

# RIT | University Council

## Meeting Minutes: November 17, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

### Approval of Minutes from October 20, 2021 Meeting

The minutes were approved unanimously.

### Provost's Report

#### COVID Updates & Events

- Post-Halloween spike among students has died down, from 10 to 3 case per day
- Monroe County cases also spiked after Halloween and have not yet died down.
- Campus indoor mask mandate will stay in effect for the foreseeable future.
- November 19 at 1 pm: *Living with COVID-19* presentation
  - Community and campus experts will discuss how to continue to keep our community safe as COVID becomes endemic.
- All RIT employees working in the US, including remote workers, must be fully vaccinated (or exempted) by January 4, 2022
  - **Deadline for the final dose: December 21, 2021**
  - Proof of vaccination must be uploaded and, supervisors must sign off, on or before December 22, 2021
  - **Deadline for uploading proof of vaccination *and* supervisor sign-off: December 22, 2021**
    - *The vaccine reporting that took place earlier this summer does not fulfill this requirement.*

#### Board of Trustees Updates – November Meeting

- Full approval of the 2021-2022 budget.
- Completion of 3-year term of Board Chair Don Truesdale '87 (Business Administration Finance)
- Welcome to new Board Chair Jeff Harris '75 (Photographic Science and Instrumentation)
  - Retired Corporate VP, Situational Awareness, Lockheed Martin
- Continued service of Vice Chairs: Susan Holliday '85 MBA, and Susan Puglia
- Approval of two new trustees:
  - **Kathy Yu '91:** College of Liberal Arts Distinguished Alumna, 2019 | Board member and business executive with experience at Intel, Samsung, and Microsoft | Founder of MogulWe and SideWalkGroup – nonprofits that assist women entrepreneurs
  - **Nicholas Schneider '10:** President of the RIT Alumni Association (January, 2022) | Principal at Boston Consulting Group leading BCG's Technology, Media, and Telco sector
- **Board of Trustees – Strategic Plan Updates**

Goal	Update
4: Continue to attract and retain world-class faculty committed to elevating RIT's collective excellence in scholarship, teaching, and service.	Number of new faculty changed from 50 to 40
10: Develop the leading performing arts program in the nation for non-majors, making sure to capitalize upon NTID's strong history in the performing arts.	Target increase in faculty changed from 15 to 10
13: Determine and actively work toward the optimal size of the university...	Changed "achieve" to "actively work toward"
18: Pursue design, construction, and renovation of facilities that support core activities of creativity, design, and innovation...	Added NTID performing arts and athletics facilities
19: Pursue construction and/or renovation of facilities that support research and graduate students.	Added Lowenthal Hall expansions and Brown Hall renovation

## **Faculty & Staff Compensation-Market Adjustment Program Update** (presentation files available on [RIT Digital Archive](#))

Jo Ellen Pinkham, Assoc. VP & Chief HR Officer

### **Compensation Philosophy – Slide 3**

- RIT is committed to paying competitively to market
- Utilize peer institutions and market data for benchmarking
- Conduct market analysis annually and throughout the year under Tina Ross' direction
- Target to achieve, on average, compensation levels at 50<sup>th</sup> percentile of market for faculty and staff

### **Benchmark Schools – Slide 4**

- The university has expanded the list of schools used for salary benchmarking to include all R1 and R2 schools that participate in the College and University Professional Association (CUPA) annual surveys of faculty, staff, and administrator salaries. The expanded list of benchmark schools significantly increases the availability of market data for a large number of our faculty disciplines for which data was previously not available.
- Note that unless at least five institutions report data for a discipline, it is not included. It's a Sherman Antitrust confidentiality of data sort of guideline.

### **Performance Rating Distribution Results - Slide 5**

The y axis represents the percentage of employees receiving a performance appraisal rating within each employee groups. We've broken out faculty, exempt staff. There is a No Rating category to the far right, which is primarily made up of employees who are new, but it does also include employees who are on leave, or who are retiring or leaving the university or those few employees with no rating that was entered into the system. So it's small number, but I wanted to explain what that that's the performance distribution.

### **Merit Distribution - Slide 6**

- Hopefully merit is in line with the performance rating because merit is tied to performance and based on the performance distribution and we see this distribution is similar to previous years, so no real surprises here. The median increase related to merit across all the different groups was 2.75%. And we like to see that because that was the merit pool for this year so it lined up very nicely. Some of you will see there's a smattering of increases in the Does Not Meet Expectations, and you may be wondering as I did, if someone's not meeting expectations, why are they in that pool? Well, we do have some individuals that meet some but not all expectations. Are they're making progress and performance is improving. So they may receive a partial, very minimal merit increase.

### **Market/Exceptional Performance Increases - Slide 7**

- There's additional funding that supports this component of the salary increase program. Some background information - in previous years, market adjustments were available only to high performing faculty and staff who were paid below the 50th percentile. It's important to continue to close those gaps for those people on market. At the same time the university recognizes the need for flexibility and to move pay above the 50th percentile particularly for high performing highly skilled and marketable faculty and staff. So we release that restriction of having those additional dollars just for those employees paid under the median or under that 50th percentile. And allow those to be available to all high performers and for market adjustments. It's really especially important as RIT continues to grow and expand our national reputation in an increasingly competitive market. So, paying competitively for high performers with critical skills often means that pay is above the 50th percentile. There's additional information we can go over if you're interested in the guidelines. We did provide guidelines to supervisors and managers about how to consider individual employees for these Exceptional Performance increases. All of those increases were reviewed and approved by the deans and other senior divisional leaders. And then more marketing dollars were applied to faculty

because they have a larger gap to market than the steps show some staff members do. So more of those dollars went to faculty as in past years.

#### **Compa-Ratio Change – Slides 8 (faculty), 9 (exempt staff) and 10 (non-exempt staff)**

- Talking about Comp-Ratio shows the comparison that ratio of paid to market or paid to benchmark. And in this chart on slide 8, what we like to see is that there's a decrease in the number of individuals below that median right below the 100 percentile and being paid in that across year over year, and then increase year over year and those paid above median and that's what you want to see. And what I'm really excited about is to see that impact. The first chart is faculty, the second chart is exempt staff, the third chart is non-exempt staff. And that was true across all the different categories and that's exactly what we're striving toward. So this gives us some data to say yes, what we're striving for is actually happening. Now what we need to do is get the size of those charts over the 100%. So we got a lot of people in that 85 to 95% range. And as we continue these programs we will be moving those folks.

#### **Salary Program Results – Slide 11**

- So skipping ahead to slide 11 to make up a little time here. You see the five year history of the Compa-Ratios across each of these categories. Calling your attention to last year versus this year. What you will see is that the faculty Compa-Ratio increased, as did the exempt staff just slightly. Not really, it was kind of flat, but the non-exempt staff Compa-Ratio went down. You may wonder what that's about. It's because we increased the grades for non-exempt staff much more than we did for the exempt staff grades. So if you think about the whole grade structure and non-exempt staff are in the in the lower pay levels. We raised those by a much more significant percentage due to the market movement. So that's why you see that Compa-Ratio change. So new hires, promotions, retirements, market fluctuations all impact these Compa-Ratios. So it's not a simple analysis, but we do like to see whether we're making progress over time. And just to footnote, staff wage grade bands were uplifted two years ago in 2019 and again this year. It's unusual to do in two years, but we're seeing a lot of market movement in staff in particular, as I'm sure all of you understand that the market is going a little crazy at the moment. So we're trying to respond as best we can in our programs and structures.

#### **Equity Review Process – Slide 12**

- This is looking internally, not externally, but can say relative to one another, how our faculty and staff are paid and do we have any concerns or differentiations based on gender or underrepresented status AALANA status, etc. A third party, Willis Towers Watson, performs this detailed regression analysis for faculty, exempt and non-exempt staff positions. The purpose is to determine if there are pay differences based on any of these factors discipline, terminal degree, rank or grade and the results this year there were no statistically significant negative differences based on gender or AALANA status. In case you're interested RIT has been performing this equity analysis externally since 2012. It was not performed last year because we didn't have a salary increase program last year. So with the exception of 2020, every year the same analysis has been consistently administered.

#### **Total Compensation**

- We've been talking about base salary here, but really our compensation at the university has several other components, including benefits, and yes, it's open enrollment right now. So shameless plug you have until Monday to make benefit changes. Total Compensation has a number of components and each of us as employees have the ability to view that in Oracle at [myinfo.rit.edu](http://myinfo.rit.edu).

**Market/Exceptional Performance**

## Guidelines:

- Exceptional performance or unique contribution(s) in support of unit, department or university objectives
- Scholarly contributions that contribute significantly to the national and international reputation of RIT
- Current pay is significantly below market and performance exceeds expectations
- Significant improvement achieved on a work process or system, or significant increase in efficiency of an operation or a department/unit
- Possession of critical skills and experience that would be extremely difficult to replace

**Q:** The CUPA data – did that come “cost of living” corrected or do we do it ourselves?

**A:** There are two differentials - cost of living and geographic. And the geographic these days is quite a hot topic because of all the remote work. But the cost of living data are smoothed so we do not do a separate cost of living analysis.

**Q:** Faculty starting salary – what mitigation strategies do we have in place to start getting competitive so we don't have this issue going forward?

**A:** There are a couple of things that we do. We work with the provost office and the deans to make sure that they have the most competitive data when they're bringing a new faculty member into the university. We didn't talk about other elements like compression adjustments that are made. So, when we talk about equity and we look at who's been here and for what period of time, what credentials did they bring, what discipline are they in, there are often compression adjustments that are made to try to mitigate some of that for existing individuals who are here. But another component is at the time of advancement in rank. I could spend a whole 15 minutes talking about that, but this year was the first year of a multi-year change in conversion and the amount really and the how advancements in rank are going to be administered such that we will have a much more contemporary and many more dollars put in that process. So it's going to be as I said, multi-year but, those are some of the ways that we're looking to make sure that we can be as competitive as possible.

**Q:** I'm on slide five, the performance rating distribution. So I'm bringing in the staff perspective on that. So just notice the trend here where looking at the faculty meets, exceeds, outstanding ratings and then you look at staff it's the inverse. And it goes to staff exempt and non-exempt, particularly the outstanding faculty that's almost double that of staff. So I am curious what insights you might have on that and why it seems so much different.

**A:** Yes, so much more differentiation in terms of performance. And actually on the next slide, there's much more differentiation in terms of the pay, because with more differentiation in performance, the staff have a wider distribution of pay increases than the faculty as well. So you do see it marry up. My comment on that, I'm not sure it's an insight, is this is not atypical to see that sort of differentiation. What you would see perhaps not in higher education is a more even bell curve. Here there is quite a perception that if one meets expectations then one it's not performing, that you have to be at above or exceeds expectations to really feel good about that. So I think we have some inherent challenges there and it's not a completely objective process. So there's some subjectivity there and even these ratings are not even across colleges, divisions, maybe departments.

**Q:** For student employees – the cost of tuition, food, gas, etc. all are higher. What can be done to raise wages for student employees?

**A:** My department, Human Resources, doesn't oversee student employment or pay. It is overseen by the Student Employment Office. But I will say that RIT will move up student wages, and pays more for more experience. An analysis of how various units pay students has been done.

## **Student Health & Wellness Update** (presentation files available on [RIT Digital Archive](#))

### **Sandra Johnson, Sr. VP of Student Affairs**

This is a large group of Student Affairs staff that's going to be speaking to you about how we are supporting student wellbeing. I know that the request was for a presentation about "student mental health" and I want to make sure that we all understand we need to change that narrative, because we're really talking about student wellbeing and their sense of belonging and support here at the university. And while this group is a significant player in helping to do that work, every single person in this room has that responsibility. And you know, we can all talk about the impact of the pandemic. But this particular population of students are very traditional age and this is the one of the most critical times for them, to have those lived experiences that will give them the tools to manage stress, anxiety, challenges, you know, things that many of us had that opportunity. They did not and so we need to have empathy and compassion for what they've gone through. And I know we've all gone through this, but it is our role to support our students. And we need to hear them. We need to listen to what they're saying and talking to us about and then responding, but it does takes a village. So you're going to hear from a part of the village today and a significant group and you'll hear about some of the things that they're seeing and doing but I really just wanted to get us all on that boat and all rowing in the same direction in terms of how we're supporting our students and ensuring their success. We admitted them because we know they can succeed here. We had some wrenches thrown into this. And now it is still our role to help and support them and to hear what this has been doing to their experience as students here. So I'm on my student advocacy soapbox, and now I'm going to turn it over to my colleagues who will share some of the work that they've been doing and that many of you have been involved in as well.

### **Jennifer Maltby, Dir. Data Analytics & Planning – Slide 2**

**Student Experience Surveys:** Fall 2021 similar results to Fall 2020 and Spring 2021. Surveys are focused on our strategic goals which are around improving the students' sense of connection and belonging and improving student well-being. Three important points I want to highlight.

- Large numbers of students continue to report their mental health is fair or poor. This typically reaches its peak in the second half of the semester. AALANA and LGBTQ+ students are more likely to report their mental health is fair or poor.
- Engaging in extracurricular activities is highly correlated with positive mental health, wellbeing and thriving at the university.
- Students who feel that they belong at RIT are more likely to report positive mental health and wellbeing.

### **Catherine Lewis, Director Disability Services Office**

#### **We all collaborate in Supporting Students – Slide 3**

My name is Catherine Lewis, I use she, her, hers pronouns. And for those of you that I haven't had the chance to meet yet, I started just a few weeks before the pandemic started. And so I've seen many of you on Zoom thumbnails, but not in the flesh. So it's a pleasure to be with you today. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of my wonderful colleagues in the Division of Wellness. So, the Division of Wellness comprises a number of different parts: Case Management, Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) are paths for sure, my office, the Disability Services Office, the Student Health Center, and Wellness Programs and Services, which comprises Health Promotion, the Center for Recreational Sports, Outdoor Education and Wellness Education. So I'm going to spend a little bit of time talking about how all these specific departments collaborate to support student wellbeing in terms of their direct mental health care, in terms of sense of belonging and connection and engagement on campus and more.

#### **Responding to Student Needs - Slide 4**

So first, in terms of how we're actively supporting students' mental health, probably most obvious and at the heart of this is direct clinical support provided by the folks at CaPS. But also it's important to note that every visitor to the Student Health Center and to CaPS is screened for anxiety and depression as part of that connection. I will make an emphasis at this point that clinical support around mental health is key. So also is access support around mental health. And so, in my office 43% of students receiving disability accommodations have a primary or secondary need

that relates to mental health services. We also recognize that students here at RIT are whole people, not existing just on this campus. And when we talk about the role of Case Management, I often think them in my mind as a resource navigator or resource connector, and part of the work they do is helping our students get to key resources both on and off campus. The good folks in Health Promotion, are doing a series of programs that are proactive and educational in nature - about two a week. This fall, I believe we're actually at about 78 health promotion programs so far, which include topics like stress management, good sleep, meditation, ways to sort of get yourself centered and feel good.

And all of us together collectively understand the importance of outreach and connection to the campus about how we do what we do and why we do it. One of the hallmarks of the way we provide optimal education to the community is something called the [Red Folder](#), which is a relatively new resource. It's designed to be a quick and easy way to find information on how to support students in distress. It has a decision tree of sorts. So if you're encountering a student navigating X, Y, or Z, you will find the resources to connect students to support, so the Red Folder is a very key resource.

#### **Responding to AALANA Student Needs – Slide 5**

So importantly, we understand that students bring a number of identities that impact their experience and also their mental health. I'd like to spend some time talking about underrepresented students in particular. The AALANA population specifically has some pretty compelling data to share. Thirty-eight percent of the students working with CaPS identify as members of the AALANA population, in contrast 27%, so just over 11% more AALANA students work with proximity to the overall RIT student body, so I think that's an important figure. Taking that into account, CaPS in particular has done some pretty powerful work supporting representation among AALANA students. They have an embedded mental health provider in the Multicultural Center for Academic Success in the SAU. They are about to host the second Annual Black Mental Health Matters Conference in February.

#### **Responding to AALANA Student Needs – Slide 6**

Shifting from CaPS to Case Management, one of the important things about how they do the work they do is that whenever a student is asking for support, Case Management makes a point to inquire as to the students preference in terms of race, gender, identity, age, specialty or focus area of their provider, recognizing that who you ask for help from matters in terms of identity and content. And then in my Office of Disability Services, we're partnering with folks in Center for Campus Life and Diversity and Inclusion, to think about representation in celebration of identities, including disability identity. And so we're doing active work to bring disabled leaders of color to campus to talk about who they are and what we do, in an attempt to create a community where all urban identities are celebrated.

So we talked about how co-curricular engagement and connection to the campus community plays a role in terms of mental health. I'll walk through a number of ways that our division is doing this. First of all, I alluded a little earlier to the number of health promotion programs that are offered in terms of topics for stress management, mindfulness, meditation, wellbeing, etc. We understand the importance of fitness and recreation in terms of wellbeing and so there are a number of opportunities to engage there. About 1,400 students are engaged right now, but ~2,800 or so are engaged in club sports. The recreation facilities on campus this year have seen about 118,000 visits from about 9,000 unique individuals. So I think that tells a pretty compelling story about use. And we have a number of really unique and important facilities themselves to offer including the Red Barn, which is an awesome space. But as Sandy alluded to when she kicked this off, we are just a piece of Student Affairs. And so I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge that we're just part of the big picture, celebrating identity, empowering students, connecting them to resources and ensuring they are well. So thanks to all my colleagues throughout the university and particularly in Student Affairs for that work.

**Responding to AALANA Student Needs – Slide 7**

Talking a little bit more about connection, social connection in particular. One of my favorite programs is the Social Tigers program. The subtitle of that program is “Embrace the awkward” and the intent behind this Social Tiger program, is to practice social interaction and to have a safe space to experiment and learn how to get through that awkward initial moment in connecting with new people.

Coming back to CaPS for a moment in terms of the quality of relationships as relates to mental health support. Over 80% of the students working with CaPS have reported that work with a mental health provider has positively impacted the quality of their relationships. So we have some pretty nice data about being impacted, pursuing mental health, clinical support, and positive social interaction.

Importantly, in Disability Services, we have done a lot of revamping of our process to be student centered and relationship oriented. What I mean by that is that a disability is not just the diagnosis. In fact, one of the most important things about good access coordination is recognizing that you live your disability as an individual person. So, to understand the unique experiences and needs of the student sounds like a relatively simple thing, but a change we made recently is that every single student requesting accommodation support has a meeting on-on-one. The language we say to them is “You are the expert.” We need to understand first your diagnosis and the context for your needs. But in terms of knowing how they impact your life. You know that better than anyone else. Centering on the student experience is a great tool for helping students feel empowered. And then lastly, student employment, which is a really powerful way for students to feel part of this community. Wellness employs about 300 students.

Okay, so how are we promoting what we do? So we meet students where they're at on social media. We're active on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter in particular. We're feeding the events that we do into the RIT Events Calendar on a regular basis. During the pandemic, the Student Life website was created as a virtual space to promote opportunities for connection, engagement and support. What I think is pretty cool about the student life site now is that it not only promotes events that are happening on campus, but opportunities for self-care and ways to stay connected and engaged for students in quarantine and isolation. So there's lots of different modalities of events and opportunities and resources there. We also have a provider centered outreach tool, which is the Wellness Menu of Services. Wellness Programs and Services distributes this each month to providers across campus. So that when we're sitting one on one or in a group of students and a good fit opportunity comes up, we have something we can hand right to them.

**Wendy Gelbard, MD, Associate VP, Student Wellness – Slide 9**

Living with COVID

So, we entered into this pandemic almost two years ago. And when we started this fall, I was hoping that we would see the other side, but it hasn't been quite so clear cut. As COVID is becoming more prevalent throughout the world and our community, we're learning now how to live with it as part of our everyday lives. It is becoming endemic. It hasn't been called that by the officials yet, but by the unofficial reports we're hearing, we are really entering into that state of an endemic. This means that COVID is everywhere. And a lot of things are everywhere. We've learned how to deal with other illnesses and we're learning how to deal with COVID. But as we enter into this new phase, we have to see how far we are we've come. We started with vaccinations a little less than a year ago. We didn't have that when the pandemic started. We have IV medications that are now being used as treatment and the big news this week is there's now a pill that can be used to treat COVID. It's not out there yet, we can't buy it at CVS, but the expectation is that that soon we will be able to. So we're in a very different place than we were a year, two years ago.

And part of learning to live with the pandemic is having each of us define our own comfort levels of risk. We all have access to vaccines and masks and those are just about the best things that we can do to protect ourselves. But we're no longer at the point where we need to identify every single case of COVID. Last year, we did want to pull out any positive cases because any positive case could potentially infect many other people. But the number of people a

single person can affect has diminished with vaccinations, with masking, with distancing, and with our knowledge. So all things are really moving in the right direction. And you'll see that our focus of testing this year has changed. Last year, we tested everyone on campus once a week. This year, we're only testing those who we're really concerned about that have a greater likelihood of disease transmission. So that would be those who are unvaccinated who become ill, they tend to be infectious for a longer period of time. And those who are symptomatic, those who come to the Health Center and have symptoms suggestive of COVID, but we don't test everyone. You know, I look around this room and Ryne just mentioned that he got a bunch of tests miss delivered to his office. If he brought them here and we tested all of us, I promise you that some of us in this room, very likely have asymptomatic COVID. And I'm not worried about that. And I'm hoping to make you not worried about that either. Because we're wearing masks, and the likelihood of our transmitting is very low. You've heard the Swiss cheese model, where all the holes have to line up perfectly so that the bad event happens if everything goes through all those holes to the other end. Well, I think that COVID transmission is very much like that. Only the holes in the Swiss cheese have shrunk down to pinpoints so it's very difficult when you're in a highly vaccinated community as we are to transmit illness.

So that's my general update. I would give a plug to something Ellen had mentioned earlier on Friday, we are having a kind of question and answer about living with COVID and I will be involved with that. Dr. Phillips, our Student Health Center Director will also be there that day, Dr. Jenn Schneider who many of you know from Academic Affairs, she's kind of our resident wastewater and air handling system expert and as well as the University of Rochester Medical Center's Director of the Emergency Dept. to answer questions. I would encourage you to attend.

#### **David Reetz, Director, Counseling & Psychological Services (CaPS) – Slide 9**

##### Student Mental Health Trends

I was asked to provide comment on current student mental health trends. And It seems like we are wrestling with whatever other considerations we need to make as we continue to re-shape learning environments and policy around our learning environments. I want to keep my message pretty simple. I try to remind myself about the most important trend in student mental health. For those of us who have been working in this phase for a while, we have seen an important trend for well over a decade – long before the pandemic and the trend is going to continue post pandemic. We've been seeing that the number of students reporting anxiety has been on the rise every year. We must understand the larger social dynamics feeding the trend, again before the pandemic. Because the social issues we have to account for when we think about how do we better shape our environments so that students when they come here, we can meet those growing needs in a more effective way. Anxiety and depression are not going to slow down post pandemic. We need to keep a broad view of what we can do collectively to prepare ourselves to be better prepared for the students coming in to the environment. And as Sandy said, that's a role that we all play, because we all shape the environment. Student anxiety and the profound barrier it has on their learning, requires all of us to be actively engaged in that. And think about the role that we can play in our individual responsibilities to shape the totality of the environment.

#### **Catherine Lewis – Slide 9 – Disability and Accessibility**

- The number of students requesting support from the Disability Services Office is steadily on the rise. We want to celebrate disability as a facet of diversity and discard idea that disability is a deficit. It's an opportunity to do things differently. As of 11/16/21, DSO supports 2,233 students actively receiving disability accommodations. This number does not include Deaf/HoH students who work only with Access Services for interpreting, captioning, and/or notetaking.
- Fourteen percent of the RIT student body are actively receiving accommodations with DSO. Even before the pandemic, which had a major impact on accessibility needs, national data showed that 19% of college students identified with some kind of disability (note, this is the number of students with disabilities, and does not equate to the number of students receiving accommodations). Most colleges report 5-6% of their population is utilizing accommodations. Our 14% is higher, but the goal should be that all students with access needs have the support they need to thrive. We have explicitly celebrated access and inclusion and we have more students here who are neurodiverse and D/deaf.



- For some, disability is visible – but disability is not always visible or recognizable, such as mental health. Particularly for those with mental health disabilities, clinical support is vital, but so is access support.
- We have a high number of students with accommodations, and DSO has been noting some fear/uncertainty among faculty about the rise in numbers. There will be work to do on the part of faculty. My strongest wish is that DSO is seen as a faculty/staff partner, available to consult and problem solve to ensure that student needs are met *and* that accommodations function well in specific contexts. Rather than an adversarial relationship, faculty should view DSO as a partner, available to consult and strategize when any access challenges or questions arise. If we send faculty an accommodation that doesn't work, please let us know so we can work together.

**Gary Moxely, Director of Public Safety** (*presentation files available on [RIT Digital Archive](#)*)

#### **Public Safety Mental Health Response**

- From August 2021 – Nov 15, 2021, we've had 44 mental health transports. These calls are taking more time than they once did. Our officers are spending more time addressing ever more complex needs. They don't have a counseling background (though they do receive Crisis Training), so sometimes it takes longer to sort things out. Public Safety supports students – they see themselves that way – not as Party Enders. They are the only ones here overnight and point students to resources. They will do whatever they can to assist the student.
- As director, I am a member of the [Student Behavior Consultation Team](#) (SBCT) which allows Public Safety to be an active participant in RIT community in addressing mental health needs. Sometimes, we are involved just in finding a student. I can make calls to the Rochester Police Department and Monroe County Sheriff Office for assistance. Sometimes, all that's needed is just for an officer to sit with a student and listen. Some officers have been here a long time and they know everyone.
- Staying Current: A team of all area college Public Safety officers meets monthly to talk about mental health. There is a new similar group for High School Security Directors, which also meets monthly and we participate with them as well.

**Q:** Is there any information from March 2020 to now regarding specifically the impact of COVID on mental health at RIT?

**A:** The data supports that even pre-COVID mental health was fair to poor. There was a small bump, but hard to specifically attribute it to COVID. It was high before and it continues to be high now.

**Q:** How does the fall survey correlate to academic success, can you comment on that?

**A:** So, our survey is coming out of Student Affairs and is really focused on Student Affairs priorities. We are not looking at student's academic performance as it relates to their student experience. I think what Lucas is referring to is that we have two main measures of wellbeing on our survey. One scale that asks students to rate mental health and another for thriving to struggling to suffering. Those two scales are correlated with each other, but they are definitely measuring two different things. Our rates of thriving over term mirror that of student mental health – which is as term goes on, the number of students who rate thriving on the scale goes down. So, we know that the student experience is being significantly impacted by the cadence of the academic semester.

Sandy Johnson commented: I think what Lucas is getting at is when we talk about student stress and what the cause is, yes we have seen an increase in students talking about academic distress as a core factor of their stress level. And that is happening across universities and they are attributing that to the disruption in learning that COVID has had on this particular population.

**Q:** Related to compassion and equity in classroom...some faculty don't know how to deal with this. RIT needs to educate faculty on this area, because some faculty don't believe students who are asking for accommodation.

**A:** I understand the faculty dilemma of needing to maintain the integrity of the curriculum and yet be responsive and compassionate to the emerging emotional needs of students is often very difficult and stressful. To Sandy's point, we continue to see more and more anxiety due to the socialization of children and adolescents. There was a time when we would be in our academic program in the mid-semester, we'd have three exams coming up, group work, presentations, and we would say, "I'm really stressed out." That's a normal reaction to the environment But the

language around it now is “my mental health is really suffering” – that’s the term we use now to talk about a normal response to an adverse environment. That shifts our focus to think that there’s greater mental health issues and that we need greater mental health interventions. And really the shift is to think about considering the socialization trends that are shaping students to be less prepared to meet the demands of this environment when they get here. There are adaptations to that to better equip them, and it has a lot to do with getting involved, engaging in relationships, and interpersonal communication. Asking for help when you need it, as opposed to waiting until it gets to be a critical part of the semester. If we can help students engage in this environment sooner and to have a greater sense of belonging and overall sense of wellbeing, we can avoid a lot of anxiety and avoidance behavior.

**Catherine Lewis commented:** One point from an access perspective, when talk about faculty empathy and compassion fatigue, please lean on the Disability Services Office to help you assess that. That’s in fact why we’re here. While it is the case that not all mental health needs are rising to the level of disability, but many do. And I would encourage faculty and staff to develop some fluency and comfort in referring students to us because we can help you understand and take a consistent approach to evaluating needs and take the weight off your shoulders.

**RIT Action Plan for Race & Ethnicity Action Update** (*presentation files available on [RIT Digital Archive](#)*)

Keith Jenkins, Vice President & Associate Provost for Diversity & Inclusion

Two things I want to focus on, first of all the updates and then second, the action items focused through 2023. So looking at slide 4 which deals with the updates. The seeds for the plan were planted in the summer of 2020, following the murder of George Floyd. And from that there were a number of meetings and gatherings that took place at RIT to really address some of the concerns that were rising in the community here at that time. There were town hall meetings, three RIT Working Groups. One group focused on students, one faculty and staff and the third group focused primarily on the culture, climate and communication. We also met with the governance groups, the AALANA student groups, focus groups, university leadership, the Board of Trustees and also had external peers, leaders who serve in similar roles as myself, who represent the National Association of Diversity Officers in higher education. There were four individuals who came in and did an external review. And so they looked at the plan they looked at everything that was unfolding here at RIT, and also weighed in and all of those groups providing information primarily shaped the plan that was presented.

Academic Senate unanimously endorsed the plan in the spring of 2021 as did Staff Council. The plan was released to the RIT community on July 7, 2021. Student Government endorsed the plan fall 2021 and I work closely now with Adrian Pyatt, who is the Student Government Director of Ethical Governing, as he helps and assists Lucas and Chris in terms of moving forward many initiatives of the plan.

What are we focused on now? And I'll look at 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. Commencing in the fall with an ongoing focus of articulating the diversity commitment message and it starts at the top. One aspect of the plan is that leadership must set the tone. And so there's been a lot that flows from the president, but I believe it begins with the Board of Trustees, the president, the vice presidents, the deans of the college's, managers, but we set the tone in terms of articulating what is in this plan. RIT senior leadership participation also was taken in August and September as we participated in an Intercultural Development Inventory. The purpose of that inventory was very simple, to give us a pulse check, to give us insight about where we stand developmentally, individually, but also as a collective group. We also are working to leverage the best work of our RIT K-12 University Center MCAS and other cohort programs to increase accountable pathway programs and partnerships. We know that there is outstanding work right now done by the K-12 office and we applaud that work in terms of attracting students and connecting with students by middle school and tracking those students and working with them through high school and many of those students choose RIT as their place to study. Through the Division of Diversity and Inclusion, we have a partnership through RIT with Rochester Prep. This year, we were fortunate to welcome 13 students from Rochester Prep to RIT. Eleven of those students are Rochester City Scholars. So the great work that goes forth in the City of Rochester and beyond, that work continues and we want to scale that work up.

In terms of other work being done expanding the RIT Student Success Steering Committee's charge, and that was to explicitly include contributors and barriers to AALANA student success. A lot of that work is well underway right now. Now if you don't know, the Student Success Steering Committee is a cross-divisional committee that focuses on student success at RIT. One player, Dr. Ammina Kothari (formerly of RIT, but now at the University of Rhode Island) is also conducting research on behalf of RIT with students to really identify what they perceive as barriers, but also contributors to their success here. There were a series of focus groups that have been held with about 60 to 65 students thus far. And those focus groups were held this week to get that information from students and the Students Success Steering Committee will receive a report from Dr. Kothari in terms of what she has discovered in the student feedback. And so we look forward to that research that is underway.

Also working to diversify membership on search committees. Making sure that if we are hiring here at RIT we have diverse participants involved in the process at all levels. Building our relationships with HBCUs, our historically black colleges and universities, our Hispanic serving institutions and our Native American Scholars initiative universities, that work continues. One major project that is underway comes through the Provost Office. And those are the connections that have been made with Howard University. But there are other outreach efforts that are well underway through the Office of Faculty Diversity and Recruitment. For example, there are partnerships that are underway with several HBCUs but not only HBCUs, but also PWI, predominantly white institutions that are the greater producers of Ph.Ds. who are people of color. That is important so we're not limited to just those institutions of higher learning that are targeted institutions where people of color, but also those institutions that are PWI that are greater producers. So you see a lot of that manifesting here at RIT through our Future Faculty Career Exploration Program, as students come here from the University of Wisconsin, the University of Florida, but also Jackson State University, Texas A&M university, so we keep a lot of those on our radar screen. We also leverage partnerships to support dual career hires. That work is underway through Human Resources. So we keep focused in this way through the plan.

Some of the other items we expect to complete in year one the President's Cabinet as mentioned during the Inclusive Leadership Inventory that has been done administering a nationally normed student and employee climate survey. That work is under the leadership of Liz Bremer and she is also working collaboratively with a cross divisional team in terms of this major effort. So that survey will be administered in the spring of 2022 and will give us additional insight about how we are faring as a university at all levels. We also work with appropriate governance committees to evaluate the extent to which RIT's curricular offerings reflect the commitments and priorities of RIT with regard to diversity and inclusion. These discussions are well underway at many different levels at the university. The College of Liberal Arts as one example, has put forth the recommendation that we consider a perspective in diversity. And there are other recommendations out there. So keeping those things in mind as we move forward. Also, completing in year one, creating a dedicated position focuses on outreach and recruitment of diverse staff. Jahmar Elliott has been hired in Human Resources as Asst. Director Talent Acquisition & Staff Diversity Outreach. NTID created a number of positions, specialist resources for staff, and those players have been hired also. So you can see that there are a lot of check marks that are now underway in this plan because as we look at year one, several things are being accomplished now, but there's still a lot more work that is underway.

As we look at year two and ongoing, providing resources to educate faculty and staff, to more effectively support AALANA students. We're now into the space of diversity education and I'll speak more to that a little later. But Taj Smith is heading a lot of those efforts and as you know, Taj Smith, he is the Director of Diversity Education in the division and he is working with a cross divisional team also, as we look at our diversity education efforts here at the university and I'll speak a little more to that later. Recognizing the contributions of AALANA faculty and staff support and making it possible for participation in shared governance. And that is simply allowing those avenues regardless of the rank of the individual or the positions that they hold at the university, if there is interest and commitment in working with any of our shared governance groups, allowing those opportunities in that support for that to happen. And so there is a commitment in that space. Also instituting an annual requirement for all employees to receive

education related to and create an inclusive culture. That is the work that is underway by Dr. Taj Smith. And they anticipate being able to roll that out sometime in 2022 for us to implement in the fall of 2022.

Now we've gone through the Intercultural Development Inventory. We're looking at other models, Ellen has been involved, myself, Taj Smith, and other players as we look at models that would be appropriate for RIT at this time, so that work will indeed continue. Also mentioned when you talk about getting a pulse of where we are, there is great work that is being done in Marketing and Communication, as we really assess and get an understanding of the populations that are coming into RIT who are African American, who are LatinX, so in that particular regard, there's a survey that is being done now, that is tapping into many of us here, but also the students who would be entering into the university. So we look forward to what we learn from that particular research.

Also, another thing is creating this new tradition of a day of understanding, solidarity and racial reconciliation. There is a planning committee that is underway also under the leadership of Taj Smith. We expect the first celebration to take place 2022 to 2023. Finally, completing in year two, employing intentional and comprehensive efforts to incorporate and reflect DEI work across all constituencies, including and not limited to requiring DEI related information and goals in every performance appraisals, plans of work, annual reports and the like.

Also part of the plan is accelerating the establishment of a permanent strategic hire fund. I will say that Faculty Senate did put forth a motion that passed regarding understanding what the commitment financially is to this particular action plan. And so when we talk about a strategic hire fund, when we talk about some of the things that are already underway at the university, there are inquiries into having a more transparent approach in terms of what is the actual commitment financially to these spaces. So these are some of the things that are underway. But the work that is being done, let me say this is not simply out of this division. But as you can see, this is work that is across the university as a whole. And I will mention there are other plans that are out there that feed into this plan. There are plans in NTID, and the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Science, just to name a few. There are other initiatives that are underway across the university. So I thank you all first of all, for just the commitment to the work that is being done in this space. But as we continue to move forward, we look forward to realizing the completion of all the actions in this plan by the year 2024. So with that, that gives you an update, but I yield to any questions that

**Q:** I just like to clarify the Faculty Senate position, where we're asked about the strategic hire budget. We weren't saying well, that's going to cost a lot to do that. That sounds like a great idea, but is the money going to happen? Where's the money going to go, etc.? I have two follow on questions, one has to do with the pathways to bring in students from high schools and maybe people in master's programs and other institutions, and also about Native American, Hispanic serving, and HBCUs. We all know about bringing in diverse faculty and the Ph. D. programs and I can tell you that the application pool is typically not terribly diverse. And if we want to have a diverse Ph.D. population, we need to be making some efforts to prove that diverse Ph.D. population. I didn't hear you explicitly mention that. So I was wondering if you could address that.

**A:** I would yield in terms of building those relationships to the Provost in that particular regard. But one thing that I will say in terms of building the relationships and I would argue, in terms of the institution's name that we are already building relationships with, they are the highest producers but also we're talking about relationships with students who are undergraduates who are interested in what we're offering here at RIT. One acknowledgement of that is with Howard University. There are many initiatives that flow out of Howard University, where there's interest in the research efforts and what is going on at RIT, and also our students have interest in Howard University, but I'll yield to Ellen share more on that.

**Provost Granberg:** There are initiatives for creating relationships with faculty, a database of faculty with backgrounds of interest to RIT at the annual MSc program, and so there's quite a bit of work on the faculty side and on the students we're looking at how to increase the pipeline.

**Q:** My concern here is on behalf of the diverse faculty members, who are frequently asked to serve on committees. If you are giving extra work to faculty members who are more diverse and there's nothing coming off their plate, although it's unintentional, you are slowing them down in progressing in rank and obtaining tenure.

**A:** The concern to share and my hope is that we're not looking to do exactly what you just mentioned, but finding the creative way to be inclusive, while at the same time supporting the upward mobility in the achievement of all faculty at the university. So I think that there has to be sensitivity to all faculty at the university that if you're being tapped to serve in this space, you're not tapped every single semester to do this. And so when we're talking about diversity, finding those creative ways to include faculty of diverse backgrounds on search committees, while at the same time not over taxing, overburdening the faculty of color at the university and that is inclusive of not only faculty of color, but also women as well.

**Q:** The Action Plan is a piece on admissions of students AALANA background. Can you talk a little bit about that aspect and where you expect to be and maybe even in the aspect of marketing and background how are you reaching more diverse students to apply?

**A:** I think a lot of that is focused on the schools that we choose to partner with. And there are designated schools that we have identified, there are some that we're already aware of that we are seeking partnership with. And so as we began to build those particular relationships, we're trying to build a pipeline for students entering into the university, I think out of the K-12 office, the model that has been used is that we have to start these relationships much earlier. And so it's not enough to simply start those relationships in high school, when we have to reach students where they are in middle school and even before as we began to court and hopefully encourage them to build a relationship with RIT. So I think that's what we're looking at right now. There are some designated schools that I've been talking to that are targeted universities that should help us in that particular regard. The goal is 18%, a lot of that's AALANA at the university and that's by 2025. That is the goal that will then be looked at again, as we see it that goal needs to be increased as we move beyond 2025. But 18% is what we're looking at overall.

**Q:** I guess my comment is similar to Clyde's, but on the staff side of things. I think the comment for reflection and it's been asked a lot over the years, has been oftentimes in predominantly white institutions, it's our colleagues of color who hold a great responsibility to do a lot of the education and training regarding DEI at their institutions. So it's just as it's important for the black professor to serve and to ensure that that voice is heard similarly, staff of color as well hold a lot of responsibility as well. To make sustainable change, we have to think about how do we make sustainable changes in our practices? So you know, there's been a lot of discussion among staff of color. This is often things above and beyond what we have to do in our responsibilities. So similarly with respect to faculty, so one publication equals how much time and effort you're doing the training and education of your colleagues, I can remember staff would be more likely to put themselves in a position if they saw that as providing additional expertise and providing an institutional ask. How do we support the retention of our staff, faculty of color, by saying we value them and want to pay them for the work that they're doing, work that other people can't? So that's outside of your office, but it would be how do we change practices in providing adequate compensation and recognition for people that are doing work and that's just not volunteer time? Maybe that's new business.

**A:** I think DEI work should be explicitly included in Plans of Work, it should be made visible. It becomes important and I encourage this across the board, it requires all of us to roll up our sleeves and come up with those creative strategies that will allow us to achieve what is in the plan. And so, the burden isn't placed on one group, it's really placed on all of us to make sure that happens.

**Q:** I am sharing sentiments provided to me by others. The focus on double A AALANA has left some students identifying as Asian feeling excluded, this semester particularly.

**A:** Thank you, this has been talked about a great deal and the efforts in those spaces continue. We do recognize that concern that has been raised, but it in no way takes our lens off the greater diversity that exists at RIT. So whether we're talking women, single A ALANA, disabled persons, however we look at diversity at RIT, the focus is never taken off of that, but this plan went directly at something based on 2020, so that's where this stands at this time.

**New Business**

- None

Meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

**Attendance November 17, 2021**

Name	Relationship to UC	Attended	Name	Relationship to UC	Attended
Abushagur, Mustafa	Member-FS		Lindsay, Susan	Member-SC	
Aldersley, Stephen	Member-FS		Loffredo, Joe	Non-Voting Member	
Betlem, Carla	Member-SC		Maggelakis, Sophia Alt. A. Hudson	Member-Dean	x
Buckley, Gerard	Member-Dean	x	Merrick, Alexa	Member-SG	
Button, Amy	Member-SC	x	Milliken, Renee	Member-SC	x
Carrington, Keira alt. K. Nix	Member-SG	x	Moore, Emily	Member-SC-Alt.	
Castillo, Jaime	Member-SC	x	Mortimer, Ian	Non-Voting Member	
Castleberry, Phil	Non-Voting Member		Mozrall, Jacqueline	Member & EC	x
Crawford, Denton	Member-FS		Munson, David	Non-Voting Member & EC	
Cummings, Twyla	Non-Voting Member	X	Nasr, Nabil	Member-Dean	
D'Amanda, Elisabetta	Member-FS	X	Pinkham, Jo Ellen	Non-Voting Member	x
Edwards, Doreen	Member-Dean		Prescott, Joanna	Member-SC-Alt.	
Ferrari, Christopher	Member-SG	x	Provenzano, Susan	Non-Voting Member	
Finnerty, Bob	Non-Voting Member	x	Pyatt, Adrian	Member-SG	x
Gallagher, Maureen	Member-SC		Raffaella, Ryne	Non-Voting Member	x
Ghazle, Hamad	Member-FS	x	Ramkumar, S. Manian	Member-Dean	x
Granberg, Ellen	Member & EC	x	Randrianarivelo, Lucas	Member & EC	x
Haake, Anne	Member-Dean	x	Reeder, Gina	Member & EC	x
Hadi, Abu Syeed	Member-SG	x	Robinson, Natalie	Member-SG	
Hall, James	Member-Dean		Sheffield, Chip; SOIS (sprg 2022)	Member-FS	x
Harrington, Gabrielle	Member-SC	x	Shuey, Jay	Member-SG	x
Herman, Vanessa J.	Non-Voting Member		Sood, Neha	Member-SC	x
Heyman, Emily	Member-SC	x	Sparkman, Torrence	Member-FS	x
Hudson, André	Member-FS	x	Stenport, Anna	Member-Dean	
Hull, Clyde	Member & EC	x	Teal, Michelle	Member-SC	x
Inclema, Ali	Member-SC-Alt.	x	Tolossa, Natnail	Member-SG	x
Jenkins, Keith	Non-Voting Member	x	Travis, Luca	Member-SG	
Johnson, Dan (fall 2021)	Member-FS	x	Trierweiler, John	Non-Voting Member	x
Johnson, Sandra	Non-Voting Member	x	Vo, Carol	Member-SG	x
Johnson, Scott	Member-FS		Wang, Yong Tai	Member-Dean	
Jokl, Todd	Member-Dean	x	Watters, Devon	Member-SC	x
Kahn, Sunny	Member-SG	x	Watters, James	Non-Voting Member	
Laury, Dino	Member-FS		Zeglen, Lauren	Member-SG	x

**Interpreters:** Carolyn Kropp and Allison Merkle