amp; Fee Revenues</td>
<td>FY15 $454</td>
<td>Favorable $457 $451 $454 $454 $454</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Unrestricted Revenues</td>
<td>$537</td>
<td>Favorable $539 $535 $537 $537 $538</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>$525</td>
<td>Favorable $526 $525 $525 $526 $525</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Operating Surplus</td>
<td>$12.0</td>
<td>Favorable $13.4 $10.7 $12.7 $11.3 $12.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Operating Surplus - %</td>
<td>2.24%</td>
<td>2.48% 2.00% 2.36% 2.11% 2.27% 2.21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One can see that the projected operating results are fairly insensitive to the test changes, never varying the projected operating surplus percent by more than .25%. As a final test, all three unfavorable scenarios were incorporated into one test case to see how taken together they would impact RIT’s projected surplus. The result was an unrestricted operating surplus of $9.8 M or 1.84% of revenues, indicating that RIT is well-positioned to resource its mission even should it face a more unfavorable set of circumstances than currently expected.

**Financial Trends and Projections Summary.** In summary, the University currently enjoys a very stable financial position, evidenced by its favorable comparison to other institutions using Moody’s benchmark financial ratios. These data show a University with a modern campus, modest level of debt with capacity to make future investments should they be required, and a very stable history of managing its revenues and expenses. That conclusion is bolstered by detailed financial projections which show RIT continuing to maintain these characteristics while investing in projects aligned with its goals. Finally, this projection was tested to see if it could survive a more negative set of circumstances. In each case and collectively, RIT’s projected results are within a tolerable range of its long-term target. Taken together, RIT’s recent and projected results provide evidence of a key ingredient to achieving its strategic goals—solid financial foundation to support student success, innovation, operational excellence, and stakeholder satisfaction.
Chapter 5: Organized and Sustained Processes to Assess Institutional Effectiveness and Student Learning

Designing effective and sustainable assessment systems across a university the size of RIT is a significant task. An even larger enterprise is to ensure that such systems actually lead to data driven improvements to programs and services, educational practices, effectiveness, and teaching and learning.

RIT’s history and institutional context have always placed an emphasis on outcomes and have been particularly respectful of the importance of concrete evidence of learning (RIT Periodic Review Report 2002, page 3). As pointed out in the last RIT decennial Self-Study (April 2007), “From its founding, the RIT education has emphasized student mastery of current, practical, and marketable knowledge and skills in technology-based courses (page 62).” This historical emphasis on “application” and experiential learning has led faculty to be very accustomed to assessing student capstone projects, portfolios, exhibitions, and theses across science, engineering, business, imaging, computing, and technology fields. This is also evident in RIT’s emphasis on cooperative education as a central component of the undergraduate experience. Over 80% of RIT degree programs include mandatory or optional cooperative education components or another form of experiential education.

As a career-oriented University, RIT has leveraged this longstanding tradition in the ways it has approached assessing quality and effectiveness for the University as a whole, and in the area of student learning, in particular. Over the years, in assessing the value-added of the education that RIT provides to students, data (enrollment profiles, grade distributions, performance in capstone courses, graduation rates, persistence rates, graduate program admission data) and regular curriculum review information (course evaluation, review of syllabi, student satisfaction surveys e.g., Noel Levitz) were traditionally used. Prior to 2002, we relied principally on career preparation indicators such as job placement rates, alumni satisfaction surveys, and co-op supervisor evaluations. These measures worked well (and still do), but do not give sufficient emphasis on direct measures of student learning. Assisted by institutional analysis included in RIT’s 2002 Periodic Review Report and more recently the 2007 Self-Study, major actions and investments have been made to build an assessment culture and community that embed systematic assessment practices at every level and across all academic and administrative units.

Chapter 2 of the PRR (Response to Recommendations) provides considerable detail concerning the significant actions taken in response to a series of assessment recommendations made by our 2007 visiting MSCHE team and our internal self-study team. We do not repeat this information in this chapter. Instead, we refer back to those actions in a general way and focus here primarily on university-wide policies, practices, and expectations made possible by the “infrastructure” actions taken and detailed in Chapter 2. These infrastructure actions have powered our ability to integrate assessment throughout the University, making assessment an expected ingredient of our institutional life and processes.

We have divided this chapter into four topical areas which, when taken together, illustrate our university-wide commitment to assessment. These areas are:

1. Institutional Assessment Framework
2. Institutional Effectiveness Assessment
3. Student Learning Assessment (Academic Programs and General Education)
   - Program Level Outcomes and Use of Results
   - General Education Outcomes and Use of Results
4. Analysis and Next Steps

5.1 Institutional Assessment Framework

With a collective institutional commitment to improvement of the quality of educational experiences and services, there is an integrated effort to develop the best assessment practices at all levels of the institution. Our work has been greatly aided by the development of an overarching Institutional Assessment Framework detailed in Chapter 2 (See Figure 1 page 8). This integrated assessment framework articulates the relationships between the vision, leadership, operational infrastructure, and use of results, serving as the nexus for producing meaningful, organized, and sustained assessment across multiple levels. With this framework as the foundation, we discuss and highlight here the ways we have organized our institutional assessment processes and how we work to successfully close the assessment loop—using results to fuel improvement.
5.2 Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness: Administrative Units and Academic Support Programs and Services

Measuring institutional effectiveness at RIT has required us to place considerable attention on establishing goals and measuring achievement against these goals at both the University level and the unit level. We discuss each separately starting with institutional level assessment followed by assessment at the unit level.

Institution Level Planning and Assessment. RIT has a clear and visible strategic plan to operationalize its mission. Imagine RIT, RIT’s Strategic Plan, is a living document that is annually reviewed and updated as part of the University’s systematic planning process (See Figure 6). Likewise, each college and division is involved in strategic planning and ensures the units’ goals are aligned to RIT’s Strategic Plan, are measured, and help inform planning at all levels. An accompanying scorecard tracks each goal and strategic objective against expected performance levels. Using color-coded metrics, stakeholders can easily determine whether goals have been met or are close to being met (green), have not been met and results are moving in the wrong direction (red), or if goals have not been met but results improved over the previous year (yellow). Please see RIT’s Scorecard in Appendix E1.

An annual review cycle helps assess progress on achieving results and determine modifications or refinements to goals based on institutional data. The annual review cycle identified in Figure 6 provides an overview of the process and articulates the link to the annual budget process. Because RIT’s Strategic Plan is dynamic, annual goals/targets are accelerated or modulated based on assessment findings and use of results. There is an established process for submission and approval for modifications.

Figure 6: Annual Planning Process/Annual Budget Process

The Strategic Planning Committee reviews and refines the KRAs based on data. Many of the adjustments to the Strategic Plan goals were made as a result of a mid-course review of the plan that took place during fall quarter 2011-12.

One example from the November 2011 review cycle relates to Key Result Area 1: Student Success, and its associated Goal 2b: “Enhance diversity to best-in-class levels.” The modification included a change from a target of 40% female new enroll by 2015 to 37% female new enroll. Although the introduction of two new engineering programs (Chemical and Biomedical), as well as other effective recruiting strategies in the Kate Gleason College of Engineering have increased female enrollment, the increases have been offset by substantial growth in male-dominated programs such as Game Design and Development and declines and/or stasis in the percentage of female students in more traditionally female-friendly areas — College of Liberal Arts and Saunders College of Business, for example. The President’s Commission on Women developed three growth scenarios, none of which moves RIT to 40% female new enroll by 2015. Only the (highly unlikely) scenario of a 5% annual increase in females and a 1% in males—gets RIT close to the revised goal (37% female by 2016). The change was made to reflect these careful calculations.
Administrative Programs and Services: Planning and Assessment. RIT addressed head-on many of the assessment challenges identified in the 2007 Self-Study, fully establishing a systems approach to institutional assessment. In particular, RIT has focused on the establishment of an infrastructure to guide assessment within RIT’s administrative and academic support units, programs, and services; increased resources for data collection, management, access and analysis; and established clear reporting channels.

Notwithstanding, one of the critical areas identified by MSCHE in 2007 was a need for a program evaluation model for administrative and academic support programs (administrative units). Responding to this need, the University Assessment Council (UAC) developed the Institutional Effectiveness Map (See IE Map, sample Figure 7) as a tool to help administrative and support units facilitate planning and identify measureable goals. This tool provides an opportunity for all administrative units to map to their division goals and RIT’s Key Result Areas. Beginning in Fall 2011, administrative units began the transition to using an IE Map converting their existing planning documents, scorecard, division goals, etc. to this format. The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Office provides ongoing support and works with administrative units to complete the maps and analyze the results.

The last column on the map, Next Steps or Actions, is considered the most important part of the form because it is used to guide specific actions related to planning and resource allocation. As described in Chapter 2, this process was designed as a self-directed planning tool to help units, administrative offices, programs, and services, assess outcomes and tie results to their planning and budgeting processes. Administrative offices are able to align their budget requests to division and University level goals and outcomes. IE Map information is entered into the Assessment Management System (AMS). The AMS tracks budget resources and allocations by goals and outcome in the “Actions and Status” section. (See Figure 2, Actions & Status Report section, page 12.) This component prompts managers to determine which actions are needed based on their outcomes, and indicate budget needs.

![Figure 7: Sample (one goal) of Administrative Unit Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Map](image)

The following table (Table 15) provides a summary of the progress of administrative and academic support units in RIT divisions that have IE Maps completed or in progress. The work ahead of us now is to move all units to the next level which entails systematically measuring outcomes and using results for improvement. Administrative units are focusing on aligning goals and outcomes to university-wide data sources and developing measures. (See Appendix B4 for additional samples of IE Maps.)
In all cases, the goals and objectives outlined in divisional strategic plans can be rolled up to the institution’s Strategic Plan. In administrative unit plans, for each divisional objective, divisions identify the KRA to which it maps. In Academic Affairs, for example, the provost and deans use an executive dashboard that provides an annual snapshot for each college to show how RIT’s strategic objectives and priorities are being met and how other academic quality goals are being realized. The dashboard covers college performance metrics related to: Student Success; Academic Excellence; Research, Innovation, Scholarship, and Creative Work; Inclusive and Global Education; Faculty/Staff Success, and Operations. Figure 8 is a sample page from the provost’s Academic Quality Dashboard which displays outcome indicators related to Academic Excellence. (See Appendix E2 for full Academic Quality Dashboard.)

Figure 8: Academic Quality Dashboard (Sample Page)

| TABLE 15: RIT DIVISIONS/UNITS WITH INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS MAPS |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| DIVISION/AREA   | # UNITS     | COMPLETED       | IN PROGRESS     |
| Academic Affairs| 9           | 7               | 78%             |
| Development & Alumni Relations| 6 | 6 | 100% |
| Finance & Administration| 10 | 10 | 100% |
| Student Affairs | 22          | 22              | 100%            |
| Enrollment Management and Career Services| 5 | 1 | 20% |
| Office for Diversity and Inclusion| 4 | 4 | 100% |
| TOTAL           | 56          | 50              | 89%             |

The Institutional Effectiveness process is designed to facilitate reflective practice and strategic planning across RIT in an effort to create an effective learning environment, a positive experience for students, and a productive work environment for faculty and staff.

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Rochester Institute of Technology
Many administrative departments are actively using results to make improvements and share information on those improvements campus-wide. The selected examples displayed in Table 16 are illustrative of the range of varying stages of assessment based on both direct and indirect data sources.

**TABLE 16: FIVE EXAMPLES OF “CLOSING THE LOOP”**

### 1. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION DIVISION: HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement Focus Area: Employee Engagement</th>
<th>RIT KRA 4: Stakeholder Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Achieve “Best in Class” rating in four categories (using National Employee Engagement Survey)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Findings                                   | • 1725 employees responded to the survey  
• Overall Effectiveness: RIT = 68%—Best in Class Target= 80%  
• Recognition/Career Advancement: RIT = 66% - Best in Class Target = 78%  
• Supervisor/Management: RIT = 59% - Best in Class Target= 72%  
• Co-Worker Performance Satisfaction: RIT = 84% - Best in Class Target= 90%  
While RIT scored similarly to its peers in most/all areas, it did not meet its best in class targets. Identified areas to work on include: recognition, career advancement, and leadership development for managers |
| Actions                                    | 1. Piloted leadership development program for Finance and Administration Division managers using a tiered approach – first line managers to senior level leadership – 150 people  
2. Formed recognition committee to highlight staff excellence  
3. Developed career ladders and job categories to promote advancement opportunities  
4. Piloted implementation of succession planning for administrative staff positions |

### 2. ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT AND CAREER SERVICES DIVISION: CO-OP OFFICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement Focus Area: Co-op Student Performance</th>
<th>RIT KRA 1: Student Success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal 1</td>
<td>Employer evaluation of co-op student’s overall performance average rating of 4 or higher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings 1</td>
<td>For the five year period 2005 to 2010 more than 27,000 evaluations of RIT co-op students were completed by partner employers. Employer overall satisfaction with the performance of co-op students, as measured on a 5-point scale ranged from 4.32 to 4.39 during that time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 2</td>
<td>90% or higher of employers would hire co-op student for regular employment if available and appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings 2</td>
<td>When asked whether the employer would hire the co-op student for regular employment if a position was available and appropriate, over that same period between 91.5 and 92.9% of employers indicated they would. These offer very consistent and very positive measures of employer satisfaction with our co-op students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>No glaring need; Data disaggregated and sent to colleges for review and action by individual programs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3. STUDENT AFFAIRS DIVISION: ASSESSMENT AND RESEARCH OFFICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement Focus Area: Student Engagement</th>
<th>RIT KRA 1: Student Success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Understand RIT’s strengths and challenges from the student perspective by involving students in process of institutional assessment using Student-to-Student Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>In 2009 over 4,000 students responded to a “Student-to-Student” survey, offering their opinions on operational areas determined by students to be most important to the RIT student population. Survey items were categorized into the following nine themes: sustainability, housing, food, grading system, quality of education, campus environment, campus resources, RIT policies and procedures, and life at RIT.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Actions                                    | Disseminated information to community via “The Link: Student Guided Change @ RIT.”  
http://www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/thelink/  
Identified next steps for collecting new or follow-up information and keeping the information updated on the site. The site provides a listing of changes and improvements taken by department. Specific examples include:  
Academic Support Center, Center for Women and Gender, Office for Diversity and Inclusion, and Dining Services. |

### 4. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION DIVISION: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement Focus Area: Develop a mobile application strategy to meet needs of faculty, students, and staff</th>
<th>KRA #4: Stakeholder Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Determine the platforms and functions for development of the application using Mobile App Survey.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Findings                                                      | Mobile App Survey submitted to campus community (December 2010) – 1157 responses received:  
Results: 68.63% own a smart phone 2; 60.76% would download mobile applications  
Top five uses for model applications: 1) Events, 2) Dining Services, 3) Campus Map, 4) Courses, and 5) News |
| Actions                                                       | Information Technology Services released mobile application for Android and Apple iOS devices. The apps feature RIT news (separated into categories); a searchable campus map; an events calendar (also separated into categories); lab hours; RIT and RTS shuttle-bus schedules; dining-services locations, hours and menus; and more.  
The apps are available for download from the Android Market and the iTunes App Store. In the future, a special section showcasing apps created by students and others will be added. |
5. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION DIVISION: HOUSING OPERATIONS

| Improvement Focus Area: Identify ways to offer students leading edge housing services that are easily accessible 24/7 |
| KRA 4: Stakeholder Satisfaction |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Improve/increase online services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>Finance &amp; Administration Committee surveyed 1000 students and parents to determine strategies for conducting their on-campus business. Student focus groups were conducted. Major findings – preference for conducting on-campus business: online and 24/7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions</td>
<td>Purchased and implemented a new housing system, StarRez. Students now able to complete much of their business with Housing Operations online. Students can engage in the following business on line 24/7: complete housing contract; search and select roommate; select their own room; complete a room assessment; participate in the Housing Selection process; place a maintenance request; cancel a contract; select, change, and cancel a meal plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the University Assessment Council’s responsibilities is to provide support to various units for instrument development including direct measures, identifying benchmarks, analyzing and interpreting results, and using the data to make improvements. These administrative unit examples highlight RIT’s commitment to integrate assessment into every corner of the University as an expected part of our institutional processes. These processes include using the results to make improvements to programs and services that improve the quality of educational experiences for students.

5.3 Student Learning Assessment: Academic Programs and General Education

Over the past decade, our student learning assessment work has steadily matured and moved away from input and indirect measures to a greater emphasis on outputs and direct outcome measures, with marked growth especially in the last five years. Faculty have begun to understand the benefit of direct learning measures and why grades alone are not a sufficient indication that students have achieved specific learning outcomes. Accreditation processes have also helped advance this view. In addition to regional accreditation through MSCHE, almost half (47%) of RIT’s career and professional undergraduate and graduate degree programs carry specialized accreditation through 15 specialized accreditation bodies. These specialized accrediting bodies often have unique standards for assessing academic quality and student learning. Our internal commitments to the value of student learning outcomes indicators in RIT’s Strategic Plan demonstrates the high priority RIT places on measuring the achievement of student learning as a quintessential measure of institutional effectiveness. (See Appendix E3 for a list of all programs and accreditation bodies).

In particular, three major University initiatives have also positively impacted our ability to make learning assessment an important quality imperative. These initiatives are: the outcomes emphasis in RIT’s Strategic Plan, investment in an assessment infrastructure, and semester calendar conversion.

RIT’s Strategic Plan. RIT’s Strategic Plan is the foundation for our work and provides the focus and direction for our growing culture of assessment. Our annual review cycle supports reporting progress on achieving results and determining modifications or refinements to goals based on data (see Figure 6, page 34).

In 2010, to clearly articulate RIT’s concentration on program level student learning outcomes assessment, the Strategic Planning Committee of the Board of Trustees approved two additional sub-goals to the Strategic Plan, Key Result Area 3 (Goal 11): “Demonstrate Education Excellence.” These additional sub-goals focus on program level learning outcomes and require annual evidence that: 1) expected program student learning achievement levels are met/exceeded, and 2) assessment results and processes guide planning and improvement. Working with deans, the provost developed specific university-wide annual goal expectations for these two indicators (see Table 17). The inclusion of these student learning outcomes indicators in RIT’s Strategic Plan demonstrates the high priority RIT places on measuring the achievement of student learning as a quintessential measure of institutional effectiveness.

Table 17 (see page 39) displays these annual sub-goals and assessment metrics. It is important to point out that RIT expects that 75% of all academic program outcome learning achievement levels will be met or exceeded in FY 13 and that every program will be using its results to guide improvement in teaching and curriculum. We realize that we have set a high bar for ourselves with these goals, but believe the bar needs to be set at this level in order to demonstrate our commitment to achievement of student learning outcomes as an important indicator of academic quality.

Investment in Assessment Infrastructure. Beginning with the establishment of the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) Office and the hiring of its first director in January 2009, central support for campus-wide assessment has continued. The support of the provost has been substantial as has the active involvement of the college deans. The provost holds the deans accountable to oversee and demonstrate in their annual reporting that
planned program level outcomes assessment has occurred per the established timeline. This support from executive leadership has made an enormous difference in our ability to operationalize the institutional assessment framework and ensure that the four assessment pre-requisites are “in play” all of the time:

- Support for strategic vision and culture of assessment
- Provision of institutional leadership and coordination
- Support for accountability and transparency
- Utilization and development of data sources and resources

**Semester Calendar Conversion.** In February 2010, RIT made the decision to convert to a semester calendar beginning in fall 2013. This was an opportune time to redouble our efforts to strengthen assessment processes across the institution as the entire campus prepared for semester conversion. This conversion has required academic programs to examine their curricula and courses in preparation for submitting plans to translate programs and courses to a semester format. One of the most important reasons for converting to semesters was the potential to positively impact the quality of the educational experiences that RIT students receive. Beginning with the Academic Year 2010-11, we were able to leverage the calendar conversion process to provide an opportunity for program faculty to develop semester program level assessment plans using a newly designed common template (described in Chapter 2). Faculty worked effectively and collaboratively to meet this challenge. The template included core assessment elements as part of the documentation required for University approval and to seek New York State Education Department semester registration approval. (See Appendix B5 for Program Level Outcomes Assessment Template.)

As part of the semester conversion process, program level assessment plans were reviewed by the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Office prior to submission. The plans were reviewed to provide feedback and ensure consistency of assessment standards across programs and colleges.

The fact that every program (226) was required to rethink programmatic outcomes and prepare a new or revised outcomes assessment plan during this time gave us the unique target of opportunity to ensure that each plan for the future reflected good assessment practices. It is expected that this emphasis on assessment practices will also serve us well in the time period leading up to fall 2013 because programs can apply “new found” assessment knowledge to quarter based activities. We have already begun to see this unfold. For example, programs are assessing program level student learning outcomes that will transition to the semester programs. Programs are in the process of developing new key measures, including rubrics.

In sum, all of our academic programs (100%) have well-defined semester program level assessment plans. The RIT faculty and staff continue to invest a great deal of time collaborating on this large-scale initiative and are now in the process of developing new courses for the semester model all of which also require course level outcomes that map to program outcomes.

**Student Learning Assessment: Program Level Outcomes and Use of Results**

Because of the sea change that semester calendar conversion spawned, particularly from spring 2010 through December 2011 as programs were working feverishly to complete curriculum revision work in order to meet the timelines for submission to the New York State Education Department, we separate our assessment cycles and results into three distinct time periods: **Pre-Calendar Conversion Decision (2007-2009), Preparation for Semester Program Conversion (2010-2012),** and **Implementation of Program Semester Conversion (Fall 2013 forward).** Here we provide an overview of RIT’s assessment processes and how results have been used across these three periods.
Pre-Calendar Conversion Decision (2007–2009): Program Level Assessment and Use of Results

In this time period, immediately following the decennial review, attention was paid to shoring up course outlines to be more outcomes driven and to moving colleges along the program level outcomes continuum to data collection, analyzing, and using results.

- **Course Outlines/Descriptions** – As part of “folding in” assessment into ongoing RIT processes, since about 2002, each RIT course outline proposal form included an outcomes assessment section. In this way, each course outline squarely identified the program level learning outcomes it supported (see Appendix B12 for sample form).

- **College Level Academic Assessment Reports** – In March 2007 and 2009, Academic Assessment Reports were completed by each college to track the use of assessment results and hold programs accountable. These reports summarized progress and results from program level outcomes activities. During this two-year period, the reports clearly showed that each of the eight colleges made substantial progress with respect to assessment efforts. Undergraduate and graduate programs established reasonable, multi-year timelines to collect and analyze data. In addition, new programs were now required to develop outcomes assessment plans as part of their curricular design and as part of the RIT curriculum approval process. This requirement further stressed the importance of program level assessment. Quarter-based program level assessment plans are in Appendix E4.

All data collected for the annual reporting during this time period is from quarter-based program level assessment. The following examples (see Table 18) represent different types of actions taken based on assessment results during this same period. It is evident from our analysis of these and other examples that, while assessment results were beginning to occasion important improvements to teaching and curriculum, programs did not always know how to interpret their results or understand how to critically examine whether the assessment measures they were using were appropriate to the intended outcome. Many programs still relied on indirect measures. We addressed these issues through the development of the new semester program assessment template and guide to help programs focus on goals, instruments, and analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. BS PACKAGING SCIENCE/COLLEGE OF APPLIED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **2. AAS APPLIED COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY/NTID** |
| Action | Data collected from courses prompted the establishment of a faculty workgroup to discuss the assessment of technical skills and the following actions were taken: |
| | - Revision to several assessment instruments to more accurately reflect student achievement |
| | - A portfolio is being used for assessment in the Web-development Concentration |
| | - Established industry advisory group to provide feedback and guidance to the program |

| **3. BS PUBLIC POLICY/COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS** |
| Actions | In response to ongoing assessment efforts (alumni surveys, senior projects, and exit interviews, among other sources), the following actions were taken: |
| | - Improved the proposal writing and development process for senior projects |
| | - Increased the number and range of public policy colloquia options |

| **4. BS IMAGING SCIENCE/COLLEGE OF SCIENCE** |
| Actions | Direct and indirect data were collected from a broad range of sources and student research and overlapping content were identified as areas of improvement. The following actions were taken: |
| | - Significantly revamped the research-related aspects of the curriculum |
| | - Curriculum mapping process initiated to eliminate redundancies |
| | - Improved facilities ($30,000) in laboratory infrastructure |
| | - New course material introduced into each course as of fall 2008 |

| **5. BS BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION/SAUNDERS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS** |
| Actions | Educational Testing Service (ETS) - major Field Test in Business used to measure basic student knowledge in functional business areas. The test is somewhat generic and therefore provides somewhat limited usefulness in directing curricular improvements. However, one key finding showed that only 52% of respondents demonstrate sufficient knowledge of accountancy. To increase student learning and achievement in this area, a second required course was added to the curriculum in the program. |
Assessing the Assessment Efforts: Closing the 2nd Loop. Over the course of this same time period (2007-2009), the University was transitioning from a decentralized to a centralized support model for assessment. Because of this, it was important for the new Assessment Office to understand the assessment issues and challenges that colleges and programs were facing. To ensure that programs were on the right track and that assessment data that were currently on file were accurate and appropriate, colleges used the assessment reporting cycle to identify impediments and challenges associated with their program level outcomes assessment process. In general, three major areas of concern emerged:

- providing resources and centralized support and systematic processes at the institution level,
- developing or improving information technologies to sustain assessment systems, streamline processes, and reduce redundancy,
- communicating and working with faculty in terms of understanding assessment, developing rubrics, measuring goals, and sharing the workload

A further review of the existing quarter plans revealed additional areas in need of improvement for some of the programs including: setting measurable goals and outcomes, identifying benchmarks, using direct measures, conducting analysis and using results. Once these needs were recognized, the Student Learning Outcomes Committee and the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Office were better able to provide support to individual programs. A summary of the identified needs by each college is provided in Appendix E5. Table 19 summarizes the major themes that surfaced across all of the colleges and the status of these today.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continue to embed assessment into institutional systems and processes and decision making emphasizing its importance, and personal responsibility and accountability</td>
<td>In Progress and Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate and support communication and collaboration to find common solutions</td>
<td>In Progress and Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactively address resource issues</td>
<td>In Progress and Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish an Office of Assessment</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish website that includes online tools, resource links, templates, data-gathering systems, a document management system, and archives all program, college and University reports</td>
<td>In Progress and Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a requirement for every program to submit an assessment update and planning report. For example, all programs complete a yearly report due June 30.</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize and reward learning assessment</td>
<td>Not Started</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate collaboration between General Education assessment and those that have specific needs for their individual accrediting groups. Look for methods that can easily provide the individualized information that some programs need.</td>
<td>In Progress and Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide additional training for faculty and program administrators</td>
<td>In Progress and Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College/program level assessment themes and challenges (2007-2009)</th>
<th>2012 STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simplify the collection, analysis, management and maintenance of data</td>
<td>In Progress and Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand and balance the workloads of those doing assessment.</td>
<td>In Progress and Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find the resources to backfill for those doing assessment</td>
<td>In Progress and Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refine assessment plans and techniques as we learn more about assessment</td>
<td>In Progress and Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train faculty in assessment methodologies at the beginning and advanced levels</td>
<td>In Progress and Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create best practice sharing with cross-college faculty</td>
<td>In Progress and Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate assessment requirements across multiple accrediting bodies</td>
<td>In Progress and Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Align program assessment with University and college level initiatives</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following this analysis, the Director of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment met with each dean to review each college’s academic program assessment report, and discuss assessment priorities for the 2009-2010 academic year. The Director also reviewed the overall summary from Table 19 with the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (SLOAC) which, in turn, developed university-wide recommendations. This analysis formed the basis for additional training provided by the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Director.

During Semester Program Conversion (2010 to 2012): Program Level Assessment and Use of Results

Academic Program Profile. RIT’s mission is “to provide a broad range of career-oriented educational programs with the goal of producing innovative, creative, and successful graduates who are well prepared for their chosen careers in a global society (2008).” Every undergraduate and graduate program uses this mission statement and the outcomes described therein as the starting point in organizing curricula and program level outcomes.
During the calendar conversion process, the University conducted a preliminary expedited program review process to determine which quarter programs were going to convert to semester programs, which needed modification, and which should be phased out. As part of that process, the provost led an initiative with faculty to identify RIT’s essential educational outcomes. The Academic Program Profile is an important component of RIT’s Academic Program Management Process and is now incorporated into curriculum development and review guidelines.

The Academic Program Profile consists of two overarching elements: the Guiding Principles for Lifelong Learning and Career Orientation and a set of five Essential Program Outcomes: (1) Critical Thinking, (2) Global Interconnectedness, (3) Ethical Reasoning, (4) Integrative Literacies, and (5) Innovative/Creative Thinking.

The Academic Program Profile articulates important educational outcomes that are mission driven and characterize what an RIT education represents. RIT believes these outcomes to be so essential that they should be integrated into every RIT program at the undergraduate and, where appropriate, the graduate level. The specific ways in which programs embed these outcomes will vary and be contextualized to particular career goals and professions. In addition, at the undergraduate level, RIT’s General Education Outcomes evolve out of and map to these essential outcomes.

Through the calendar conversion process, the Academic Program Profile provided guidance and direction for developing and evaluating all academic undergraduate and graduate degree programs at RIT. It helped program faculty, governance groups, and the administration design and assess programs on the basis of how well they fit RIT’s vision, mission, and values.

**Assessment Progress Report.** One of our biggest challenges during this time period was to select a reasonable methodology to demonstrate how results were being used for improvement. In order to provide this needed level of transparency and visibility around using results, the provost’s office charged the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (SLOAC) to develop a user-friendly format for programs to annually report on their progress in implementing their assessment plans in both the quarter and future semester calendars. This was accomplished through a web-based progress report survey which required department heads to specifically describe the assessment of two program level learning outcomes and/or the progress to date on assessment processes. The response rate to the first progress report was 97% (167/172), which we consider to be exceptional. The second progress report survey results will be available in June 2012.

**Overall Findings.** Based on the findings from this survey of assessment occurring during the 2009-2010 AY and from the previous 2007-2009 assessment reports, it is clear that all programs have defined their outcomes and embedded them in their course syllabi. Assessment methods have been identified in almost every case. Table 20 exhibits these findings.

### TABLE 20: ASSESSMENT RESULTS MAPPED TO PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programs with program level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student learning outcomes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defined</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs with course syllabi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>with learning outcomes</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identified</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program that have identified</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assessment methods</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs that have collected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outcomes data</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs that used results</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>for program improvement (KRA 3</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 11ai)</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>90%*</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected program student</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning achievement levels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>met or exceeded (KRA 3 Goal 11ai)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The percentage of programs using results to make improvements is expected to be greater than the other percentages reported because programs typically use a range of indirect and direct data sources in closing the loop process. Percentages reported in other areas (outcomes, benchmarks, and achievement) are based exclusively on direct measures.*
When comparing 2008-09 actual data to 09-10, it appears that the number of programs that have identified assessment measures and collected outcomes data has decreased. It is important to understand the reason for this. Prior to 2009-10 academic year, programs varied greatly in how they prepared their program level outcomes assessment plans. There was little intentional emphasis on using direct outcome measures nor was there a requirement that an achievement benchmark be established for every outcome. As a result, programs reported assessment methods that today are judged to be insufficient. Commencing in 2009, programs were asked to refine plans around best assessment practices and include at a minimum at least one direct measure for each outcome. While these data clearly point to the fact that there is growing evidence of using results to drive changes to curriculum, instruction, and assessment, the area that requires further vigilance is certifying that programs are collecting assessment data per their plans. (For samples on use of results from all colleges, please see Appendix E6). The programs that did not directly assess student learning in AY 2009-2010 were asked to identify where they were in the assessment process. Figure 9 summarizes the responses. As can be noted, most of these programs were focused on developing assessment rubrics or selecting appropriate assessment occasions within the curriculum.

### Review and Analysis

Based on the progress report submissions from spring 2011, the SLOA Office reviewed each progress report submission and offered constructive suggestions for how the program could improve its assessment activities. This feedback was provided to the program head. The college liaison to SLOAC helped their college programs prepare a college level action plan which focused on strategies to improve “closing the loop.” (See Appendix E7 for Progress Report Instrument and Appendix E8 for College Action Plans.)

Three program examples follow, each drawn from this reporting process. It is informative to note that each one falls into a different category of assessment “maturity.” These assigned categories (Emerging, Developing, Highly Developed) are representative of the range and variation found in assessment methods, benchmarks and the ways results were used across the University. Our goal is to bring all programs up to the “Highly Developed” level by 2015. We estimate that currently about 50% of our programs fall into that category (see Figures 10-12 for samples.)

#### Example: “Emerging” Assessment Program – BS Criminal Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Outcome 1</th>
<th>Program Outcome 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Level Student Learning Outcome (SLO)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Utilize critical thinking skills to apply knowledge to social issues in crime and criminal justice policies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge of key concepts, policy issues, legal and ethical issues surrounding crime and justice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment Method</strong></td>
<td><strong>Field Experience Capstone Paper (grading rubric mapped to SLO)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course: Seminar in Criminal Justice Final Exam (grading mapped to SLO)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Achievement Benchmarks and Results</strong></td>
<td><strong>Benchmark: 70% will earn a grade of C or better. Results: 100% met goal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benchmark: 70% of students will earn a grade of C or better</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results: 81% met goal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of Results</strong></td>
<td><strong>Use of Results</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Faculty recommend moving from 1 comprehensive final to mini-exams to provide additional assessment opportunities and feedback</td>
<td>• Faculty to review rubric and rating process to determine alignment of rubric to SLO and consistency of grading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Re-assessment in spring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For additional examples from each of the nine colleges of how the programs are using results from the 2009-10 assessment cycle, see Appendix E6. These additional examples further substantiate the need for some programs to articulate and improve student performance criteria and benchmarks.

All programs will continue to report annually on the progress of assessing program level student learning outcomes. Beginning in 2014, the annual progress report will be handled through the new on-line Assessment Management System (AMS), but until then this will continue to be an electronic survey sent to programs.

**Assessment Management System.** A preliminary three year time frame for implementation of the new Assessment Management System (AMS) was established (this system was described in Chapter 2, page 12). The College of Science, College of Liberal Arts, and Golisano College for Computing and Information Sciences are in the process of transitioning their 2013 program level assessments plans into the system. Once in the system, programs will be able to manage their own assessment workspaces and report on the achievement of the outcomes using the assessment management system. A sample of a program level assessment plan developed in AMS is provided in Figure 13.
After Semester Program Conversion (Fall 2013 and beyond): Building Capacity

To assist faculty in the development of semester-based program level assessment plans, four integrated processes were put into place beginning in 2010-11.

**Process #1: Calendar Conversion-Use of Results Table.** As part of the required semester conversion documentation process, programs were asked to summarize how the results from their ongoing program level assessment drove various types of improvements or changes proposed when converting the programs to a semester format. The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment staff used qualitative software to review, code, and summarize all submissions. A summary of the results from the programs are displayed in Table 21 and demonstrate that specific changes were, indeed, made to curriculum, pedagogy, or assessment based on previous assessment findings.

**Process #2: Course Outline Form (Calendar Conversion).** The Course Proposal Form was refined further during the calendar conversion process to include additional assessment elements: course and program level outcomes, alignment to general education student learning outcomes (new) and methods of assessment (new). Every course was submitted to the curriculum approval bodies using the revised format. (See Appendix B12 for sample form.) These additional elements ensure that course outcomes map to program outcomes and general education outcomes, as appropriate.

**TABLE 21: USE OF RESULTS SUMMARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>USE OF RESULTS</th>
<th>PRIMARY DATA SOURCES CITED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Changes made to the curriculum:</td>
<td>Most frequently cited data sources:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Modified/removed/added specific course = 78 (56%) programs</td>
<td>• Student Feedback 46 (33%) programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Modified/removed/added specific course content = 58 (41%) programs</td>
<td>• Faculty Feedback/Recommendations 40 (29%) programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Modified/removed/added minors = 28 (20%) programs</td>
<td>• Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Data 26 (19%) programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Most frequently cited data sources:</td>
<td>• Alumni Survey/Feedback 33 (24%) programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Course or program level assessment data Student Feedback</td>
<td>• Employer Survey 24 (17%) programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Faculty Feedback</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>Changes made to instruction/pedagogy: Modification to Instructional</td>
<td>Most frequently cited data sources:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td>Strategies = 21 (15%) programs identified the following:</td>
<td>• Current Assessment Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Integration across the curriculum</td>
<td>• Faculty/Committee Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Technology focus</td>
<td>• Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Office Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Cited Changes to Assessment - Modifications to assessment plans:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• New program level assessment plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Modified or developed program student learning outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Aligned to new Academic Program Profile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Developed Benchmarks for student learning outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identified new data sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 13: Sample Program Level Assessment Plan in Assessment Management System (AMS)**
**Process #3: Development of New Program Level Assessment Plan.** In order to establish a consistent and strong assessment foundation campus-wide, each program was required to complete a program level assessment plan for converted semester programs. Many colleges and programs had quarter program assessment plans which they adapted and refined for semester program assessment plans, but this provided an opportunity to review and strengthen all plans. Semester Program Proposals could not move forward for internal approval or be moved to the New York State Education Department for approval without an assessment plan.

Using a common template, all programs (100%) submitted program level assessment plans through the semester conversion process.

**Process #4: Assessment Support to Colleges and Programs.** To further support the program level assessment planning process, the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Office (SLOA) developed multiple strategies to facilitate the development of high quality plans. As the colleges had very different needs and approaches related to assessment, the SLOA Office provided multiple types of support for planning program assessment. The SLOA team worked with colleges to determine the best method or methods for individual programs. For example, one of the approaches included the development of electronic resources in the form of the Academic Program Assessment Planning Guide and Program Assessment Plan Rubric as well as specific resources on how to develop the core elements of the plan (e.g., program level outcomes). For samples of electronic resources please visit the SLOA website at http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/outcomes/program_services.php.

A second approach used was meeting one-to-one with program faculty to focus on initial development. This continued until a final draft was developed. This typically included face to face meetings, electronic reviews, and phone calls. A third approach was “moving in” to the colleges. The SLOA staff set up a mobile office inside various colleges to work directly with program faculty. The staff also visited departments within each college and worked with college level curriculum committees and key assessment liaisons.

All program level assessment plans are now housed electronically. Samples of semester program assessment plans for every college are provided in Appendix E9.

As we continue to move forward with respect to our outcomes assessment processes and systematic practices, we are able to focus on strengthening the support for assessment among the faculty. We feel there is a more cohesive and natural connection between curriculum, instruction, and assessment and that when we begin in the semester format, assessment plans will be more sophisticated and mature than in the past.

**General Education Student Learning Outcomes: Planning and Implementation**

As discussed in Chapter 2, since 2007 RIT has put into place a new General Education Framework (See Appendix B10); a set of 19 general education learning outcomes, an assessment plan, an annual tracking and reporting mechanism, and a governance structure to oversee the integrity and quality of general education at RIT. The General Education Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan and schedule can be viewed at http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/outcomes/media/documents/general_education_assessment_plan.pdf.

In order to move the General Education Assessment Plan forward, the SLOA Office, in collaboration with college deans, established General Education Faculty Teams affiliated with the five General Education Student Learning Outcomes domains. In this way, RIT faculty members serve as the architects of our assessment activities and function as facilitators, consultants, reviewers, statisticians, and mentors. See SLOA website for faculty team charges at http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/outcomes/sloa_at_rit.php.

Each General Education Faculty Team designs and develops all aspects of the assessment, including assessment measures, benchmarks, timelines, and analysis. The team establishes a data collection schedule, recommends faculty development needs, resources, and strategies for sharing and using results.

One important responsibility for each team has been the development and piloting of rubrics. The teams continually review the rubrics to determine if improvements are warranted. Since planning is cyclical, the teams will continue to assess the rubrics over time to ensure they include clear criteria, and relevance-appropriate knowledge and skills for general education. (See Appendix E10 for General Education Student Learning Outcomes Rubrics.)

In addition, part of the planning process included the review of other existing data from indirect measures that align to the general education student learning outcomes. For example, Appendix E11 displays the alignment of specific RIT general education student learning outcomes to questions from the NSSE Survey. This level of planning contributes to finding cost effective methods for the continuous measurement of the outcomes.
General Education Student Learning Outcomes Assessment: Use of Results

As part of our five year cycle, we assessed eight outcomes in the first year (2009-10). A few highlights follow from the General Education Student Learning Outcomes assessed in the first assessment cycle (2009-10). These include outcomes that fall in the Communication Domain and the Scientific, Mathematical, and Technological Literacy (SMTL) Domain. A summary of the use of results from the first year can be found in Appendix E12.

A. Domain – Communication:

Outcome: Revise and improve written and visual products

During the first cycle, faculty chose to assess the Communication Outcome: Revise and Improve Written Products to determine the level and type of revision that students use in the writing process. As this was a first time assessment, one of the goals of the assessment was to establish appropriate benchmarks. At the end of the fall and winter terms, over 200 portfolios of student writing were collected from students enrolled in 79 sections of Writing Seminar. Faculty developed a scoring guide that defined the types of revision expected, including: sources, complexity, organization, and editing/stylistics.

The specific scoring rubric included the following performance criteria:

- **Sources**
  - Source information added or removed to support claims/thesis
  - Sources more fully integrated into the essay
  - Sources in support of claims/thesis more accurately presented

- **Complexity**
  - Multiple perspectives are presented in a way that demonstrate greater complexity of thought
  - Implications and/or questions are articulated in a way that demonstrate greater complexity of thought
  - Focus of Essay Narrowed/Expanded through changes in word choice, organization, use of sources, and audience awareness

- **Organization**
  - Transitions between and within paragraphs in order to improve flow.
  - Alterations of paragraph sequencing demonstrate intentional organizational structure
  - Organization has been improved by addition or modification of transitional words or phrases

- **Editing & Stylistics**
  - Copyediting has reduced distracting errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, mechanics, format, and syntax
  - Sentence level changes in word choice, word order, redundancy, etc.
  - Other (please explain):

Table 22 identifies the overall benchmark for using revision to improve written products and the established benchmarks based on the data collected and analyzed. The University Writing Program Director is using the results of the assessment to improve curriculum and instruction in specific ways, including:

- Development of pedagogical strategies that integrate and incorporate revision processes into writing instruction (ongoing)
- Development of two workshops to determine specific commenting strategies on what faculty valued and that facilitate the improvements in writing (one workshop completed May 2011; second planned for May 2012)
- Share scoring guide and strategies for implementation with faculty (completed)

| TABLE 22: BENCHMARK FOR USING REVISION TO IMPROVE WRITTEN PRODUCTS |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| BENCHMARK                                        | RESULT          |
| 100% of students will demonstrate some form of revision to improve writing | Met (99.5%) |

**PERFORMANCE GOAL:**

| BENCHMARK BASED ON YEAR 1 ASSESSMENT |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Use revision to use source information to support claims or thesis | 70% |
| Use revision to address errors in editing and mechanics | 70% |
| Use revision to improve organizational structure | 55% |
| Use revision to show increased complexity of thought and audience awareness | 30% |
The initial assessment of one of the outcomes, *Apply Methods of Scientific Inquiry and Problem Solving to Contemporary Issues*, is highlighted below.

**B. Domain – Scientific, Mathematical, and Technological Literacy (SMTL):**

**Outcome:** Apply methods of scientific inquiry and problem solving to contemporary issues

The assessment process included faculty teams developing and piloting a general, holistic rubric in a biology course to assess the level of student achievement. The faculty developed the holistic rubric that included the following four-level scale to measure the learning outcome:

1. **Beginning** – often fails to identify important elements of problems, has difficulty communicating ideas clearly and concisely, typically uses inappropriate methods/experiments to collect data or inappropriate analysis techniques, conclusions are frequently incorrect or unjustified by the experiment in question.
2. **Developing** – inconsistent in identifying important elements of problems, communication of ideas is often unclear but generally aimed toward the proper goal, often uses appropriate methods/experiments to collect data but inadequacies in data collection or analysis hamper drawing inferences, conclusions are generally correct but often not justified by the experiment in question.
3. **Competent** – often successful in identifying important elements of problems, communication of ideas is reasonably clear but with weaknesses in presentation or content, typically uses appropriate methods/experiments to collect data but quality of data collect and analysis are inconsistent, conclusions are generally correct but their justification is sometimes incomplete.
4. **Exemplary** – identifies important elements of problems, communicates ideas clearly and concisely, uses appropriate methods/experiments to collect data and usually analyzes them correctly, conclusions are correct and justified.

Faculty determined which course-embedded assignments mapped to the expected outcome and then used the four achievement levels on the rubric to determine how well students were achieving the outcome. Faculty assessed the outcome multiple times within the course and selected specific measures such as: exams, lab reports, homework, and quizzes. The following is a summary of the key results:

- Overall, students met the benchmark with a “developing” to “competent” range on the student learning outcome with an average of 2.65.
- The student average was the highest (3.57) on the first quiz and the student average was the lowest on homework assignment #2 (2.28) which suggest that the homework and practice helped inform the quiz achievement results.
- Overall, faculty felt the findings were consistent with a course that includes both science majors and non-science majors.

Following the analysis of these results, faculty:

- Reviewed the outcome and assessment methods in lab/lecture co-requisite courses to improve consistency/connections in knowledge and skills with the objective of strengthening and supporting student achievement of the outcome. A lab component was added to the next assessment cycle.
- Refined the benchmark to – “the majority (more than 50%) of students will demonstrate a mid-developing to competent rating of 2.5-3.0 on a 4 point scale using the holistic rubric.”
- Replicated the assessment process in spring quarter 2012 to collect additional data to compare and look for trends as team wanted to look at more data to determine and support curricular or instructional improvements.

As described earlier, at the end of the first year of assessment, both General Education groups came together at a “mini-retreat” where the outcomes data were shared and faculty provided input into further analysis and interpretation of the data, how to use results to improve learning, how to improve components of the assessment plan, and recommendations for next steps. This type of assessment review provided a deeper and richer level of conversation with experts in the disciplines.

A General Education assessment report is produced annually and shared with RIT constituency groups. The goal of this reporting strategy is to communicate results of the assessment in an understandable and timely manner. A communication plan has been developed for disseminating the results to the campus community. Please see Appendix E13 for General Education Communication Plan.

The first General Education assessment report (November 2011) has been shared and discussed with targeted audiences, including the Academic Senate.
Assessing the Assessment Efforts: Closing the 2nd Loop. In order to continually refine and improve general education assessment processes, a two-step approach is used. The first step is faculty review and discussion of findings and recommendations, including a prioritization and development of a timeline/work plan for use of results and issues to be addressed in the next assessment cycle. This review takes place in the summer following the academic year in which the assessment occurs and helps to ensure that results are used. In addition, with an eye toward improvement of effectiveness and efficiency, the general education assessment processes themselves are annually reviewed by the faculty to determine which aspects worked and which did not work. An examination of the goals, instruments, and methodology are part of this annual review. As results are discussed, faculty consider how to make assessment more meaningful and useful and what changes to teaching practices or the curriculum may be warranted. For example: faculty adjusted their assessment method and instruction to include a pre- and post-test on concepts, made recommendations for additional assessment opportunities, and shared scoring guide and implementation strategies (see Appendix E12).

The second level of assessment processes review is by the General Education Committee (GEC). Based on the first set of results, during the most recent review by the GEC (November 2011) modifications were made to the assessment schedule and wording changes were made to two of the 19 outcomes.

- Revised assessment timeline from a three year to a five year cycle given the focus and emphasis on calendar conversion.
- Refined two outcomes from the Science, Mathematics, and Technology domain based on data collected and faculty feedback to be more measurable and applicable. Revisions to outcome language include:
  - Demonstrate knowledge of basic principles and concepts of one of the natural sciences
  - Perform college level mathematical operations or apply statistical techniques

note: italics indicates new wording

5.4 Summary and Analysis

Since 2007, RIT has moved rapidly to enhance its leadership support, assessment infrastructure, and assessment of outcomes. The University consistently supports institutional effectiveness and communicates goals and performance results through its shared governance model, public websites and campus-wide communications. Institutional leadership has demonstrated its support of an assessment infrastructure through transparency, access to evidence and critical information, resources, and the use of technology to support and sustain student learning outcomes across the University. Overall, we have deepened and strengthened our assessment processes to assess institutional effectiveness and student learning.

As the Chief Academic Officer, Provost Haefner’s priority of assessment and use of data to improve programs and services is explicit. Six of our nine deans have been hired within the last two years and bring valuable assessment experience from other settings. All of the deans are engaged in advancing the vision, understand and value assessing student learning, and are held accountable for assessment goals.

In 2009, RIT identified specific plans and timelines to ensure the continued implementation of an organized, sustained process to assess the achievement of institutional, program level, and general education student learning outcomes. The status for each initiative is provided in Appendix E14 Updated Timeline/Plan. We have successfully completed 11 of 19 of these initiatives and the remaining eight are in progress or ongoing.

5.5 Looking Ahead – Priorities and Challenges

Looking Ahead – Priorities

We understand that our institutional assessment practices and assessing for learning build over time. As a campus, we are developing and integrating structures and processes that support our collective commitment and foster successful change. The focus over the next few years must reside in maintaining a sustained collective commitment and moving this commitment to the next level, which for us translates to closing the loop with every program. In order to successfully achieve this goal, the following priorities, mapped to the elements of our Institutional Assessment Framework, must be realized.

Leadership and Coordination. The addition of a General Education Faculty Associate who will provide direct support for implementing the new General Education Framework, including course and curriculum development and assist with the assessment of the General Education Student Learning Outcomes, is needed to lead and advance these efforts.
Planning and Implementation. Ongoing work with colleges/programs on assessing student learning – specifically in designing instruments, benchmarking, and using results from progress report to determine key areas of focus is needed. In addition, the SLOA Office must increase its capacity to support the development and management of the future Administrative Unit Review and Academic Program Review processes. This will mean at minimum, one additional FTE.

RIT is committed to sustaining program level assessment of student learning as we transition to semesters. In order to achieve this goal, we must continue to work with programs to help them be strategic about which program level outcomes and selected courses/assignments to focus on for collecting data during interim years before semesters. This necessitates providing guidance on:

- Assessing at least one program level student learning outcome that is included on both quarter and semester program level assessment plans.
- Using a key course and assignment/measure that is included in both quarter and semester programs (e.g., capstone, internship, senior project, major course project)
- Working on major elements of program level assessment plan (e.g., develop or refine scoring guides or rubrics) that may be new in semester program, but can be piloted in quarter program.
- Continuing a focus on data already collected and ready for analysis

RIT’s new General Education Framework and a five year assessment cycle to assess the General Education Student Learning Outcomes are critical priorities. The General Education Committee must continue to expand its knowledge and understanding of assessment with a focus on using existing resources, authentic assessment experiences, and use of results to improve student learning.

Structures and Processes. One of our priorities is to recognize exemplary accomplishments in assessment work through special awards or faculty assessment fellowships and grant opportunities. In particular, grant opportunities could potentially advance:

- Innovative course level assessment approaches in General Education courses
- Innovative program level assessment processes
- Refinements to assessment of Capstone or Senior Projects, CO-OP/Internships, etc.

Over the next few years, the final phases of the Assessment Management System (AMS) university-wide roll-out will take place and needs to include:

- Working with remaining colleges and programs to develop workspaces
- Maintaining and updating General Education Workspace
- Maintaining and updating Middle States Workspace
- Continuing the training for college program liaisons and administrative staff

One of the ways we “folded in” assessment of student learning is through RIT’s new Academic Program Review (APR) process which begins in 2015. This process, premised on external review of a program prepared self-study, asks programs to present evidence to support centrality to mission, program demand, financial viability and academic quality. The academic quality criterion requires submission and discussion of program level student learning outcomes assessment data results and evidence by the program that the results have been used for program improvement. Results from the program review will determine strategic quality improvement needs and resource implications. Results will also determine if a program should be enhanced, consolidated or eliminated. The SLOA Office must build capacity to begin working with programs to assemble this data in early 2013-14. (See Appendix B7 for full Academic Program Review Process.)

Engagement of faculty is an ongoing opportunity to support the assessment of student learning. The SLOA Office must focus on providing an orientation for new faculty, to provide them with a general understanding of current program level assessment practices, and the types of course level assessment support that are available.

Evaluation and Improvement. We are in the early stages of aligning our goals and outcomes to budget and resource allocation. A key priority is to continue to work with administrative and academic support units to assess effectiveness and link results to budget and planning. It is imperative that the University Assessment Council (UAC) focus its energy on coordinating the implementation of the IE Maps and develop a model for systematic review of administrative units as a core institutional process. The UAC must also prioritize building capacity among the divisions with training and professional development opportunities. We are in the initial stages with this and have
IE Maps for the majority of our administrative units. Now, we need to focus on the implementation over the next few years and coupling the process with budget requests and allocations.

**Looking Ahead – Challenges**

We also understand that institutional assessment practices and assessing for learning presents a variety of challenges. We have identified the following challenges as we move beyond the foundational level of assessment.

**Resources.** One of our greatest challenges is resources. We continue to balance and maintain a cost effective approach with the use of direct and indirect measures as well as using existing data sources to sustain our institutional level assessment. However, as assessment becomes more ingrained campus-wide, the need to support academic program and administrative unit assessment work will increase. The focus will shift from a foundational level of support to a more advanced level of data analysis, benchmarking, developing and piloting new instruments, using results, and linking to planning and budgeting. In addition, as the campus adopts new core institutional assessment processes (Academic Program Review and Administrative Unit Review), the need for additional resources increases. We expect this will include the need for at least one additional FTE.

**Maintaining Momentum.** Another challenge is maintaining momentum during the interim period between the quarter and semester programs. Faculty are focused on preparing semester programs and courses so there are many competing program priorities. Placing assessment within the context of academic quality and not accountability requires champions and exemplars. Additional effort must be devoted to this if we are to successfully situate assessment in the proper context. The momentum will be maintained through planned and cyclical key University initiatives that promote and integrate assessment. These include:

- RIT’s Strategic Plan and student learning and use of results performance indicators
- RIT’s Annual Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Progress Report
- Administrative Unit Review – to be developed
- Enterprise-wide assessment management system to sustain the University’s assessment work
- Centralized office with resources and tools to support the campus

**Using Data.** One of the most challenging aspects of our assessment work is using data to inform and reflect upon current practice and facilitate program change. Using assessment results is a key element in supporting a program’s continuous, quality improvement processes. We place this as both our highest priority and our greatest challenge. We recognize the significant accomplishments to date but are also humbled by what we believe remains to be done.

The second part of that loop is assessing if changes are working. This part of the loop is even harder to close as it requires programs and units to further assess the modification or refinement they have initiated. This takes time and additional resources, but moves the program or administrative unit further and confidently towards improving student learning or services. This is also challenging for us because this final closing of the loop is coordinated by the assessment-related committees (GEC, UAC, and SLOAC), whose membership changes annually. Finding effective strategies for member orientation and selecting continuity strategies must be addressed.

**Summary**

RIT administration, faculty and staff were able to leverage the large-scale initiative of semester conversion and lead an integrated effort to determine the best assessment practices at all levels of the institution. The University will maintain and sustain these efforts during the transition to the next major milestones – successful implementation of semester conversion and the new Academic Program Review process. With a collective institutional commitment, RIT continues to build and implement its assessment infrastructure and processes with the goals of measurable, meaningful, and sustainable assessment practices and quality educational experiences for students.
Chapter 6: Linked Institutional Planning and Budgeting Processes

Through RIT’s annual budget planning process (referred to in Chapter 4), the administration’s primary intent is to apportion its scarce financial resources to those activities which most directly support the University’s long-term strategic priorities. This chapter begins with a brief synopsis of the University’s Strategic Plan. Following this is an overview of the University’s annual planning process, which begins with a longer-term outlook and ends with a specific allocation of resources for the coming fiscal year. Finally, there is a detailed review of our two most recently completed budgeting cycles and how the resources allocated each year correlate directly to our strategic goals.

6.1 Strategic Plan

As noted in the Executive Summary, the Strategic Plan’s focus is embodied in four Key Result Areas (KRAs) and their related goals (available on the president’s website, http://www.rit.edu/president/strategicplanning/plan.php, and accessible to all the University’s constituencies). In brief, the Key Result Areas call for the University to:

1. Be renowned for student success
2. Maximize opportunities for innovation, creativity, research, and scholarship
3. Execute with organizational/operational excellence
4. Achieve the highest levels of stakeholder satisfaction

Each Key Result Area is supported by quantifiable key result measures as outlined in the Executive Summary. As discussed in Chapter 5 (section 5.2) and depicted in figure 6 there, the University’s strategic plan and goals are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Although the Key Result Areas and measures typically do not change, changes to both long-term and intermediate performance targets may result from this iterative process. These metrics, taken together, help to shape the University’s priorities and serve as a guide in allocating resources. The next section describes our resource allocation process manifested in the preparation of our annual budget.

6.2 Annual Planning and Budgeting Process

The process to produce RIT’s annual operating budget begins in December of each year and culminates at the following November’s Board of Trustees meeting where the final budget for the, then current, fiscal year is approved by the full Board. This iterative process begins with high level, long-range assumptions and projections and proceeds to lower levels of granularity and eventually a detailed budget which the operating units utilize to ensure that the University meets Strategic Plan Goal 9, a balanced budget. RIT operates on a permanent budget basis, meaning that operating units carry forward their expense budgets from one year to the next with global adjustments for merit pay, benefits expense, and other institution-wide impacts. In the annual budget process the administration vets proposals for new spending which, if approved, are added to each unit’s operating budget.

The timeline below (Figure 14) includes the typical sequencing/timing of the various phases, followed by a chronology of activities.

Figure 14: RIT’s Annual Planning and Budgeting Timeline
Financial Modeling. The Budget Planning Committee typically has two planning meetings which set the constraints within which the budget is to be prepared. For transparency and shared governance, the Budget Planning Committee is cross-functional and consists of the following individuals:

- Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs, representing all the colleges
- Senior Vice President for Finance & Administration
- Senior Vice President for Enrollment Management and Career Services
- Assistant Vice President for Budget and Financial Planning Services
- President of the Academic Senate
- Chair, Resource Allocation and Budget Committee of the Academic Senate
- Chair, Staff Council
- Other participants from the Controllers division and Budget Office

In its first meeting, the committee reviews the latest projections from the University’s long-range planning model, Future Perfect (described in detail in Chapter 4). This phase is focused largely on key strategies and assumptions, including:

- Long-term enrollment levels and composition
- Endowment growth and returns
- University initiatives – e.g., new programs, facilities
- Inflationary impacts
- Financing required for initiatives

While the first meeting provides a longer-range view for planning, the second meeting of the budget committee in December is focused on the coming fiscal year. In this meeting, the committee addresses topics which will be critical in formulating next year’s operating budget, among them:

- Preliminary estimate of enrollment and the anticipated gross tuition revenue
- Analysis and discussion of the composition of our student body and a projection of the amount of institutionally funded financial aid required to attract and retain students
- An estimate of the unrestricted endowment draw
- Anticipated increases in employee benefits costs
- Utility cost projections
- Other known/contractual expenses increases/decreases (e.g., debt service)
- Preliminary salary/wage merit increase pools

The net of these factors is the amount of budget funds which are available to allocate to leverage current activities and further the University’s Strategic Plan.

Preliminary Planning. The Division of Enrollment Management and Career Services holds meetings with each college to refine projected fall enrollment for the upcoming year, taking into account each department’s capacity and constraints. Final enrollment projections are sent to the Budget Office as input for the budget process.

The Budget Office prepares preliminary budget assumptions for presentation to and approval by the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees. Upon the Finance Committee’s recommendation, these preliminary assumptions are then presented to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees for adoption. These general assumptions include the proposed tuition rate increases, aggregate enrollment projections, and other known significant budgetary impacts. The net result is a projection of marginally allocable budget funds available to further the University’s strategic goals.

Budget Hearing and Preliminary Budget. The Budget Office schedules budget hearings for each vice president and dean at the University. The hearings are chaired by the president and held with the Budget Committee (includes all the members of the Budget Planning Committee, except for the Senior Vice President for Enrollment Management and Career Services). Budget hearings are an opportunity for the each college dean or divisional vice president to:

- Reinforce for the Budget Committee the linkage between their own Strategic Plan and the University’s goals,
- Discuss their progress toward the University’s goals, and
- Identify potential initiatives to further improve results.
These initiatives can be funded by either reallocating existing budget resources or requesting incremental funding in the upcoming budget year. Each presenter is asked to prioritize their requests to further inform the budget committee as to the relative importance to their college or division. For the FY12 budget year, we held 19 separate budget hearings.

Budget hearings conclude in mid-March and requests for incremental funding are summarized by the Budget Office. The FY12 hearings were typical, with over 300 specific requests for additional funding. With an emphasis on the University’s strategic goals, the Budget Office prepares a draft allocation of the available funds to those requests which it deems will make the most improvement in the key result measures. Funding requests without a specific connection to the University’s strategic goals are generally not eligible for funding. This draft allocation is provided to the provost and the Senior Vice President of Finance & Administration as a “straw man” from which they prepare a revised allocation to be shared with the president. The president approves the final allocations. In all of the phases, the allocation decisions take into account the current performance on the key result measures and their relation to the University’s expected targeted levels of performance.

The Budget Office prepares a preliminary balanced budget for presentation at the April meeting of the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees. The preliminary budget assumptions from the February presentation are revisited and where changes have been made, the committee is apprised as to why. The Finance committee is charged to ensure that the new budget allocations included in the preliminary budget mesh with the University’s Strategic Plan and then approves the preliminary budget and recommends its approval by the full Board. After adoption by the full Board, the Budget Office publishes the allocations to the budget officers in each college and division.

**Final Budget.** The actual enrollment figures for the fall academic term are used as the basis for the final budget presented for Board Approval in November. Any significant deviations from the preliminary enrollment estimates are accommodated in a new spending plan which typically either: a) makes additional budget allocations if the enrollment is above the preliminary estimate or, b) consumes a portion of the budget contingency if enrollment is below the estimate. As with the main budget allocations, any additional allocations are made in light of the current University goals and priorities.

The final budget is presented to the Finance Committee and full Board for approval. As the Board is principally charged with the long-term oversight of the University, discussions of the budget at these forums are typically focused on the correlation of our operating and spending plan and their impact on the Key Result Areas.

### 6.3 Linkage to Institutional Goals

For fiscal 2012, the budget hearings produced 330+ specific requests for new funding, which totaled over $20 million—a combination of operating funding and capital requests. Through the budget process, the administration allocated $5.5 million in new spending to support the University’s Strategic Plan. Table 23 compares those figures with the prior year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 23: Budget Requests/Allocations 2011 and 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY11 Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requested</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of line item proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dollar Amount of Proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Positions (full-time equivalent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated, decisions to allocate resources are made in light of the potential impact that the deployment of additional resources in a particular proposal will have on the University’s goals. To convey those linkages, the charts on page 55 (Figure 15) reflect how the budget allocations noted above map to the University’s Key Result Areas. [Note that these figures do not include significant physical plant investments, such as new academic buildings, plant infrastructure, etc. While such investments are important to the University’s strategy, their inclusion would skew this analysis by virtue of the size of these expenditures.] For this presentation, budget allocations which relate to multiple measures within and among the Key Result Areas were counted as being “connected” to each measure and their associated dollar and position FTE were divided proportionally among the Key Result Areas to which they were connected. The specific budget items which were funded for both the FY11 and FY12 budgets are listed in Appendix F1 to this report.
Each year, the allocation of available incremental funding among the Key Result Areas is fluid depending upon the opportunities which then present themselves. As such, there is no pre-determined apportionment of where funding will flow. Rather, resources are provided in each budget cycle to those areas facing increasing demands (e.g., through enrollment increases, compliance demands, etc.) or proposals which are seen to have the most direct relationship to improvements in the Key Result Areas and measures associated with the Strategic Plan.

6.4 Summary and Analysis

Based upon the sheer number of proposals each year, the administration is confident that the colleges and divisions are actively engaged in unearthing new initiatives and tactics which will propel the University toward its Key Result Area objectives. Balancing these demands and operating within its revenues are strengths of RIT. As noted in Chapter 4, pressure on tuition rate increases in the future and inflation in the cost base will likely mean smaller pools of incremental budget funds available for investment in proposals brought forward in the planning process. Funding for RIT’s future investments will increasingly come from two other sources

- The aforementioned University Business Practices Committees, which have been charged to identify revenue generation and cost savings strategies which can be utilized both to help restrain tuition rate increases and to provide funding for new initiatives, and
- Constant evaluation by the deans and vice presidents of the resources already under their control and re-deploying them to the programs and initiatives with the most impact.

A key input to these evaluations will be the new Academic Program Review process described in report section 5.5. This will be a further aid in assigning and re-assigning resources within the University to optimize their use in meeting our goals. As noted, RIT’s ability to set targets for and achieve higher levels of performance is dependent upon this kind of dynamic, constant assessment of where we are spending out scarce resources. Regardless of the source of funding, the annual budget planning process will continue to be a cornerstone of RIT’s resource allocation mechanism, aiming for the highest and best use of the University’s funds to meet its strategic objectives.