

## Charge to the T-Shape Tiger Team 16 September 2015

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**The case:** The RIT Strategic Plan “Greatness through Difference” promotes a compelling case that the college student of the future must graduate with skills that will enable them to succeed in an ever-changing landscape. The strategic plan calls for excelling at graduating students with the T-shape skill set they need – skills that not only give them the in-depth knowledge from their academic major they need but, more pertinent to the plan, the set of skills that broaden their thinking, their perspectives, and their actions.

Indeed, this idea is not unique to RIT. For example, Rice University recently announced a \$150M gift to create a center for leadership with the premise that leadership can be taught and every Rice graduate should be exposed to these essential skills<sup>1</sup>. Michigan State University President Simon has declared that MSU will distinguish itself by embracing the T-shape graduate<sup>2</sup>. In addition, companies such as IBM, IDEO, and Cisco are exploring ways to scan resumes and other job applicant materials to find candidates that fit the framework<sup>3</sup>

It is up for debate whether the ‘T-Shape’ metaphor is the most suitable to articulate this aspiration that our students have both a depth and breadth to their skill set. Regardless, the final set of skills we want our students to possess must uniquely fit the mission of RIT. Fortunately we have some guidance from the strategic plan:

**Difference Maker I.1:** RIT will build upon its strong academic portfolio, extensive experiential learning and co-curricular offerings, and the rich diversity of its people and programs to develop “T-shaped” graduates possessing both disciplinary depth (the vertical axis of the “T”) and breadth across multiple skills and competencies (the horizontal axis, or “transversal” skills).

**Objective I.1.1:** Introduce a comprehensive co-curricular transcript that will reflect to employers a student’s competencies in such necessary skills as critical thinking, written and oral communication, leadership, visual interpretation, collaboration, and research.

**Objective I.6.1:** Develop a broad institutional definition of “leadership” that applies to the spectrum of RIT programs and degrees.

**Objective II.3.3:** Map research skills acquired by undergraduates to the T-shaped competencies increasingly required by employers.

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<sup>1</sup> Inside Higher Education

<sup>2</sup> Notes from T-shape conference

<sup>3</sup> [Educational Advisory Board Brief](#)

### **Difference Maker III.2**

RIT students will be internationally recognized for their global experience, their mastery of intercultural competencies, and their engagement with globally relevant problems.

These difference makers and objectives speak to the need to insure our students have:

- Interdisciplinary perspectives;
- International and multicultural awareness;
- Advanced critical thinking skills;
- Strong communication abilities including writing and presentation skills;
- Leadership acumen;
- Innovation and entrepreneurial insight; and
- Research experiences that undergird the transversal skills.

This charge then provides direction to an RIT Tiger Team that will bring forward a set of recommendations as to which skills we want our graduates of the future to possess. The skills will make up the signature profile of a successful and engaged RIT graduate ready for future success and life-long learning. In addition, the Tiger Team is also to recommend how the achievement of this signature profile will be pursued, encouraged, and documented — especially, but not only, through extended portfolio and transcript systems.

To achieve this objective, the Tiger Team will need to research as to what the future skills need to be and will need to conduct a gap analysis of what we currently identify as the skills of our graduates. An important data source will be the recent National Survey of Student Engagement results for RIT.

Finally, it will take new approaches, thinking, and perspectives in order to insure that our graduates achieve the new outcomes. For this reason, this effort transcends so many units across campus – it is truly a collaborative effort in the best sense.

**Charge:** The RIT T-Shape Tiger Team is directed to provide three recommendations:

1. A set of skills graduates of the future will need for future success and life-long learning – this set will be the ‘signature profile’ of a successful and engaged RIT graduate;
2. A framework that the University will use to assess these skills using a new curricular and co-curricular portfolio system;
3. A set of examples that elucidate how these skills might be achieved and examples of how the skills will be assessed.

**Sponsors:** Because this effort spans a considerable cross-section of RIT, this is a collaborative effort between the Office of the Provost, Academic Senate, Student

Affairs, Student Government, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and the Office of Career Services.

**Membership:** The committee will include representatives from all the sponsoring divisions as well as faculty representatives from each of the degree-granting units on campus. Members include:

James Hall	Co-chair, School of Individualized Study
Jodi Boita	Co-chair, Student Affairs
Kit Mayberry	Strategic Planning
Heath Boice-Pardee	Student Affairs
Kerry Foxx	Student Affairs
Harold Fields	Student Affairs
Kate Caliel	Career Services and Co-op education
Tomicka Wagstaff	Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Anne Wahl	Student Learning Outcomes Assessment
Besim Agusaj	RIT Croatia
Denise Kavin	National Technical Institute for the Deaf
John Ward	Saunders College of Business
Michelle Harris	B. Thomas Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences
Deanna Jacobs	College of Applied Science and Technology
Kathleen Lamkin-Kennard	Kate Gleason College of Engineering
Sean Sutton	College of Liberal Arts
Ricky Figueroa	College of Imaging Arts and Sciences
Elizabeth Perry	College of Health Sciences and Technology
Tom Trabold	Golisano Institute for Sustainability/Graduate
Elizabeth Hane	College of Science
Michael Palanski	Saunders College of Business and Senate nominee

**Resources:** The task for the Tiger Team is substantial and that is why the sponsors are willing to provide appropriate resources in support of their work.

- Companion External Advisory Group: Throughout the strategic planning process, a number of external enthusiasts and volunteers have come forward wanting to assist the university in identifying the T-shape skills. As a result, an external advisory group will serve as a resource to the Tiger Team; however, it will be the responsibility of the Tiger Team to submit the final recommendation(s).
- Staff support: Adequate staff support will be provided to the Tiger Team to ensure success.
- Tiger Team summer retreat: A summer retreat will allow the Tiger Team to coalesce, bond, and advance in its work.
- A fall joint faculty and staff curriculum and co-curricular retreat.
- Town hall meetings and speakers series.

- Other materials as needed.

**Target date:** The recommendation for the new University Student Learning Outcomes is due by March 2016 and the recommendation for the framework of assessment is due by September 2016.