

RIT | University Council

Meeting Minutes: September 8, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 3:08 p.m.

Approval of Minutes from April 21, 2021 Meeting

The minutes were approved 35-0-1.

President's Report

This is the most enthusiastic semester I have witnessed at RIT. Freshman and sophomores arrived with lots of energy after such an abnormal last year.

COVID Restrictions, testing, vaccination rates:

- We are requiring that students be vaccinated. There are however, medical, religious, and philosophical exemptions allowed.
- Ninety-six percent of students are vaccinated, though there are some students who have not yet reported. Faculty/Staff are at 94% vaccination rates.
- We are testing all un-vaccinated students and staff on a weekly basis.
- About 1 student per day is COVID positive. Our virus prevalence is still way below the surrounding community. There are almost no staff testing positive.
- There are some other universities that have moved strictly online again, we want to do everything we can to keep the semester as normal as possible. We have contingency plans if the need arises.

Construction on Campus:

- Steel going up at the SHED. It is moving along nicely.
- Lots of work on athletic facilities.
 - Fields north of Andrews Drive went from green grass to piles of dirt this summer. We are re-creating the track on the north side of the road.
 - Artificial turf for softball and baseball fields will be installed. All in preparation for the future stadium. No start date has been set for construction on the stadium.
- Last week we held a groundbreaking for the addition to the Lowenthal Hall. Lots of staff and community members were present. This will double the size of the Saunders facility. Dean Jacquie Mozrall will be leading the fundraising on this project.
- Renovations completed on the photo program area in Gannett Hall. This was funded by a gift from CAD alumnus, Chance Wright '18.
- Upcoming NTID Project.
 - Area around Panara Theater will be completely renovated and somewhat repurposed. NTID is the lead in dance instruction and performance at RIT.
- RIT Venture Creations and Marketing Communications Division Relocations
 - We relocated the Venture Creations startup accelerator to our building on Franklin Street in downtown Rochester. About 30 companies are there presently.
 - Planning to bring all of the Marketing and Communications Division together into the former Venture Creations building on John Street. The space they vacate in Brown Hall will be turned into space for researchers.

Our plans for Brick City Homecoming are in progress and a report is later in today's agenda.

NCAA Athletics Updates:

We had conversations about possibly moving more of our teams to Division I, but this was put on the back burner due to the pandemic. Since then, we have been working on a plan to get scholarship approval for men's and women's hockey. Almost all of the teams we play offer scholarships. We are pursuing a waiver in the rule and a change in the rule. Important to note that the entire NCAA's future is uncertain – so it's not the right time to make a decision about moving additional teams to Division I. NCAA has called for a constitutional convention in November and is in the process of surveying universities for input. The convention will lead to proposals that are expected to be acted upon in January. There is no indication at this time of what the rules might be.

Q: We have some clinical programs on campus. We are seeing hospitals and other clinical sites are making vaccinations a requirement for employees. Will vaccinations become required as mandatory without exception?

A: There are legal issues related to medical and religious exemptions. We are required to provide accommodations for employees as it relates to disability and religion. The religion does not need to be organized, but must be recognized and believed in. There is ongoing conversation about removing the philosophical exemption, as well as requiring faculty/staff to be vaccinated in the same way it is required for students.

Q: Hockey and athletic scholarships - is president Munson confident this will change?

A: We are making the appeal, but do not know how it will turn out. There recently was a rejection, and they are in the process of appealing the waiver. They are doing this in collaboration with the union. I am in favor of these scholarships.

Ratification of 2021-2022 University Council Plan of Work (*presentation files available on [RIT Digital Archive](#)*)

Ellen Granberg, Provost and Sr. Vice President for Academic Affairs

There are three categories of items that come to UC: annual reports, policy reviews and revisions, and special topics. This is a living document and members are welcome to suggest changes to the University Executive Committee.

The Plan of Work was endorsed unanimously.

C06.0 Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment & Retaliation – REVISIONS (*presentation files available on [RIT Digital Archive](#)*)

Bobby Colón, Vice President & General Counsel, F&A

Jo Ellen Pinkham, Assoc. Vice President and Chief Human Resource Officer, F&A

Major Changes:

- Added reference to RIT'S policy on consensual romantic and sexual relationships (C23.0) and RIT'S policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment for Faculty, Staff and Students (C27.0). The updated policy clearly states that Non-consensual sexual and romantic relationships between staff or faculty and a student are a violation of university policy.
- In the policy statement section, more language added in anti-retaliation statement and a new reservation of rights statement.
- Definition Section: more consistent definitions
- General provisions: sexual harassment does not include Title IX sexual harassment (C27.0)
- Records and allegations: added can be reviewed by the Title IX Office or Office of Compliance & Ethics (OCE) investigators
- Complaint section: Supervisors have an obligation to report any observed or overheard violation centrally to Human Resources (HR).
- Determining the outcome of investigation – HR is responsible for determining if violation of policy occurred; will work with supervisor and department to determine corrective actions.
- Procedures section: made a separate section, frequent revisions from state and federal governments. This will simplify future updates
- Appeals – revised to differentiate between C27.0 and C06.0
- Added language in anti-retaliation statement

Q: Do we let employees know when policies are being updated?

A: Yes. **Proposed revisions** will be brought to Staff Council and Faculty Senate and a broad communication is made whenever policy is updated.

Q: Are there regulations for hostile classroom environments as there are for hostile work environments?

A: There are federal statutes that prohibit discrimination against students.

Q: If a student experiences a hostile classroom environment, whom should they go to?

A: Students should go to department chairs, and then to the dean if needed. Sometimes students will talk to a different faculty member. If there is an investigation, it will go through HR or another appropriate office, depending on the circumstances. Student-to-student issues will involve Student Conduct. Students also have access to the Title IX Office and the [bias-related incident report form](#), as well as the Ombuds Office.

Comment: Students will often go to Academic Advisor. Maybe they should be more aware of the processes for support. Academic advisors may not have the awareness to deal with this issue. It might be useful to give them a list of resources to give to students.

Comment: CaPS Perspective: RIT has a [Red Folder](#) that lists indicators for distress and is an excellent resource. This is accessible via Google search. CAPS makes it their responsibility to be well connected with the other offices. Academic Advisors are aware of this resource.

Q: What is the definition of hostile work environment?

A: There is case law, state law, and federal law that defines a hostile work environment.

Q: From a student perspective, where is the best office to go for support?

A: It is best to start with the Ombuds Office because they can help or they will point you in the direction that you need to go.

Brick City Homecoming & Family Weekend (*presentation files available on [RIT Digital Archive](#)*)

Lynn Rowoth, Assoc. VP Community Relations & Special Events

Lisa Stein, Assoc. Dir. Conferences & Special Events

Nicole Prahler, Assoc. Dir. Conferences & Special Events

Events are happening October 15-17th and are primarily in-person this year, however Alumni Relations will be doing some virtual offerings.

October 15th, Friday:

- Alex Kipman '01 Golisano will be back as featured speaker. He helped create the Microsoft HoloLens and the Xbox Connect.
- Comedian Tig Notaro - She has HBO and Netflix specials. Her performance is at 9:00pm.
- Dueling pianos will be presented both before and after her program.

SAU - Family Fun

- Includes escape room and games, DIY Kite making, laser tag, and food trucks

Activities

- Women in Computing is having an open house.
- Rochester city tours will be held on Friday and Sunday afternoons.

Saturday:

- Men's Hockey v. St. Lawrence in the evening at Blue Cross Arena. Shuttle busses will be provided.

- Women's Hockey v. Cornell - 1:00 p.m. in the Gene Polisseni Center.
- Volleyball in Clark gym
- Women's soccer team is playing as well

College Programs:

- Golisano College is having their 20th anniversary and it is also the 25th anniversary of the software engineering program. In addition, they are dedicating the Cybersecurity building with self-guided tour.
- CAD: glass blowing and School of Film and Animation Honors show. Tours of labs and facilities on campus including remodel of the photo lab and the tunnel tours.
- Saunders: wine tasting
- CHST: Patient care and Ultrasound show
- COLA: Pop up performances

Family programming on Saturday, October 16th

- Kite making in SAU lobby
- Red Barn rock climbing, fake axe throwing, and zip line.
- Bubble soccer, giant games, inflatables, and food trucks near the shuttle buses before the hockey game departure.

Sunday:

- Bubble soccer.
- Annual Brick City 5k. Starts on residence hall side.
- Performing Arts Scholars will perform Broadway Cabaret show on outdoor stage.

[Website](#) will be open next week for ticket purchases.

Facilities Update Campus Projects (*presentation files available on [RIT Digital Archive](#)*)

John Moore, Assoc. Vice President, Facilities Management Services

Jim Yarrington, University Architect & Dir., Planning & Design

Almost 1 billion in capital projects currently underway that are driven by strategic plan:

- Need for updated classrooms
- Need for more research space
- More performing arts space
- Need for upgraded facilities.

The SHED:

- New building 126,000 sq. feet.
- Classroom, project, maker and performing arts spaces.
- Transportation Center will be brought back once the construction concludes.
- The Wallace Library existing corridor will be tied into the new building.
- The main level had an entrance on the quarter mile. This will be accessible. There will be a maker showcase, dance facility and black box theatre.
- Changes in Wallace will be delightful for the overall community.
- Currently working on steel and the elevator tower.
- There is a large oval shaped open space (landscaped) that the building is centered around.

Music Performance Theater:

- Will be the finest facility for musical performance in the region with 750 seats. Many spaces are below 500 seats in the Rochester region. Will also have a restored theater organ.
- Located by the CET and Institute Hall buildings.
- Visitors from the public can enter through a lobby

- This will create an outside amphitheater and we will work on pedestrianizing Reynolds Dr. Hope to be able to project on the outside building.

Athletic Facility Improvements

- Install artificial turf surface for our current stadium and then a future project is to build a new stadium facility around this field.
- Rebuilding two ball fields on north side of Andrews Drive
- Future plans for the stadium. More robust athletic core for campus. Hope to create a sense of enclosed stadium.

Other Projects Underway

- Brown and Engineering halls will have assignable research space.
- Improved space over in the Gannet Building
- NTID – Key part of the performing arts portfolio. Phased classroom renovation project. Remodeling some of the interesting clover-shaped classrooms. Bringing the restrooms up to code.

Q: Is there a discussion about student housing, especially the dorms? A lot of students want A/C and elevators.

A: Talking with Auxiliary Services regarding improvements. Working on elevators in NRH and the SDC and the following year will be Eastman and Gleason. We are in discussion about what to do to improve A/C in the rooms that do not currently have it and also the all gender restroom conversion in the Residence Halls.

Q: What is the timeline on stadium?

A: It will be philanthropy driven. The first athletic phases will be done this summer.

- Next summer will be the field and lighting to prepare for a future drop in of a stadium.
- There will just be one section of bleachers in the field, so home and away will be on the same side.
- 15,000 bleachers. There will be space for a future addition if needed.
- Primarily for soccer and lacrosse.

Q: CHST currently has an exercise science program. There is work for growth in a Doctorate of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy. What is the possibility of having space for these programs?

A: We are hoping to have a clinical building for health sciences that will also incorporate athletics.

Q: Regarding the Lowenthal building renovation – will this impact the wetlands behind the building? There is a colony of feral cats in that location.

A: There may be some minimal impact to the buffer zone. We will be careful to protect the wetlands. Please send an email to jryfms@rit.edu with concerns about the cats.

Q: What is the amelioration plan for disturbing the existing wildlife that live in the spaces where construction will be done?

A: We've had issues this fall partly because we were not as occupied in the past year and critters found comfortable living spaces and in addition, the SHED work shook them loose. There is an exterminator on contract and working with Environmental Health & Safety department to clean up. They are hoping that there will not be any major issues.

Q: Is there a plan for more parking? We have been continuously removing parking while doing construction that encourages more visitors.

A: There is a plan process coming in the fall, it will be about parking and pedestrian walkways. One of the goals in the Strategic Plan is to create a Master Plan that has a specific section on parking. This plan was put on hold due to the pandemic.

Q: There was a discussion about building a parking garage. Is that idea possible?

A: This will be included in the discussion of the master plan. This has to be looked at very strategically from an aesthetics and operational point of view.

New Business

- None

Meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Attendance September 8, 2021

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

Key: EC=Executive Committee; FS=Faculty Senate; SC=Staff Council; SG=Student Government

Interpreters: Carolyn Kropp and Allison Merkle