RIT | Rochester Institute of Technology

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS PROGRESS REPORT 6
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
2020 – 2021

RIT's annual *Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Progress Report* is designed to demonstrate continuous quality improvement practices across the university's administrative units. The University Assessment Council (UAC) serves as an advisory body on institutional effectiveness and supports the annual process of self-evaluation. Representatives from RIT's eight divisions, the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), and RIT Dubai participate in this process.

The Progress Report, completed by leaders from each administrative unit, articulates how data are collected and used to guide decisions and make changes to improve services, operations, and processes. UAC representatives use the *Institutional Effectiveness Continuous Improvement Rubric* to rate each report submission. The rubric has a four-point scale ranging from *No Evidence to Exemplary* (see Table 1).

The 2020-2021 reporting cycle re-established the pre-Covid submission (November) and UAC review (January-February) timeline. All divisions, NTID and RIT Dubai were represented in the annual reporting cycle, achieving 100% participation. Table 1 provides five-year trend data on the overall percentage of administrative units rubric ratings.

Findings include:
- 81% of administrative units achieved a rating of "Effective" or higher which is a 5% decrease from the prior reporting cycle.
- 100% of administrative units were rated as "Developing" or higher which is a 2% increase from the prior reporting cycle.

Table 1: Five-Year Rubric Rating Trends

	2015.16 (n=58)	2016.17 (n=60)	2017.18 (n=67)	2018.20 (n=66)	2020.21 (n=70)
Rubric Rating	% (#)	% (#)	% (#)	% (#)	% (#)
Exemplary	29% (17)	35% (21)	30% (20)	32% (21)	21% (15)
Effective	41% (24)	52% (31)	42% (28)	54% (36)	60% (42)
Developing	14% (8)	13% (8)	19% (13)	12% (8)	19% (13)
No Evidence	16% (9)	0% (0)	9% (6)	2% (1)	0% (0)
Total Administrative Units Rated Effective or Higher	**71% (41)**	**87% (52)**	**72% (48)**	**86% (57)**	**81% (57)**

Reflections and Continuous Improvement Highlights

The university's goal of 100% of administrative units rated as "Effective" or higher was not met and decreased slightly from the prior year. This may be due in part to a slight increase in the number of new administrative unit submissions. This increase, while positive in building our continuous improvement efforts across the university, contributed to an increase in the number of reports receiving a "Developing" rating. This is often the case for first-time submissions. New administrative units will continue to receive ongoing support from UAC representatives to improve their institutional effectiveness and reporting practices.

The following examples highlight how administrative units used data to inform decisions or guide changes that led to departmental and institutional improvements.

Example 1: University Web Services – Marketing and Communication

University Web Services used Siteimprove's Digital Certainty Index to evaluate *the quality of the university's core web by addressing issues and opportunities related to search engine optimization (SEO), accessibility, and content quality with the goal of meeting or exceeding industry benchmarks.* The education industry benchmark value is 78.7. While initial results determined that the benchmark was met in all three categories, University Web Services used results to improve web performance.

Enhancements to RIT's core website improved load page time on mobile devices, increasing the search engine optimization (SEO) score to 86.8, and exceeded the industry benchmark of 82.5. Changes to color contrasting and code hierarchy resulted in making the website more accessible to people with visual, auditory, cognitive, learning and language disabilities. Our accessibility score increased from 88.7 to 91.1, and exceeded the industry benchmark of 83.6. The website received a 96.8 quality assurance (QA) score in the previous assessment cycle. While above the industry benchmark (76.4), Web Services made several adjustments (broken links, misspellings, typos, and image size), increasing the quality assurance score to 98.0. University Web Services used results to improve the core web's SEO, accessibility and QA scores thus increasing the overall Digital Certainty Index score to 92.0 and exceeded the education industry benchmark.

Example 2: RIT Dubai – Advising Office

The Advising Office sought to *increase the rate of mandatory advising sessions that are completed by the end of the semester to ensure students are aware of their graduation requirements before enrolling in upcoming semester classes.* Meeting this objective would reduce the number of holds placed on the student's SIS account and allow for enrollment in the following semester. A benchmark, 80% of students will complete their advising by the end of the semester, was established. Progress was made toward achieving the benchmark with 79% of students having completed their advising session 2.5 weeks after exams in the fall, 2020 semester, 76% respectfully in the spring, 2021 semester 2 days after exams. The Advising Office collected three-year trend data but determined that time intervals differed, making it difficult to compare year to year results. The findings reveal two issues:

1. Inconsistent gathering of data which made it difficult to assess our objective and
2. A deficiency in the number of advising meetings that are being completed by the end of the semester

The following strategies are being implemented based on results. Both strategies will be re-assessed for impact in achieving the objective.

1. Weekly data collection reports will be pulled from SIS at close of business on the same day/time each week. This will allow for more consistent comparison from semester to semester. Data will also be collected during and after exams to identify trends.
2. Reminder emails will be sent each week to all students who still have remaining holds according to weekly SIS reports to increase the rate of meeting completion. Previous sporadic email reminders have generated an uptick in appointments but weekly reminders will keep the requirement at the forefront of student's minds. Only those who still have holds will receive the reminders.

Example 3: Diversity and Inclusion – Diversity Education Department

The Division of Diversity and Inclusion (DDI) examined its objective to *increase employees' cultural humility knowledge, skills, and application of that information and insight*. Assessing this objective through various methods is fundamental to RIT achieving an "elevation of our institutional commitment to and actual work of creating a diverse, inclusive, and anti-racist culture" (RIT Action Plan for Race and Ethnicity).   Participant survey data from DDI's Cultural Humility Professional Development certificate program was analyzed. This is a first time assessment therefore, no benchmark is available. There were 411 participants between 2019- 2021 with approximately 100 completing the certificate. Four survey questions on two confidence measures – "Perspectives Gained" and "Skills Learned and Applied" were analyzed.

Analysis of the "Perspectives Gained" responses determined that 58% (2019) and 68% (2021) of participants indicated that they "*strongly agreed*" that they "*understand how identity informs our experience*". 55% (2019) and 71% (2021) of participants understood how diversity, inclusion, and equity influence their work on campus. The number of participants who strongly agreed increased from year one to year two (+10% - 2019; +16% - 2021) suggesting that self-awareness improved as employees participated in more workshops.

Survey results for the "Skills Learned and Applied" confidence factor were 51% (2019) and 37% (2021) of participants reported that they are "extremely likely" to be able to "identify negative biases or stereotypes on campus".   Participants were less confident (33% - 2019; 41% - 2021) in their likelihood to confront unconscious bias or micro-aggressions on campus.

Additional response data affirmed overall participant confidence (71% increase) related to active listening, perspective taking, and defining and discussing diversity, equity and inclusion.

Findings provided a baseline for benchmarking confidence factors, suggested an increase in self-awareness with participation in year to year certificate programming, and identified focus areas (negative, unconscious biases, and stereotypes) to enhance the Cultural Humility series.

UAC Next Steps

The University Assessment Council met to review annual reporting results and finalize the revision of its Charge and Mission. The revision will now be forwarded to the Vice Provost and Provost for review and consideration.

The following topics were identified for the upcoming academic year.

- Review reporting processes including sampling methodology, resubmission option, and rubric rating criteria.
- Explore ways to inform meaningful best practices across divisions and units.
- Develop communications with a focus on connecting RIT's institutional effectiveness process with current internal and external reporting requirements.

2021-2022 University Assessment Council Members

Academic Affairs: Laurie Clayton (chair)
Diversity and Inclusion: David Wick and Liz Bremer
Enrollment Management: Edward Lincoln
Finance and Administration: Joan Graham
Government and Community Relations: Lynette Baker
Marketing and Communications: Shelley Yehl
NTID: Denise Wellin
RIT Dubai: Dezzil Castelino
Student Affairs: Jennifer Maltby
University Advancement: Sharon Lonthair