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## **GREATNESS THROUGH DIFFERENCE** *RIT's 2015-2025 Strategic Plan*

### **Preface**

Strategic Plans provide an institution with a blueprint for the future, and the one before you is no exception. “Greatness Through Difference” focuses on the future path that will culminate in RIT’s achievement of “greatness” by 2025.

But this strategic plan is more than a guide through the future. It exists securely within a story that opened 186 years ago with the planting of the early seeds of our current successes, and that will draw from these successes to achieve by 2025 the “difference-making” goals set down in the following pages.

The story opens in 1829, with the founding of what would become one of Rochester’s most influential cultural institutions—The Rochester Athenaeum. The Athenaeum’s 1891 merger with the Mechanics Institute set the stage for a unique educational institution that offered technical training alongside of courses in the sciences and the industrial and fine arts. From its founding, the school’s mission was to educate prospective employees for jobs in local business and industry. The Rochester Athenaeum and Mechanics Association was a down-to-earth place that “taught what needed to be taught” at the lowest possible cost to students.

This practicality, attention to student needs, and taste for doing things differently fueled the many early instances of multi-disciplinary integration, cooperation, and risk-taking of the institution’s first 100 years.

Indeed, these qualities served the institution that would become the Rochester Institute of Technology extremely well throughout the next century. So well, in fact, that by the opening of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, RIT had developed a long list of programs and practices that were the first of their kind in higher education.

But the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries brought economic, demographic, and technological disruption to all of higher education. Happily, the RIT appetite for change and adaptation positioned it perfectly to address these unprecedented challenges and the attendant demands of a public increasingly disenchanted with the traditional model of higher education.

Unlike many of our competitors who are struggling to support and recruit a very different student demographic, to contain tuition costs, and to provide an education leading to careers, RIT can now turn itself to anticipating and addressing the next set of challenges. And that is precisely what we are doing in this new strategic plan: capitalizing on what we have learned and achieved in order to provide the new world of 2025 with the graduates, the new discoveries, and the educational model that it will require.



## A University of Distinction: The Past

Throughout its 186-year history, Rochester Institute of Technology has always been a different kind of institution. At its founding in 1829, when most U.S. colleges shared a mission of educating gentlemen in ancient languages, theology, and the law, RIT launched a trajectory that in 2015 remains unique among the more than 4,000 U.S. colleges and universities occupying the higher education landscape. Consider the following early instances of “difference”:

1829

The provision of lifelong learning has been a strand of the RIT DNA from its inception as the Rochester Athenaeum, which offered evening lectures to the people of Rochester and was for a time the young city’s dominant cultural force. From its founding, RIT allowed women into every academic program.

1885

The institution that is now RIT commits itself to educating young men and women in the technologies necessary for successful careers—a mission that endures to this day. Early in its history, RIT becomes one of the first schools to integrate applied technological study with curricula in the humanities, the arts, and design. RIT may have been the first school to introduce “design thinking” into its curriculum.

1912

With the initiation of its cooperative education program, in which students secured paid employment in their major field, RIT becomes a pioneer in experiential education, or what today would be called competency-based education.

1950

The Graphic Arts Research Center is established to apply scientific and engineering principles to the printing and publishing industry. RIT becomes a center of research on all aspects of the graphic arts.

School for American Craftsmen, founded by Aileen Vanderbilt Webb and now called School for American Crafts, moves to RIT. The school offers undergraduate and graduate programs in ceramics, glass, metals and jewelry design, and furniture design.

RIT appoints the first female dean of a U.S. business college.

# 1968

National Technical Institute for the Deaf begins operating at RIT, revolutionizing technical education for the deaf community. At least two dozen universities wanted to house NTID but RIT's strong post-secondary technical education and work-study programs gave it an edge.

# 1971

RIT delivers its first distance-learning course via closed-circuit television.

# 1982

RIT begins offering the first undergraduate program in microelectronic engineering in the United States.

# 1983

RIT becomes the first university in the nation to offer a Bachelor of Science degree in biotechnology.

# 1990

The imaging science Ph.D. program begins—the first doctoral program at RIT and the first such program in the United States.

# 1991

RIT delivers its first fully online program—years before the rest of higher education enters the online arena.

# 1993

RIT offers the first nationally recognized Bachelor of Science degree in information technology.

# 1996

RIT becomes the first university in the United States to offer a bachelor's degree in software engineering.

# 1998

Kate Gleason College of Engineering is founded, becoming the first engineering school in the country named for a woman.

# 2008

RIT offers a doctoral program in sustainability, the first program in the world to focus on sustainable production systems.

### A University of Distinction: The Present

Given the distinctiveness of its origins, it should come as no surprise that in this second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, RIT has kept pace with the relentless acceleration of scientific and technological discovery and the resulting economic, social, and cultural transformations. One hundred and eighty-six years after its founding, RIT has matured into one of the world's most innovative, agile, and foresighted universities. Consider the following:

- ▶ As a member of the Association of Independent Technological Universities (AITU), RIT is among the world's leading technological institutions. RIT was recently ranked in the top 40 "most technologically advanced" universities in the world.
  - ▶ Today's program portfolio boasts award-winning programs in a host of non-traditional disciplines—in film and animation, industrial design, sustainability, photography, medical illustration, microelectronic engineering, packaging science, museum studies, and diagnostic medical sonography. The RIT portfolio is among the richest and most diverse in the world.
  - ▶ RIT is a world leader in experiential education. Our cooperative education program is the fourth oldest and one of the largest in the world.
  - ▶ RIT is one of the largest private universities in the U.S. based on full-time undergraduate enrollment.
  - ▶ With full residential campuses in Dubrovnik and Zagreb, Croatia, in Kosovo and in Dubai, our global presence is far-reaching and unique.
- ▶ RIT's growing research portfolio includes unique interdisciplinary centers like the Center for Applied Psychophysiology and Self-Regulation (a program integrating education, research, and clinical care around the autism spectrum); the National Center of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance/Cyber Defense Education; and the Image Permanence Institute (a world leader in artifact preservation).
  - ▶ The new Wegmans School of Health and Nutrition is based upon the premise that anticipating public health concerns is more effective than reacting to them.
  - ▶ RIT's sustainable architecture program is among the first to consider sustainability as a curricular element equal in importance to design.
  - ▶ And a final confirmation of this tradition of difference: a search of the Carnegie classification website for institutions with the same defining characteristics yields no comparable institutions.

## A University of Distinction: The Context

At a time when the public disenchantment with higher education is growing, and disruptive (often commercial) alternatives are looking more and more appealing to prospective students and their families, the real measure of a university’s success is the degree to which its offerings satisfy the demands of its many stakeholders. The current list of these demands is lengthy and all too familiar—including calls for lower tuition, less expensive research, and graduates who are competitive in the job market. It should be no surprise that RIT is aggressively addressing these demands. Leveraging its appetite for difference, its talent for adaptation, and its commitment to student success, “the people’s institute” is listening and acting.

<b>The public is demanding</b>	<b>RIT has responded with</b>
Career preparation for jobs at graduation (parents and students)	A 95% employment/graduate school acceptance rate 6 months after graduation.
Return on tuition investment (parents and students)	A combination of a strong career-oriented mission, curricular currency, and excellent relations with business and industry, yielding one of the best returns on tuition investment in the nation.
Affordability (parents and students)	Need-blind admissions; tuition below the national average for private institutions; intervals of paid cooperative employment; historically high percentage of PELL-eligible (low income) students.
Breadth <i>and</i> depth in content mastery (employers)	Education in fields with high employer demand, integrated with design, management, critical and innovative thinking, and data management.  Broad participation of undergraduates on funded research teams, which sharpens critical and innovative thinking skills, data analysis, and problem solving.
More STEM graduates (employers)	Among private universities, RIT graduates the second highest number of STEM in the U.S.
Experiential education and work experience (employers)	An educational experience that includes considerable time learning outside of the classroom—either working in a paid cooperative education position, designing new products and businesses in the Simone Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, or participation on interdisciplinary research teams.
Groundbreaking research in multiple disciplines (business, industry, government, society)	Interdisciplinary Ph.D. programs—ranging from Imaging Science to Microsystems to Sustainability—dedicated to providing solutions to complex problems that defy a single-discipline approach.
Anytime, anywhere learning (students, alumni, community members)	A program (the Center for Multidisciplinary Studies) that gives credit for prior learning; an Innovative Learning Institute providing credit- and non-credit experiences to traditional and non-traditional students in multiple electronic formats.
Diverse population	Over 50% international students at the graduate level, 1200 deaf and hard-of-hearing students on the Rochester campus, and a history of serving low-income students
Global Reach	Unusually high number of international students, four international campuses with multiple opportunities for

## Greatness Through Difference – 2015-2025 Strategic Plan

student exchange; courses in ten languages.

- ▼ The RIT story contains an additional element of difference—one that will be indispensable to the university’s success in the next decade. A powerful by-product of the school’s continuing commitment to distinctiveness is an intellectual and social diversity unmatched within higher education—a diversity that distinguishes its academic and research portfolios, its richly diverse population, and the multiple modes of learning, thinking, and knowing taught and practiced daily. In the coming decade, RIT will intentionally assemble and leverage its many forms of diversity in order to invent and discover new solutions, new programs, new kinds of graduates, and the highest levels of stakeholder satisfaction.
- ▼ Imagine the new questions that might be asked, the new solutions posed, and the innovations achieved by a team of glass artists, imaging scientists, and physicists.
- ▼ Imagine the new courses and research projects emerging from the collaboration of a biomedical engineer, a materials scientist, a three-dimensional designer, and a physician’s assistant student.
- ▼ Imagine a team of architecture students, history professors, and photographers collaborating with our Kosovo students and faculty in the repair of ancient war-damaged monuments in Pristina.
- ▼ Imagine the job offers received by an RIT student graduating with a double major in biotechnology and philosophy, extended membership on a funded research team, demonstrated competencies in innovative thinking and intercultural relations, and a one-year co-op with Amgen.
- ▼ Imagine RIT as a model civil community in which all difference—from ethnicity to nationality to sexual orientation to political persuasion to socio-economic status—is leveraged as an engine to solve seemingly unsolvable world problems.

RIT has all the ingredients to realize these and countless other scenarios. Through the new Strategic Plan before you—“**RIT: Greatness Through Difference**”—we will develop the necessary mechanisms to make them a reality while simultaneously enriching our highly student-centric environment, demonstrating a high return on tuition investment, and meeting the ever-shifting needs of the world.

We know that the decade ahead will be a treacherous one for many colleges and universities. Some will prove too paralyzed by tradition and bureaucracy to adapt to the shifting ground of higher education; others will survive but fail to thrive. RIT, building upon its talent for distinctiveness and innovation, its successful management of change, and its visionary approach to higher education, will continue not just to survive and to thrive, but to reach new heights of greatness. While the future doubtless holds surprises for us, we are confident that the route mapped within this Strategic Plan will allow us to navigate successfully an uncertain future and to emerge as a world-class university without peer.

## Greatness Through Difference: RIT's 2015-2025 Strategic Plan

### The Strategic Planning Process 2013-2015

In the fall of 2013, following a careful analysis of the multiple factors most likely to impact higher education in general and RIT in particular in the next 25 years, the RIT community embarked upon the development of a new ten-year strategic plan. The university is proud of the depth and breadth of engagement in this process, which included the active participation of students, staff, and faculty from our Rochester and international campuses; and of alumni, employers, industry partners, retirees, and friends of the university. The resulting ten-year strategy is designed to leverage our institutional strengths in such a way as to ensure our ownership of the pole position in the higher education environment of 2025.

During the strategic conversations of the past year, five intersecting spheres of effort have surfaced repeatedly. Recognizing that the most successful strategic plans cover a circumscribed range of territory, we have elected to concentrate on these dimensions:

- ▼ Career Education and Student Success
- ▼ The Student-centered Research University
- ▼ Leveraging Difference
- ▼ Affordability, Value, & Return on Investment
- ▼ Organizational Agility

## ▲ **Dimension One: Career Education and Student Success**

Educating students for successful and satisfying careers is the pre-eminent mission of the university. As the world changes, so too will the definition of “student success.” The coming decade, with its promises of gigantic global problems, accelerating technological change, and a stunningly quick turnover of knowledge, will challenge our achievement of this mission. But our history of agility, our record of “firsts,” and the creative power of our diversity will serve us well as we educate the next generation of RIT students for a lifetime of professional, personal, and career success. Throughout the lifetime of this strategic plan, we will deliver thousands of superbly educated graduates who have been transformed through their RIT experience. Their depth and breadth of knowledge, skills, and practical experience will make them irresistible to the world’s most discerning employers. And because of our commitment to containing costs and thus educational debt, they will see an immediate return on their educational investment.

To ensure the quality and continuous improvement of our academic inputs and learning outcomes, we will continue to practice and to learn from the regular, rigorous, and multi-faceted assessment of our courses, academic programs, and student learning outcomes. The assessment tools deployed will be a mix of internally generated models and external, nationally normed surveys.

### ▼ **Difference Maker #1**

RIT will model and share a bold approach to academic quality with a focus on student learning, the success of our graduates, and a continual improvement process within our academic environment.

### ▼ **Difference Maker #2**

RIT will offer opportunities for study at the intersections of technology and the arts, imagination and application, and rigor and curiosity, all designed to meet the demands of future careers in our ever-expanding global economy.

#### **Objective 2.1**

Increase opportunities for interdisciplinary, collaborative, and innovative learning, including development of an integrated STEAM curriculum.

#### **Objective 2.2**

Create an interdisciplinary, cross-functional team to identify and prioritize interdisciplinary academic opportunities for rapid implementation.

#### **Objective 2.3**

Leverage academic/instructional technology to extend and enrich RIT’s interdisciplinary capabilities (e.g. online, blended, flipped).

#### **Objective 2.4**

Supplement traditional curricula by adopting innovative learning packages like nano-degrees, competency badges, and mini-courses.

### ▼ **Difference Maker #3**

Opportunities for experiential learning will be expanded and strengthened to the point where there are sufficient available positions for all undergraduate and graduate students to participate in at least one experience.

#### **Objective 3.1**

Revise degree program requirements so that an experiential learning component is required in all undergraduate and graduate programs. 100% of RIT students will participate in experiential learning relevant to their degree program and designed to provide skills and competencies of growing importance to employers. (Experiential learning may include coop, internship, research, field experience, clinical experience or an opportunity to study abroad in addition to a senior capstone experience.)

#### **Objective 3.2**

Broaden the definition of co-op to include undergraduate research on funded research projects.

#### **Objective 3.3**

Increase the number of on-campus student employment positions that could be 1) counted as a co-op as is; or 2) enriched so as to qualify for co-op status.

### ▼ **Difference Maker #4**

On-time graduation will be a highly visible priority of the university.

#### **Objective 4.1**

Students and their advisors will develop comprehensive, multi-dimensional Educational Plans, with the purpose of ensuring on-time graduation for as many students as possible. Plans will be monitored and revised as necessary throughout students' RIT careers.

#### **Objective 4.2**

Identify existing and develop new policies, procedures, practices, and conditions that support progress toward on-time degree completion.

#### **Objective 4.3**

Eliminate existing policies, procedures, practices, and conditions that impede progress towards on-time graduation (e.g., revision of the "W" policy; removal requirement of a grade of "C or better" in pre-requisite courses; investigation of pass/fail option).

#### **Objective 4.4**

Incorporate the on-time graduation priority into recruitment and marketing materials.

▼ **Difference Maker #5**

RIT will be a center of innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship that serves as an important economic engine for Rochester, the region, and the nation.

**Objective 6.1**

RIT will launch 50 student-run startup companies per year.

**Objective 6.2**

RIT will further leverage its resources and expertise in entrepreneurship to create entrepreneurship curricula (i.e. programs and minors), applied research, business development programs, and technology transfer.

## ▲ **Dimension Two: The Student-Centered Research University**

A student-centered research university combines the mission-critical activities of research, scholarship, teaching, and learning across all degree levels and all disciplines. By conducting interdisciplinary, high-impact research that pushes the boundaries of human knowledge to address the challenges facing our global society, our professions, and the planet, while ensuring that student experiences in scholarship are an essential component of their education, RIT will distinguish itself internationally as a significant research university dedicated to enhancing the student experience.

### ▼ **Difference Maker #1**

RIT be internationally distinguished as a research university through its focus on and investment in specific inter- and trans-disciplinary research areas selected on the basis of current investment in critical interdisciplinary areas in which it can be distinctive.

#### **Objective 1.1**

Building on its uniqueness, RIT will select, invest in, and foster interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary research areas of focus where RIT's assets align with growing opportunities. Among the areas that could meet these criteria are Digital Media; Global Resilience; Accessibility and Inclusion; and Advanced Design and Manufacturing.

#### **Objective 1.2**

RIT will develop a systematic, transparent, and data-driven process for identifying a limited set of signature research areas in which RIT can become a global leader. This structure will 1) promote collaboration across colleges, departments, and centers; 2) make strategic investments in interdisciplinary focus areas to catalyze further growth; 3) eliminate barriers to participation in interdisciplinary research for faculty and students across RIT; and 4) ensure stable financing for research infrastructure in research focus areas.

#### **Objective 1.3**

RIT leadership will develop and communicate a strong, data-based research vision that includes a set of candidate research areas that are transformative, interdisciplinary, and inclusive.

#### **Objective 1.4**

RIT will create an external research advisory board comprised of neutral, recognized experts to guide the selection and evaluation of strategic research areas.

### ▼ **Difference Maker #2**

RIT's research enterprise will be a national model of inter- and trans-disciplinary and inter-generational collaboration based upon the principle that diverse teams formed from members of diverse experience levels and diverse disciplines drive good questions, good processes, and good solutions.

#### **Objective 2.1**

Increase opportunities for undergraduates to participate in funded research teams.

#### **Objective 2.2**

Develop a mentoring program for students that extends beyond the classroom and develops their capacity to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and discovery across all fields of study.

#### **Objective 2.1**

Add masters and bachelors level students to funded research teams.

#### **Objective 2.2**

Map research skills learned by undergraduates to the T-shaped competencies increasingly required by employers.

#### **Objective 2.3**

Further integrate research into the curriculum, ensuring that it is an important part of the undergraduate learning experience.

### ▼ **Difference Maker #3**

RIT will enlarge its graduate portfolio through adding professional and research-focused programs in STEM fields, the humanities, social sciences and arts, bringing the graduate population to 30% of the total student population. New programs will include experiential learning, research and scholarship opportunities; all programs will strive for the highest levels of excellence and global recognition.

#### **Objective 3.1**

Ensure that graduate programs include innovative curricula, capstone projects, cooperative education, and international collaboration.

#### **Objective 3.2**

Implement flexible education and research opportunities including double majors for doctoral and masters students.

#### **Objective 3.3**

To improve continually the quality of graduate education at RIT, develop a holistic graduate program portfolio and a data-driven assessment plan.

#### **Objective 3.4**

Provide ongoing professional development opportunities for graduate students.

## ▲ **Dimension Three: Leveraging Difference**

RIT has long recognized the powerful role that diversity can play within an academic community. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, when we welcomed women into our classes decades before other colleges even considered co-education, we have intentionally sought students, faculty, and staff from multiple backgrounds, ethnicities, and countries. The 1968 addition of NTID to the campus brought levels of intellectual, linguistic, and programmatic diversity that are unmatched anywhere in higher education. We are likewise proud of the high percentage of PELL-eligible students that enroll at RIT, as well as of our growing ranks of minority and international students. The unmatched diversity of our academic programs is unquestionably a direct result of the diverse voices that constantly participate in the RIT conversation.

To achieve greatness, we must harness the energy and power of the diversity that distinguishes us. We will be immeasurably enriched by the collaboration among such differences as culture, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, gender, deafness, disability, sexual orientation and socio-economic status.

### ▼ **Difference Maker 1**

RIT will be the most engaged private university in the U.S. as measured by the breadth and size of its international populations in the U.S. and abroad.

#### **Objective 1.1**

Establish international research partnerships in emerging international centers of excellence in order to enhance RIT's international reputation.

#### **Objective 1.2**

Deploy innovative ways to educate international students.

#### **Objective 1.3**

Establish an RIT Global Faculty Exchange/Symposium Program and International Collaboration Grant Program to support faculty collaboration and student interaction across RIT's network of international partners and sites, as well as with our international student population.

#### **Objective 1.4**

Identify select new academic programs that could be developed through international partnerships and offered within emerging international centers of excellence.

### ▼ **Difference Maker 2**

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

#### **Objective 2.1**

100% of RIT students will develop global knowledge through guided international experiences.

### **Objective 2.2**

RIT undergraduate programs will identify a place in their curricula for a specific program opportunity through which students can participate in a global, international, or multicultural educational experience.

### **Objective 2.3**

The Office of the Associate Provost for International Education will restructure and transform study abroad into “RIT Global Experiential Learning,” with a focused commitment to developing a new model of international experiential education.

### **Objective 2.4**

Increase the opportunity for professional interaction among RIT faculty at U.S. and international locations.

### **Objective 2.5**

Develop and fund a faculty exchange program through which faculty from all RIT sites can pursue research and teaching interests on any RIT campus.

### **Objective 2.6**

Encourage international sabbaticals and provide related resources for faculty.

### **Objective 2.7**

Develop a set of curricular and co-curricular offerings through which graduate students may achieve the global and intercultural competencies valued by employers.

### **Objective 2.8**

Ensure the intellectual interaction of international and U.S. graduate students in research teams, project teams, and course assignments.

## ▼ **Difference Maker 3**

RIT will be the largest producer of female and minority male STEM graduates among all private colleges in the U.S.

### **Objective 3.1**

Examine the current marketing strategy for each STEM program and set annual goals for increasing the number and percentage of female and male minority undergraduates in each.

### **Objective 3.2**

Develop pilot recruitment programs for partner charter school H.S. girls and boys to attract them to STEM colleges and careers.

### **Objective 3.3**

Decrease the number of STEM women and minority males who transfer internally from an RIT STEM to non-STEM program.

### ▼ **Difference Maker 4**

RIT will eliminate the achievement gap between minority and majority students.

#### **Objective 4.1**

Using an asset-based assessment and research model, develop a profile of success factors and institutional challenges for minority males.

#### **Objective 4.2**

Develop a comprehensive mentoring program for minority males in which two mentors are assigned to each student throughout his/her RIT career.

#### **Objective 4.3**

Using the model of the bi-annual attrition study conducted in the President's office, interview minority students who leave RIT before graduating.

#### **Objective 4.4**

Develop a national model for the preparation, recruitment, and financial support of urban, minority, and low income high school graduates through the Rochester City Scholars program and the RIT-Rochester Prep Charter School partnership.

### ▼ **Difference Maker 5**

RIT will become a model of inclusive excellence for all faculty and staff in the areas of professional development and promotion.

#### **Objective 5.1**

Increase the number of female and minority employees in supervisory and management positions.

#### **Objective 5.2**

Identify an impartial senior administrator to champion these appointments and to oversee a university committee charged with coordinating and monitoring hiring strategies and results.

#### **Objective 5.3**

Develop professional development programs for all faculty and staff.

#### **Objective 5.4**

Design, distribute, and publicize a set of career ladders and lattices for advancement and promotion within each RIT division.

#### **Objective 5.5**

Examine the current RIT Mentoring program to determine if it addresses the personal, professional, and career advancement needs of minority and female faculty and staff.

### ▮ **Difference Maker 6**

RIT will be a model of excellence in its deployment of difference to solve problems and create solutions.

#### **Objective 6.1**

Ensure that all policy- and decision-making bodies contain diverse voices and viewpoints.

#### **Objective 6.2**

Create a mechanism by which students participating in faculty and/or staff committees receive co-curricular credit.

#### **Objective 6.3**

Encourage the productive interaction of students from multiple disciplines in academic, co-curricular, and social settings.

#### **Objective 6.4**

Create undergraduate and graduate multi-disciplinary capstone projects in which students from distinctly different disciplines collaborate on a common project.

#### **Objective 6.5**

On all RIT campuses, create curricular and co-curricular forums that encourage the interaction of international students, alumni, and visiting scholars with resident students, faculty, and visiting scholars.

### ▲ **Dimension Four: Affordability, Value, and Return on Investment**

Dramatic changes in the demographics of the college-going population will make it more important than ever for RIT to continue its tradition of affordability and access. Increasing the amount of financial aid available to students will help us sustain and enrich the student diversity so necessary to the creativity and productivity of the university community. Recognizing that affordability is as much about quality outcomes as costly input, we will provide the next decade's students with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in satisfying and remunerative careers that will justify the expense of undergraduate and graduate education.

#### ▼ **Difference Maker 1**

RIT will have the best placement rate and return on investment of all private universities in the United States.

##### **Objective 1.1**

Include the criteria of “academic program currency,” “student employability,” and “post-graduation success” in the academic program review process.

##### **Objective 1.2**

Streamline new program and course approval processes to ensure market currency.

##### **Objective 1.3**

All degree programs will establish a communication process through which recent alumni can update program faculty about their own levels of preparation for current and recent positions.

##### **Objective 1.4**

Publicize and deliver on a guarantee that all students who graduate on time and in good academic standing will incur a total debt of no more than a full year of tuition.

##### **Objective 1.5**

Publicize and deliver on a guarantee that no student in good standing within 15 credits of graduation will drop out because of insufficient funds for the remaining tuition.

##### **Objective 1.6**

Each degree program with a required or optional co-op will work with the ILI to develop a set of differentially priced online courses that can be taken when students are on co-op assignments.

##### **Objective 1.7**

Include in our calculation of return on tuition investment the provision of discounted online courses designed to keep alumni current in their careers.

### ▼ **Difference Maker 2**

RIT will become the university that best utilizes educational technology to reduce costs, improve access, and achieve desired learning outcomes.

#### **Objective 2.1**

Each degree program with a required or optional co-op will work with the ILI to develop a set of differentially priced online courses that can be taken when students are on co-op assignments.

#### **Objective 2.2**

The ILI will identify, develop, and offer those courses and competencies most useful to the career advancement of alumni.

### ▼ **Difference Maker 3**

RIT will produce and apply a creative tuition containment program to address the financial needs of promising low-income students and to ensure a positive return on investment for all graduates.

#### **Objective 3.1**

Investigate the development of alternative delivery models for core courses that would allow differential (i.e., lower) pricing.

#### **Objective 3.2**

Direct a specified amount of funding from capital campaign scholarship drive to the Rochester City Scholars program.

#### **Objective 3.3**

Create a Study Abroad scholarship fund for low-income students.

#### **Objective 3.4**

Double the number of Rochester City Scholars attending RIT.

### ▼ **Difference Maker 4**

RIT will develop alternative methods of raising revenue, including enrolling more students in fully online programs and providing services for the Rochester community.

## ▲ **Dimension Five: Organizational Agility**

RIT owes much of its past success to the alacrity with which it has been able to anticipate and respond to the various environments in which it operates. In the next decade, these shifts will only accelerate and in some cases expand to the level of seismic change, requiring us to develop innovative practices and policies that facilitate and encourage good ideas and the changes they lead to. In other words, we need to maximize our organizational agility.

“Organizational Agility” is more than a dimension: it is a strategic imperative and the linchpin of this plan. Underlying every difference-making goal in the previous pages is the assumption that our institutional culture will be agile and efficient: that we will be able to make decisions with dispatch; to move at least as quickly as the drivers of technology, science, and the global economy; and to reorganize as often as necessary to support the key themes of this plan—academic excellence in teaching, learning, scholarship and research; interdisciplinarity; diversity; and affordability.

The Difference Makers below could have introduced every dimension in the preceding pages, but they are so important to the success of “Difference Through Greatness” that we have given them pride of place as the final words of this document.

### ▼ **Difference Maker 1**

RIT’s curricular, administrative, and organizational structures will serve, not impede, discovery, border crossing, and collaboration among students, faculty and staff.

#### **Objective 1.1**

Create a true collaborative and interdisciplinary structure and culture for student, faculty, staff, and alumni.

#### **Objective 1.2**

Develop a process for the introduction and approval of joint, interdisciplinary programs.

#### **Objective 1.3**

Create the capacity to offer individualized degrees that allow motivated students, with guidance from faculty and staff, to design and implement personalized courses of study.

### ▼ **Difference Maker 2**

RIT will diminish the negative effects of academic and administrative silos.

#### **Objective 2.1**

Reward collaboration within and across colleges with regard to curricula, teaching, research, and the student-faculty-staff culture.

#### **Objective 2.2**

Re-design budget and costing models to encourage savings while rewarding calculated risk through increased collaboration within and across colleges.

### **Objective 2.3**

Facilitate the movement of students and faculty across disciplines in order to engage, motivate, and maximize student and faculty innovation.

### ▼ **Difference Maker 3**

Following a thorough budget and space audit, reassign and/or reallocate existing space to optimize and support interdisciplinarity.

#### **Objective 3.1**

Develop a transparent, collaborative process for the assignment of space.

#### **Objective 3.2**

Ensure that the collaborative body responsible for space assignment is part of the decision-making process for the design and assignment of new construction.

### ▼ **Difference Maker 4**

RIT will develop a university culture that is less risk-averse and less bureaucratic; it will streamline compliance measures and empower local decision making responsibilities.

#### **Objective 5.1**

Use long-term planning opportunities and financial transparency as opportunities to take risk.

#### **Objective 5.2**

Examine best practices at comparable institutions to streamline compliance.