

*This message is sent on behalf of Jeremy Haefner, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Kevin McDonald, Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity and Inclusion*

Colleagues,

This past weekend, the campus celebrated 10 years of our [Future Faculty Career Exploration program](#). Developed and designed by Renee Baker, this program, which has achieved national acclaim, hosts between 20 and 25 future faculty of color at RIT for a four-day intensive immersion into the world of academia. These highly sought-after individuals not only get a rare opportunity to practice their interviewing skills but also get a hefty dose of the RIT culture. Faculty, deans, chairs and staff are all engaged in making these impressive individuals feel welcomed. It is one of RIT's finest events.

Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity and Inclusion Kevin McDonald and I felt that, with the successful completion of this event, now was the perfect time to share some of the recent successes RIT has achieved in its efforts to advance our [inclusive excellence framework](#).

Representation of our underrepresented populations: The percentage of faculty who identify themselves in the category of AALANA has risen for the past several years and last year we exceeded our goal of 10%, an increase of almost a full percentage point and a first for RIT. In a similar manner, we increased the percentage of female faculty at RIT and have exceeded our goal there as well. Increasing the representation of both AALANA and female faculty remains a key goal of the university.

We are thankful to the deans, department chairs, and faculty for their work to achieve these goals and of course we thank Renee and her team for recruiting exceptional AALANA and female candidates. We have aspirations to diversify our faculty further and that is why I have asked the colleges to identify achievable and sustainable targets for diversifying the faculty based on the available pool of candidates with terminal degrees.

By the way, I am pleased to report that the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences was the recipient of this year's "Changing Hearts and Minds" award by the Future Faculty program for successfully recruiting a number of women and AALANA faculty.

Rochester City Scholars: We welcomed our fourth cohort of [Rochester City Scholars](#) this year and now have a total of 83 students in this program, which offers full tuition scholarships to qualified students whose family income is less than \$60,000. The two most recent cohorts have persisted at a rate above 90% and nearly half are entering their sophomore and junior years with cumulative GPAs of 3.0 or higher.

Future Stewards: Our [Future Stewards Program](#), which recruits and supports our Native American students, continues to be a best-in-class program:

- This year we substantially increased the number of NA students attending RIT, growing the number from 138 last year to 178 this year!
- These students continue to exceed the academic performance of the average RIT student and our retention rate exceeds 93%, far above that of RIT as a whole.
- For the 6th year, RIT has been listed in the *Winds of Change* magazine's "Top 200 Colleges for Native Americans".

MCAS: With over 5,000 student visits and 2,000 student appointments during the past year, our [Multicultural Center for Academic Success](#) (MCAS) has done a terrific job in making the academic success of our AALANA students the top priority of its mission. Through academic initiatives like its [MCAS Scholars Program](#), and the [Summer Bridge Program](#), students affiliated with the Multicultural Center are achieving, on average, a higher grade point average than the average RIT student. The MCAS website tells the wonderful story of how this program is impacting our AALANA students.

On this topic, we are pleased to report that we have made significant progress in closing the 1<sup>st</sup> year persistence gap between AALANA and non-AALANA students. Retaining male AALANA students continue to be an area of concern. To this end, a Graduation Gender Gap Subcommittee of functional partners has been tasked by the Student Success Steering Committee to take a closer look at this important issue. Additionally, the Division of Diversity & Inclusion has created an exciting and groundbreaking new program: [M.O.C.H.A](#): Men of Color, Honor, and Ambition to specifically target the academic, personal, and professional development of undergraduate, male students of color at R.I.T.

McNair Scholars: The RIT [Ronald E. McNair](#) Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program continues to positively impact the graduation rates of the diverse student population it serves. In fact, over the last 6 years, the program has graduated 98% of its participants. This percentage exceeds both the national McNair average of 97% and the RIT graduate rate.

ADVANCE: Last year we were very pleased to have been awarded a prestigious [ADVANCE Institutional Transformation grant](#) from the NSF. This 5-year program is aimed at increasing the representation and advancement of women faculty at RIT in the STEM fields with special emphasis on women of color and deaf and hard-of hearing faculty. See their [website](#) for more information and look for a major ‘launch’ of this project later this year.

These achievements are but a few of the many successes we have had in our efforts to achieve inclusive excellence. Of course, we have much more work to do but with your help we are making an impact.

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