

September 15, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

I hope fall semester is going well for each of you. I am personally really enjoying seeing a more active campus filled with students, faculty, and staff. Many of you shared with me that you appreciated the regular written updates as well as the office hours so both are continuing this year, though on a monthly rather than weekly basis. Please see below for important information on COVID and other topics.

COVID-19 Updates

The RIT COVID [dashboard](#) has been reset for fall and is updated daily. While cases on campus are relatively low, Monroe County is classified by the CDC as a region of high transmission. Because of that designation, the [mask mandate](#) remains in place. We continue to monitor the rates of transmission on campus and in the region and will adjust our response as appropriate. Visit the [COVID-19 Regional Metrics Dashboard](#) for the latest information for our region.

Vaccination rates for faculty, staff and students are strong – about 96% for students and 94% for faculty and staff. Unvaccinated faculty, staff and students are tested weekly. Wastewater is tested four times a week. The community is doing very well and it is important that we all continue to wear our masks, wash our hands, and stay home if we do not feel well.

Because masking is so important, I ask that faculty remind their students at the beginning of each class to wear their masks and to describe the proper way to wear them (nose and mouth covered). If you see an individual or group of individuals who are indoors and not masked or wearing their masks incorrectly, I encourage you to remind them in a friendly way to mask up. Your help in upholding our community expectations is important to maintaining the health and safety of everyone. More information about masking can be found [here](#) and in [RIT's Safety Plan](#).

Employees and supervisors interested in more guidance are directed to [COVID-19 Employee Information and Resources](#) page. Faculty and staff with academic questions are directed to the FAQs found [here](#).

ACADEMIC UPDATES

2021 Fram Signature Lecture featuring Sean Bratches

The 2021 Fram Signature Lecture will be held on Tuesday, September 21, 2021, at 4 p.m. Co-sponsored with Saunders College of Business, Sean Bratches will explore how thought proceeded strategy in the leadership, vision, and innovation that has defined his career with Formula 1 and ESPN. Registration is free and pre-registration is required whether attending the event in-person or virtually. Come, listen, and participate in an engaging presentation and discussion. Register [HERE](#).

Fall 2021 Enrollment

Based on the 21-Day Report, our enrollment is strong:

	Headcount	% Increase	FTE	% Increase
Overall enrollment	19,718	5.6%	16,590	5.2%
Henrietta campus	16,874	4.1%	14,260	3.9%
Global locations	2,844	15.6%	2330	14.3%

Persistence and graduate rates contained both some very good news and a disappointing decline in six year graduation:

	Current rates	Last year's rates
Freshman 1 year persistence rate	87.5%	86.4%
6-year graduation rate	70.8%	72.7%
6-year AALANA/non-AALANA graduation rate gap	10.4%	14.4%

The SHED

Construction continues on the SHED, along with the renovations in the Wallace Center. As a reminder, many of the library services have been relocated to Ritter Ice Arena, including study space for students. Find the latest Wallace Center updates [here](#).

The SHED presents many new opportunities for the campus community – new active learning classrooms, makerspaces, a black box theater, collaboration spaces, and more. Led by Dr. Chris Licata, faculty and staff teams are working on plans for effectively using these spaces when the SHED opens. There are many plans to be solidified before we are ready to open including determining the best courses to move to SHED classrooms, designing pedagogical resources to support faculty working in active learning spaces, establishing plans for the use of the performing arts spaces, vehicle team spaces, and student project team areas. When the SHED opens, we will be able to take some classrooms off line and convert them to research space. A separate team is developing a process to accomplish that goal. Other teams are working on technology, equipment, and furnishings for the building. I am planning a more in-depth discussion on the SHED at an upcoming Provost's Office Hour (see below).

Faculty and Staff Development Opportunities

There are many opportunities for faculty and staff professional development. One example is the Faculty Success Series offered by the Office of Faculty Career Development. Click [here](#) to learn more. In addition, the ILI continues to offer workshops and individual assistance with instructional design and technology. For individual assistance, click [here](#); the schedule for workshops can be found [here](#).

The Center for Professional Development offers many opportunities for faculty and staff. Programs include career support, diversity education, and learning kits to develop the skills and knowledge of faculty and staff. For more information, click [here](#).

Accommodations and Academic Continuity

Remote access needs continue for students experiencing COVID-related disruptions to learning (i.e. quarantine/isolation) and also students with other accommodation requests. Please refer to the [COVID-related Disruptions guidelines](#) for help with students who need remote access during quarantine/isolation due to COVID-related circumstances. The [Disability Services Office](#) manages other accommodations. Faculty are encouraged to review the [DSO FAQs](#) and contact the DSO with any DSO-related accommodations questions or concerns.

The Red Folder

The [Red Folder](#) is a resource for faculty and staff to help recognize signs of student stress and tips on how best to help students who may be struggling. The Red Folder also includes a list of campus resources and emergency/crisis services complete with email addresses and phone numbers as

well as a decision tree to help faculty and staff determine what course of action to follow when observing signs of stress/distress in a student. While it is always important to keep an eye on our students and how they are doing, it is particularly important this semester as we are all readjusting to on campus learning and residential campus life.

Extra Flexibility and Patience

Many of you are aware of labor shortages that are affecting our region. You may have read about bus driver shortages that have impacted K-12, especially the Rochester City School district. So far, RIT's transportation system has been working very well but there is always the possibility that a driver will call in sick or quit with very little notice. The Parking and Transportation Office is working on contingency plans but I mention it here so that you are aware that if there is a disruption in service, students could be late or miss class altogether. If this were to occur, I ask for your patience and flexibility and that you work with students who may be impacted. If there is a disruption, a message will be sent as soon as possible to alert the campus.

PROVOST'S OFFICE HOURS

Provost's Office Hours will be held monthly through December. The format of the office hours will be different from previous sessions. Office hours will be extended to an hour and each month, a different topic will be addressed in depth. The topic for October 13 is a discussion about the SHED. Topics for November and December will be announced prior to each meeting. Notes and presentations from all the sessions are posted on the [Office of the Provost website](#). Please register [here](#) for these meetings (see below for meeting dates). Interpreters have been requested.

Oct 13, 2021, 11 a.m.-12 p.m. – SHED Update

Nov 15, 2021, 11 a.m.-12 p.m.

Dec 9, 2021, 10-11 a.m.

FINALLY...

As always, I am interested in hearing your thoughts and suggestions on topics in this update, topics to include in future updates or Provost's Office Hours, or in general. Please contact me at provost@rit.edu.

Sincerely,

Ellen Granberg, Ph.D.
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs