

January 22, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome back! I hope you had a restful break and that you and your loved ones are safe and well. I look forward to starting the spring semester and offer the following updates to help you prepare for the start of classes on January 25.

Before I dive into the list of updates and reminders, I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which we celebrated this past Monday with an outstanding presentation by Joshua Rashaad McFadden, assistant professor in the School of Photographic Arts and Sciences in the College of Art and Design. Dr. King's teachings have never been more relevant and as a new administration takes office, I hope that our country can move forward grounded in what binds us together. We, in the RIT community, have the opportunity to contribute to this effort through our educational mission and our commitment to equity and inclusivity. I look forward to working with all of you as we start both a new semester and a new journey.

## COVID-19 UPDATES

### Regional Update

As you know, infection rates in our region have been much higher than what we experienced last semester. In the last two weeks, however, the number of cases and the rate of infection have both decreased. Along with some availability of a vaccine, this is good news. Despite these improvements, it is still critically important that we remain vigilant in wearing our masks, washing our hands, and maintaining physical distance. Your efforts were incredibly successful last semester and we will need to sustain that commitment and effort during the upcoming semester.

### Vaccines

It is encouraging news that faculty teaching in-person classes, including graduate teaching assistants teaching in-person classes, are eligible in the 1b phase for the COVID-19 vaccine. CICU (the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities) is advocating that student-facing staff also be added to this priority list, which RIT fully supports. We will all have to be patient, though, as the availability of the vaccine is limited. RIT has applied to be a distribution site for the RIT community but we have not yet received a response from New York State. As there is no timetable for this response, nor a guarantee that we will receive approval, faculty and staff who are eligible are encouraged to make appointments at approved sites. More information about the vaccine and the distribution process and locations can be found [here](#).

### Campus Testing Strategy

Much work has been done over the break to finalize our spring testing strategy. Our plan is to test our students more frequently, using a blend of swab, Antigen, and saliva tests. While this may increase the number of students who must be quarantined or isolated, we anticipate that increased testing will help keep our campus community safer and allow us to remain

operational. At this point, faculty and staff should continue to take advantage of the testing resources within the Greater Rochester community.

### Spring Semester Requirements

All faculty, staff and students who will be on campus during spring semester are required to obtain both a negative COVID-19 test (performed on or after January 7, 2021) and a 2020/2021 seasonal flu vaccine by January 25. RIT is not requiring that faculty, staff or students get the COVID-19 vaccine. Instructions for submitting documentation related to the negative COVID-19 test and flu shot can be found [here](#). You will also find information about requesting accommodations, working remotely, and guidelines for occasional visits to campus.

## SPRING SEMESTER UPDATES AND REMINDERS

### Academic Calendar

We continue to move forward with our scheduled academic calendar. Both in-person and remote classes will begin January 25.

### Spring Recharge Days

As you know, three recharge days have been added to the spring semester calendar to help faculty, students and staff manage their workloads. Please keep in mind that no course assignments should be due the day of or the day after any recharge day.

### Spring Enrollment Update

Registration for spring semester is going well. Outreach efforts to non-registered undergraduate and graduate students are ongoing. The efforts to resolve wait lists have been extremely successful in allowing wait-listed students to register for full loads. At this point, enrollments are about even when compared to last year at this time.

### ILI Enhanced Classroom Support

The ILI is enhancing our normal classroom support efforts for the start of the spring 2021 semester by offering additional support for faculty teaching Hybrid or HyFlex classes. We are stationing several orange shirted support team members in locations across campus to expedite requests for assistance with Zoom issues during class meetings. This support is being offered in addition to our normal support for classroom A/V technology.

Faculty can contact support during their class by calling ILI Classroom support at (585) 475-2551 x1. A member of our support team will answer the phone and ask a few questions about the nature of your issue; then a member of our support team will be immediately sent to your location to assist you. This additional support will be available during the first week of classes, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. -4 p.m., and may be extended based utilization.

### IMLC UPDATE

Foundational work for the IMLC continues. Over the next few weeks, pylons are being driven into the ground. As you may recall from other campus projects, this phase is loud and produces significant vibration in the immediate area of the construction site. The work is slated to be completed by the end of February. I appreciate your patience as we complete another step in the construction of this important addition to our campus.

### FINALLY...

While we continue to make progress in the fight against COVID-19, we are still feeling the impact of the virus. It is critically important that we continue to follow the 3 W's – washing your hands, wearing a mask and watching your distance. A fourth W has been added – will power. It

has been a long year and COVID-19 fatigue is real. Please continue to be vigilant and doing what we know works in order to keep the RIT community healthy, safe and functioning.

I look forward to the weeks ahead.

Sincerely,

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