

RIT | University Council

Meeting Minutes: March 6, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 3:12

Approve Minutes of February 14, 2024 Meeting:

Minutes approved 38-0-1

President's Report:

CURRENT EVENTS

- Congratulations to the National Science Foundation Career Award winners among the faculty— Amy Engelbrecht-Wiggans an assistant professor of Mechanical Engineering and Bing Yan an assistant professor of electrical and microelectronic engineering.
 - These are significant five-year awards that give a huge boost to any faculty that receives them, and it is fortunate enough to see one award let alone two, so a big congratulations.
- Similarly, assistant professor in the School of Design Juan Noguera has received the Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Design. This award recognizes Noguera's contributions and promise as an immigrant designer in changing the way people interact with the world.
- A team of students, faculty, and staff have been working on and recently launched the video game *That Damn Goat!* as part of MAGIC Spell Studios. This is a professional video game produced by members of the RIT community and is now available for purchase on the video game marketplace platform Steam.
- For our hockey fans, the women's hockey team has done much better this season than before and are on their way back, having made the league playoffs. The men's hockey team has won their regular season championship and are gearing up for league playoffs. The season has been overall phenomenal and a big congratulations to any folks who have had any part in the season thus far.
- A very special weekend happened this past February 23rd as it was the Power Your Potential Women's Leadership Conference for businesswomen across the area, hosting many outside panelists and held in the new event space within the Saunders College of Business expansion.
 - The following day was also the Women's Leadership Summit, which held all kinds of people from outside RIT and alumni coming to speak to our female-identifying students. The great lineup of impressive women was all put together by many students and faculty from the Saunders College of Business making it quite a weekend.

PLANNING THE NEXT STRATEGIC PLAN

- The beginning stages of working on the next RIT strategic plan are being worked on as the previous strategic plan adopted in 2018 is about to wrap up by 2025. What we as the Board of Trustees are doing currently is talking over the planning frameworks and hosting committees with many folks.
 - The steering committee is composed of higher administration and trustees, with a subcommittee of only trustees, as well as other subcommittees for faculty and staff inputs.

- Additional thought is being put into subcommittees for students, parents, and alumni of the university to get a holistic vision of the things that should be considered looking toward the future.
- Most people are aware that we are on a cycle for re-accreditation by the Middle States accreditation body which happens every eight years. The committee needs to put together a huge compendium of where things are at RIT and where they will be going, which involves a thorough review of the state of affairs of the university to nail down central themes of our advancements and plans.
 - As part of this work the committee has gone around to the various governance groups, and with how extensive their work will be, a lot of their work will be coordinated with our committees for the next master plan to combine ideas and identify critical information.
- There will be two phases of input collection for the planning of the future master plan, the first of which starts by gathering some input through the end of this semester, with the bulk of collections happening more thoroughly in the Fall with a broader reach to solicit ideas for the handful of things we feel need to be worked on over the next few years or so.
 - The ultimate target for this planning process is to get a final approval by the Board of Trustees meeting in October 2025 before considering how many people and organizations are engaged in this process and the critical importance of solidifying a plan before the expiry of the current plan.

UNIVERSITY ACHIEVEMENTS IN FUNDRAISING AND RESEARCH

- Things within the fundraising side of things are going very well under Phil Castleberry, with the latest figure reported at the recent Board of Trustees meeting being 26.3 million dollars raised this fiscal year out of the 33.1 million dollar goal set for June 30th; we are on a very good track and have until then to hit that goal.
- The Sentinel Society was created and put into place in 2021. This is an organization of donors to the university that commit to donate a fixed amount over a period of five years, with the option to dedicate their contributions to specific colleges or organizations on campus.
 - Heartwarming stories have already come out of how students facing financial hardships have been impacted by these contributions, enabling the deans' offices to distribute these funds for books and aid to needy students in their colleges.
 - We currently have 615 members of the Society, with many member events happening around the nation, including in Colorado, California, Florida, New York City, and more.
- In the research realm of things, we have already exceeded our strategic plan research goals in many areas ahead of schedule. We have passed our strategic goal of 70 million dollars expended on research this past fiscal year, and as for our goal of having at least 50 PhD graduates each year, we are already at 70 PhD graduates.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Next month is our annual Imagine RIT event, happening on April 27th.
 - The special event of the day has always been the Futurist Symposium which historically is held in the morning of the event and is always very well attended. An impressive set of people talking about innovative topics and pointing the way to the future is what sets it apart, but if you go, you tend to miss half of the festival.

- This year we will be moving the event from Saturday morning to Friday evening to avoid that conflict, and I believe it will start at 4:00 PM with a reception to follow the event.
- Finally, a reminder of how quickly this year has gone by; commencement is around the corner on May 10th and 11th and will be a joyous day for friends and family. The day is packed full of ceremonies, so we are always looking for volunteers to help.

Q: Have there been any efforts by the university to involve input from employers when drafting the next master plan?

A: That has not been suggested in our planning as of yet but is a good idea we will take under advisement.

Policy C22.0 Records Management Policy Update (*presentation files available on the [University Council website](#)*)

Evan Thompson, Senior Associate Counsel, Legal Affairs

OVERVIEW OF POLICY C22.0 AND PROPOSED CHANGES

- Just two years ago I was here previously talking about changes to policy C22.0.
- The changes to the policy were successful in expanding the trainings that the office does but we found that as a governance policy, C22.0 is restricting our ability to keep up with the times and the creation, maintenance, and disposal of records.
- That is why today we are looking to decommission C22.0 as a governance policy and institute it as an administrative policy instead per policy B5.0 which allows for the decommissioning of policies in scenarios where it outweighs its usefulness.
- This change would allow for us in Records Management to be more flexible with department implementation of the policy whenever new technology or records are created.
- Records Management is really the enforcement of record keeping to maintain our obligations with legal needs and protections in the event of litigation. An administrative policy would enable for quicker changes to the definition as needed.
 - The best example of this is that the definition of a record is very broad and could even technically encompass a student's class plan written on a whiteboard assuming an RIT faculty met and wrote this plan on the board.
 - As an administrative policy, we can work with individual departments to craft policies that work best for the documents and records they work with, enabling a more efficient and effective operation.
- We are seeking the decommissioning of the policy and over the coming weeks will be going around to each of the governance groups. Records Management will not be going away as it is a legal requirement that the division exists.

Faculty and Staff Health and Wellness Update (*presentation files available on the [University Council website](#)*)

Jo Ellen Pinkham, Assoc. VP and Chief HR Officer

Stephanie Xenias, Director of Benefits and Wellness

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT AVAILABLE BENEFITS AND PROGRAMS

- Last year we talked a lot about the program offerings for employees, faculty, and staff across the university, and will remind you about those programs that are available.

- We also want to take today to walk you through the data about internal utilizations and external utilizations through our partners.
- Starting with physical wellness, we have an onsite medical practice through Rochester Regional Health, which has proven to be convenient for our employees to seek medical care, however the data is not visible to human resources.
- We have medical insurance provided through our third-party provider Excellus for preventative care and all kinds of other care as well.
- Dental exams and cleanings are also offered, which is critical as dental health has been shown as a precursor for mental and overall physical health, so it is important to think about.
- On site we have exercise classes, personal training, wellness workshops, and free access to workout facilities.
- We also have free confidential counseling externally provided online, MD Live, and several workshops available for all constituents, employees, and managers through our talent roadmap for talent development.
- We also have had 500 individuals over the past 18 to 20 months participate in individual counseling with our external partner Captrust, which is an independent financial advisor and investment advice provider.
 - They have been able to create 400 roadmaps so far for our constituents, or blueprints as they call them, and they go in-depth with financial planning. It is highly encouraged that you take advantage of this program for the free advice on financial and/or investment advice, so look on our website to set up an appointment.
- Other vehicles include flexible spending accounts and employer matches on our retirement plans, which have over 90% participation and ⅔ of individuals contribute the max amount to, all in addition to other financial support.
- Occupational wellness and wellbeing and many training and development offerings support those in different roles and departments across campus.
- Social wellbeing and support systems include events like Imagine RIT and team gatherings such as RIT athletics.
- Environmental support of our environment is part of RIT's commitment to sustainability, with nature walks and community gardens being part of that support from an employee perspective.
- Spirituality is the last piece of our wheel of support and includes meditation, mindfulness, yoga, and other campus events and gatherings to reinforce our mindfulness.
 - There is a distinction between employee and student wellness; we do not provide the physical or emotional services on site like the Student Wellness division does; we instead work through external providers for our employees.
- Physical and emotional wellbeing is at the forefront for employers and has gained in traction following the pandemic in both focus and budget.
 - Newer employers find that millennials and Gen Z are almost half of the current workforce and research has found that the early career individuals are heavily focused on wellbeing in the workplace and identifying the role of managers in influencing wellbeing and addressing burnout.

UTILIZATIONS AND CLAIMS DATA

- We have some programs that are lacking in engagement and identified that we need to do a better job in marketing and communicating these things to share it with our employees. Investing in employee mental health has risen from about 66% to 90% in the last five years.
 - This is no longer a “nice to have” for employers as it has become a “must have” to attract talent.

- We have approximately 3800 eligible employees and 80% participate in our medical plan.
 - There are about 6500 covered members (including employees, spouses, and dependents).
- Our university belongs to a higher education drug coalition called PURPC, Preferred University Rx Purchasing Coalition made up of about 40 universities across the Northeast.
 - This coalition gives us the leverage as a group for purchasing power, but still allows for individual institutions to work to create their own plans and programs that best fit their institutions.
- Some of the most prevalent chronic conditions seen at RIT include asthma, cholesterol disorders, diabetes, depression, and anxiety.
 - Chronic means that with any of these conditions you would be living with them day in and day out, where acute conditions would include things like cancer, which is something we see as we look through the data.
- We are a self-insured institution, so we pay the claims made under our plan, whereas a fully insured plan would involve paying a premium to the carrier who would then pay the claims. As a self-insured institution, we take in all of that cost and have to be mindful of it as a result.
- Preventative care is a huge part of our plan offerings, and we need to ensure that our employees are getting their annual physicals and screenings done to catch anything that is happening right away in addition to dental cleanings and other needed visits.
 - We are above our benchmarks for current exercising of these types of screenings and our plan covers 100% of these preventative screenings.
- Wellframe is offered by Excellus as a powerful tool that allows you to be part of a care management program through an app that is part of our insurance plan. This program can enable individuals to connect with a dedicated care manager and specific health professional to help individuals with chronic conditions stay on top of their medications and interpreting charts, in addition to other aspects of wellness that some individuals may struggle with alone.
- MD Live is a telehealth program through Excellus that is for non-urgent medical and behavioral health issues that can be accessed through an app or website, getting people connected with a licensed medical professional quickly.
 - The program has a 10-dollar copay but is oftentimes less expensive than going to see a provider directly, and for behavioral health issues you can see someone in two to three days.
- This data is about a year old but what we see is that there is a trend of depression increasing annually based on the broad data, which incentivizes us to put more prevalence into addressing the mental wellbeing of individuals on campus. Other conditions like hypertension, cholesterol, and diabetes have increased five to 20% as well.
 - Younger dependents are using the services available at a higher rate, but utilization levels have leveled off overall. The norm across the United States for diagnosis codes of depression has been about 23%, putting RIT slightly above the norm.
- When you put the data together you see that there is an overall positive trend showing that our employees tend to seek out treatment more around their conditions, but we will continue to push for more change.
- Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) utilization did decrease slightly from 12.5% to 10% from 2022 to 2023.
- Looking at the disability claims, we have seen a decrease in depression and anxiety, however they remain a huge driver of claims. Musculoskeletal is number two in claims, which is a comorbidity meaning it can be tied to depression and anxiety, which is important to note.

- Depression and anxiety has a longer than average duration of an employee being out on short term disability (70 days), which is above the 30 to 35 days that other disability claims average.
- We are also seeing more frequent behavioral issues involving employees in distress, with suicidal ideations, self-injuries, anger, and uncontrollable crying.
- Considering all the above, we are actively sourcing and developing case management programs to assist employees with the transitional process as people come back to work from different role perspectives.
- Just yesterday we had preliminary results about wellbeing and behavioral health diagnostic assessments.
- We are looking to shift to a more holistic wellbeing approach that hits all of the dimensions needed to meet our people where they are by examining our training programs, our EAP and comp site, and more.
- We are looking to see what we can do in the Better Me Wellness program and see what offerings we have that worked in the past that may no longer be effective, as well as looking to speak with our vendors to review what they can offer us to help our employees do better.
 - The EAP is one of the programs under review so an RDP is going out to test if our provider is doing what we need them to do effectively and if we will need to switch providers.

Q: There were concerns expressed last year regarding the timeline to see counselors through our EAP, are there any updates?

A: It has improved somewhat however there is still an increase in demand that has made the timeline difficult to shorten, however through alternatives like MD Live there are ways to get in contact quickly with a licensed specialist without a limit to the number of sessions.

Q: Pregnancy is listed as a disability in the presentation; why is that?

A: That is not our choice, that is the definition as covered under the disability section of claims under disability law in New York State.

Q: What are your folks thoughts about what you may want to do with the program and future of Better Me Wellness with the reduction in size of the team from three to one?

A: We want to take a deeper dive to see what makes sense for what services to provide directly and see if repurposing those dollars to expand those services or change them is the best option for employees. We want to also see what it means for the program and while perhaps not replacing the headcount, instead looking to expand services and add an additional staff member.

Q: A number of years ago you could access long term care at RIT and it disappeared– why?

A: Long term care insurance was a product offered through many employers previously, but then insurers stopped carrying group policies for long term care and favored it on individual basis only, leaving those who stayed enrolled with extremely high costs and was the most likely cause for why RIT no longer offered the benefit as we could no longer justify the cost. Other schools such as U of R similarly offered and did away with that benefit.

Q: The wellbeing wheel is really complete and nice as well. Is there anything like that wheel for students?

A: The wellness wheel has been around for a long time and we look at all of those dimensions as well and the sense of belonging feelings, and consider social, spiritual, and supporting the community to

make it thrive. There is more focus on community wellbeing and will continue to connect where it makes sense to see heightened awareness in the future.

Q: Are there any plans to reopen the lab testing center that was on campus? It was shut down after COVID and because of the staff shortage being an issue; faculty and staff appreciated it being on campus.

A: I will ask that question and get back to you after finding out more.

Q: You talked earlier about how RIT is self-insured rather than fully insured, and that the costs of claims are covered by RIT directly. Could you speak as to why RIT made that decision?

A: From my experience with the population and environment we are in it is a better option for us to be self-insured because of key benefits, the largest of which is our ability as a self-insured institution to be able to see the claims that come in and make sense of what the environment is like here with what risks and claims are most prevalent and make decisions accordingly. This allows us to ensure that the benefits we are choosing are scrutinized to fit the needs of our employees based on what is most utilized and prevalent in claims. As fully insured, we would pay a flat 500-dollar fee per individual covered on our plan, instead of an admin fee of five dollars per individual up front and the covering of claims as they come in. This structure works out better in RIT's favor and given the volume of claims that are brought in and from where, it gives us the same access to coverage and saves us dollars that can be used to get more specialized coverage that fits our profile more accurately. Additionally, carriers do not support swapping plans between self and full coverage.

Q: A couple of years ago there was a New York State mandate that large employers had to cover IVF coverage, and with the trends in the United States currently I wondered how RIT determines what is covered by our plans?

A: There are things that we have to cover to comply with state laws, and there are certain items that we have review the tradeoffs before placing them in our plan, such as how much utilization IVF coverage would have and if covering it would raise the costs for everyone. The premiums and other cost effects are all things we consider while crafting our plan.

School of Performing Arts Update (*presentation files available on the [University Council website](#)*)

Erica Haskell, Director

OVERVIEW OF PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAMS

- Four years ago, the Performing Arts Scholar program was put into motion to attract students with partial scholarships for attending the university and participating in our performance-based performing arts programs.
- Following our social media platforms will give you the best insights into what the current and future performances are, as well as see our students work.
- RIT performing art students are brilliant students whose participation in performing arts benefit their creativity, collaboration, and innovation within their majors. Professors know that collaborative projects are a major part of academic and professional life, and our performing arts students get that hands-on experience and know-how through their productions and concerts where so much of the product depends on listening and reacting to their peers' performances.
- These students have a holistic balance in their lives here on campus, academically and emotionally, as they are able to get that social life experience outside of the dorms through the

- large community of performing art students here at RIT, a group that has been here even before the start of our scholarship program.
 - In the first year we had 134 students who received these performing arts scholarships, and the figure has now reached 800 recipients in this past year, with a projected figure of 2,000 applicants for this upcoming Fall.
 - Our data on our performing arts scholars is drilled down by college and program, and if you are interested in seeing where these students are within your colleges, we are more than happy to share the information with you.
 - Figures show that performing arts students have a higher on average persistence rate than other groups on campus.
- The MarComm division has been amazing partners in giving us pictures of our students as they are engaged in performing. Our posters and graphics have been made possible by the talented students in the student run graphic design agency Command+g.
- The ecosystem of students for performing arts has grown on campus, with the size of audiences increasing for our orchestra concerts or performances in the NTID theater. Our theatrical performances consistently sell out due to a lack of space for our community. Our support structure for performing arts has reached beyond our own School of Performing Arts, with now more than 42 performing arts-based clubs managed by the Center for Campus Life. These have all been grassroots clubs that spawned on their own to target an area of performing arts that is important to them, such as the new Folkloric Dance Group.

PAST AND UPCOMING EVENTS

- One of the most common questions through many surveys we have organized has been “where can I perform?” If you are here this summer and fall, you should know that the Fringe Festival will be happening, and as RIT is a cosponsor of the event, we have the Little Theater stage fully reserved for any RIT performances that are interested in showcasing themselves at this annual festival.
- This past Brick City Weekend had us taking over the new spaces in the SHED to house several performances, all held in the Glass Box Theater. The experience was extremely positive for our students and performers and many remarkable talents were showcased.
- We recently had a wonderful performance by our concert band, and the ensemble's director dedicated the entire concert to RIT creators, having many ‘world premiers’ performed during the concert in addition to having a student conduct one of the pieces.
- This Friday our RIT Philharmonic Orchestra will be having a performance with the Cornell choir and glee clubs in Ingle Auditorium, transforming the space into an interactive experience for audience members.
- We are hosting a comedian on campus for a show with the main theme of astrophysics, keeping in mind the novelty of our performing arts program which combines our technical minds with creative arts.
- Upcoming performances include *Ada and the Engine*, a play dedicated to Ada Lovelace’s work which is taking place in the Glass Box Theater, and additionally, *The Machine* is an interactive experience that will have audience members walking through a literal maze as they investigate the world of the show around them.
- Last Spring we hosted Sandeep Das, a grammy award winning Indian tabla player, perform on campus, and we are now going to be hosting him again, this time in a weeklong residency focused on highlighting intercultural interaction through performances and experiences. All of these events will be completely free for our RIT community and will be an excellent opportunity for us to continue to welcome our Indian community to campus.

- The Popular Music Collective will be holding the second Unlabeled Music Festival this spring with more than double the amount performances compared to the last festival, including a large variety of different genres.

THE FUTURE FOR PERFORMING ARTS

- We have been offering minors and immersions to our students and of recent are investigating the possibility of offering certificates in popular areas of performing arts. This has led us to looking toward hiring tenure track faculty to enable these plans and attract top talent.
 - We have been able to hire a top dance technology projection designer through this process and are looking forward to seeing the cutting edge work they do to make our performances on campus more interactive.
- An example of what a performing arts student looks like is Catherine Hammp who is a Mechanical Engineering major with a minor in Theater Arts, as well as a performing arts scholar.
 - During her past summer co-op, Catherine was able to work with a set production company to design set pieces for Broadway shows, and is currently still doing freelance for them.
 - Her senior design project has been designing a case for one of the steel drums used by our students for performances to protect them as they are being transported.
 - Catherine is combining her major with her interests and passion for the performing arts and is an example of what students at RIT are like.
- There are cross-institute efforts to source performing arts mentors within all areas of RIT, especially those who are artists and performers outside of their regular work. The mentors would have an interest in having an open door policy for our students to give them positive direction and support on what they need to succeed.
- Additionally, we have a performing arts advisory board containing members from across the institute (and two alumni) to ensure that we have a guiding strategy for our performing arts programs.
- We are seeking to create even more RIT-wide collaborations. NTID is currently the largest collaborator with their many shared performances and spaces. We are always open to new ideas and opportunities.

Q: You talked about some of the faculty partnerships and work being done there. Could you share your thoughts on why there are plans to hire more tenure track faculty when this is a non-degree awarding program?

A: There are a number of benefits associated with a tenure track faculty, number one of which is the long-term investment into the ecosystems here on campus and the future of the institute. There is an element of strategic and/or political planning with this decision and having tenure track positions are much more attractive than guest lecturer roles. Also, having more of these programs will attract greater talents. While it is true that we are non-degree awarding, it is actually a strength for us to not offer degrees as many students choose RIT for the durability of the RIT degree, and this allows us to help these students combine their interests with a durable degree rather than choose one or the other. Additionally, speaking to the research aspect of things, tenure track faculty will be critical for conducting research to be on the edge of performing arts and technology.

Q: I was here to see the blood bath that getting into the Performing Arts Scholar program was and I wanted to ask how you are ensuring that these students can get into the programs they want to participate in after receiving the award given the limited number of spots?

A: We have created many more practice rooms and spaces for performing arts students to rehearse and the SHED is a component of those efforts as well. With the increase in student clubs and performances, and the spaces now available to these groups on campus, it hopefully has made it less of a 'bloodbath.' We still want to make it competitive for our productions to ensure that students are able to showcase the stars of the community. A large limitation we currently have is the size of our facilities which is particularly true for our orchestras and larger groups.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Community Conversation (*presentation files available on the [University Council website](#)*)

Prabu David, Provost

Chris Collison, Harris Endowed Professor, COS and Co-Chair, AI Taskforce

IDENTIFYING THE FUTURE OF AI AT RIT

- This report will detail what the task force has done and how RIT is planning on distinguishing itself in AI and finding a way to capitalize on our strengths to tell our story with new investments.
- Our group was tasked with looking at our future plans on the topic of AI in the three categories of teaching and curriculum, research, scholarship and innovation, and experiential aspects of AI embedded in campus life.
- We formed subcommittees to take on each of these areas and had them conduct a SWOT analysis of their categories and had them recommend key areas in which we can move forward as a university.
 - The committee is composed of various faculty and staff from across RIT, however we did not have students in our committees.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Some of the findings were an interest in a collaborative space being constructed on campus that is dedicated to AI for faculty and students to come together, creating a central point that could host our AI foci. Creating a physical space of some kind was a common idea brought up by all subcommittees.
 - This AI Hub would be a place for seminars and workshops to take place and be the centerpiece for AI on campus.
- A second recommendation was to increase the presence of AI on campus along with its external visibility by increasing our marketing and communication focus on AI research and innovation done by students and faculty on campus. We would work with the MarComm department to enable this.
- Attracting greater and top tier talent by increasing our recruitment budget would be a great asset for university achievement in the field of AI.
- A greater strengthening of our research computing would be another critical recommendation, allocating funds toward constructing a lab with potent computing for all AI research needs.
- Another recommendation for the students on campus would be the possibility of a chatbot functionality in our web applications and sites called askRITCHIE, which would act as a resource for students to easily seek critical information.
 - It would be possible to create this technology internally or purchase it from a vendor as there are many solutions available on the market.
- Creating virtual RIT concierge kiosks and robots by involving students would showcase and emphasize our willingness to innovate and the technology we enable on campus.

- Potential robots could include accessibility functions through an ASL avatar interaction with voice recognition.
- Teaching curriculums on AI is also of critical importance, but with how fast moving this topic is and with the constant innovation present, it is a big question of how do we support the continuous faculty improvement needed to stay on target.
 - Adding AI to the classroom is critical and assessing what role it will play in our classes, and the ethical and healthy use of AI through citing and more is imperative.
- ‘Fast Tracking’ is the word of the day and must be used as we quickly move to adopt and amend policies and ethical use of AI to ensure that we are up to the times.
- We are working to fine these recommendations in order to deliver the official report to the Provost on April 1st and then await next steps.

Q: You mentioned not including students in the committees and I wanted to ask why that was?

A: We wanted to consider things like focus groups and surveys for student input and we think that students are probably way further ahead and advanced than we are with this stuff, so we wanted to start by collecting inputs from our faculty and staff members first. When the report does come in, we will be looking to student input to get more information.

Q: CalTech, MIT, and Rice all have their own spins on what AI means to them and what they teach, so how does RIT differentiate itself from competitors and where do we fit within the whole scheme of higher education?

A: That was part of what the committees have been trying to figure out and do and has been a major part of the SWOT analysis. We have amazing pockets around campus in which we excel like our division of imaging sciences and astrophysics. What we are identifying is the niche to which we belong that gives us the best competitive edge by leveraging our strengths and finding what others have yet to do and doing it.

Q: This is more of a comment on the request for a physical space. I do remember that in the early days of computing there was usually a dedicated space on campus with a single computer because there were limitations with computing. Nowadays computing has become more ubiquitous and distributed and with AI needs people have computers at their fingertips to conduct research. If we were to create a space for AI needs and research, what would we put in there that warrants the space and would provide value to users of it?

A: That was a point that we were careful to consider when recommending a space, as many faculty have their own technology and computers they use for research, but the dedicated space for this work would allow for collaboration to happen. A trade off instead would perhaps be finding a space and renovating it or taking funds to create a support package for either hiring more talent or funding greater research.

New Business

Q: There have been concerns brought up from staff regarding the decision to not close RIT on the day of the eclipse due to the gridlock traffic conditions that are expected that day in addition to the recommendations from the health officials to stay in place during the day to avoid the potential hazards that will occur due to the solar event. This plan makes it difficult for our staff and service workers to get to and from campus that day with the traffic patterns and unnecessarily puts them in a predicament given the expected low attendance of students making the overall need for a full staff unnecessary. Are

there any changes in plans for this event that will affect our staff or plans for more centralized recommendations given this information?

A: We cancel classes with great reluctance and try to make sure that students are getting the value out of their classes that they are paying for, especially with certain lab classes that cannot just be made up if canceled. This is a case by case scenario and it is important to talk with your managers to determine if you will be needed on campus or if you can work from home. There have been a lot of predictions thrown out concerning the mass traffic jams, but there is a better than 50% chance that it will be a cloudy day of the eclipse, so we will see what the situation turns out to really be. We are doing what we can and have talked with both the sheriff's office and other authorities in the area to ensure that we are safely able to stay open. While it is not a simple process by any means, the inconvenience that may be caused that day has been considered.

Q: I had a constituent that happened to meet with the eclipse coordinator from the Rochester Museum & Science Center who expressed disappointment with the university not having planned any special programming surrounding the eclipse for the greater public. Are there any programming blocks planned?

A: We do have some special programming prepared and have had a Sentinel Society event regarding the eclipse already, in addition to the RIT Observatory holding a special event. The College of Science as well as Government and Community Relations have purchased a pair of solar eclipse viewing glasses for every member of campus, and there will be celebrations and activities hosted by the College of Science and other organizations. The science behind a solar eclipse is not that in-depth due to the simplicity of the process, but we are still going to celebrate the event.

Q: I just wanted to ask and confirm that with staff being asked to come in that day, that any of the events being hosted for students and faculty being open to our staff members as well to enjoy as it is a campus-wide event.

A: Yes of course, this is a once in a lifetime kind of event and staff will be included.

Meeting adjourned at 5:10

Attendance – see next page

Attendance 3/6/2024

Name	Relationship to UC	Attended	Name	Relationship to UC	Attended
Aldersley, Stephen	Member-FS		Lapham, JT	Member-SG	X
Asmorom, Naemy	Member-SG	X	Lapizco-Encinas, Blanca	Member-FS	X
Behrend, Mark	Member-SG	X	Lezette, Michelle	Member-SC	X
Bobryk-Ozaki, Myren	Member-SG Alternate		Loffredo, Joe	Non-Voting Member	
Brinkman, Olivia	Member-SG	X	Lynch, Aidan	Member-SG	
Buch, Neeraj	Non-Voting Member	X	McQuiller, Laverne	Non-Voting Member	X
Buckley, Gerard	Member-Dean	X	Milliken, Renee	Member-SC	X
Butler, Janine	Member-FS	X	Moran-Pearlman, Katelyn	Member-SG	Excused
Castleberry, Phil	Non-Voting Member		Mozrall, Jacqueline	Member & EC	
Chung, Sorim	Member - FS	X			
David, Prabu	Member & EC	X	Munson, David	Non-Voting Member & EC	X
Davis, Kathleen	Non-Voting Member		Nasr, Nabil	Member-Dean	
Deese, Franklin	Member-FS	X	Newman, Atia	Member & EC	Excused
Dibble, Leah (Aalyan Rajwani)	Member – SG	X	Norris-Martin, Kelly (Lauren Hall)	Member-Dean	X
Edwards, Doreen	Member-Dean	X	Pauley, Darnae	Member-SG	
Ehrlich-Scheffer, Kathrine	Member-SC	X	Perez Morales, Kimberly	Member-SG	X
Faber, Josh	Member-FS	X	Pinkham, Jo Ellen	Non-Voting Member	X
Finnerty, Bob	Non-Voting Member	X	Raffaella, Ryne	Non-Voting Member	
Flowers, Rosaline	Member-SG	X	Ramkumar, S. Manian	Member-Dean	Excused
Giasi, Lia	Member-SC	X	Redman, Emily	Member-SC	X
Hall, James	Member-Dean	X	Santer, Jon (Ross Hisert)	Member - SC	X
Harrington, Gabrielle	Member-SC	X	Seyler, Andrew	Member-SG Alternate	
Herman, Vanessa J.	Non-Voting Member		Sheffield, Chip	Member-FS	
Heyman, Emily	Member-SC	Excused	Slusarski, Diane	Non-Voting Member	X
Hudson, André	Member-Dean	X	Smith, Evan	Member - SC	X
Huenerfauth, Matt	Member – Dean	X	St. Jean, Bill	Member-SC Alternate	X
Inclema, Ali	Member - SC	X	Stowe, Brendon	Member & EC	X
Jenkins, Keith	Non-Voting Member	X	Thomas, Bolaji	Member-FS	
Johnson, Dan	Member-FS	X	Trierweiler, John	Non-Voting Member	X
Johnson, Sandra	Non-Voting Member	X	Ulin, Robert	Member-FS	X
Johnson, Scott	Member-FS		Vogler, Gene	Member-SC Alternate	
Johnston, Joe	Non-Voting Member	X	Wang, Yong Tai	Member-Dean	X
Jokl, Todd	Member-Dean	X	Watters, Jim	Non-Voting Member	
Jones, Darcie	Member & EC	X	Williams, Jackie	Member-SG	X
Keeney, Morgan	Member-SG Alternate	X	Zehr, Jeremy	Member-SC	X

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

Interpreters: Nicole Lupinetti & Jennifer Mura

UC Coordinator: Tamaira Brown

Student Assistant: Scott Franco