

RIT | University Council

Meeting Minutes: October 11, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 3:04

Approve Minutes of September 13, 2023 Meeting:

Minutes approved 36-0-0

President's Report:

THOUGHTS

- Heartened to have a super energetic semester on campus, lots of smiles and fun along the way. COVID is not gone, people have COVID at this moment but it is not stopping us.

HOMEcomings WEEKEND

- Homecoming week is upon us, with so much happening and so many visitors, a lot of things that anyone in our community can participate in are occurring.
- All of the volunteer groups will be on campus simultaneously this weekend, including the National Advisory Council, the individual college advisory boards, and more. It is quite an assembly of alumni and volunteers that will be present this weekend!
- Credit to the student body for recognizing who Hank Green is, it seems we were able to sell out of the 5,000 tickets to the show pretty quickly thanks to it.

BUDGETARY STATUS

- In terms of budget, we are cautious. We placed a hiring delay in place for staff hiring while awaiting the 21 day report to delay the fraction of staff being filled. Jim says we are in good shape, so to any staff or supervisors, those restrictions are lifted now as the university is in a reasonable place again financially.
 - The reason for the cautiousness is the student recruiting picture being different from the pre-pandemic state. Following the pandemic there have been fewer seniors in high school, especially in the north east. Additionally, the percentage of students in high school electing to go into higher education has decreased. If the economy worsened, the percentage may bounce back as people question the value of an undergraduate degree. Overall, however, the job market is looking good now.

CURRENT EVENTS

- The most difficult topic is the conflict in Israel and Gaza. As an institution we are always trying not to comment on things in the news unless necessary, but this current conflict affects a number of members of our community.

- Any university president that has or hasn't commented on the situation has been criticized. This is a very long standing conflict, and lots of people are affected not just in Israel, but in the surrounding countries as well. In these times we need to speak up and stick together as humans, and hope for a better day where we can persevere with strength. But right now, that hope is just not as bright as it was.

The Effect of Enrollment Numbers on the RIT Budget (*presentation files available on the [University Council website](#)*)

James Watters, Senior VP and Treasurer

OVERVIEW

- As an institution we spend about 140 million dollars an hour every day of every year keeping the university running. IT takes a lot of resources and steps to deliver the high quality education we pride ourselves on to students, and taking in our enrollment number across all campuses pulls this into perspective.
- We distill down the number to arrive at how many students we need to provide our resources and services to on our campuses.

STATE OF THE INSTITUTION

- We are up more than 600 undergraduate students than we were in 2019, and they are the strength of the university enrollment, representing about 86% of enrollment.
 - Around fall we expected to have about 2800 new enrollments, and actually attracted 2828 enrollees. Similarly, we expected to provide a 56% discount against the institution, but we were actually 2% below where we projected.
 - Graduate enrollment shows that we are down in terms of enrollment since 2019 to about 274. We need to do some work to restore the picture for graduate students, but we are seeing growth in our PhD programs, an area we are actively trying to grow.
- Institutional aid, unfunded aid, is the amount of revenues the university is providing out of our operating budget to students and families to assist with costs. This fall about 31% of students are Pell eligible, coming from challenged backgrounds requiring financial aid. About 1.5% of students are fully paid students, receiving no assistance from the university to pay thanks to their backgrounds. The cost of increasing the discount rate for students is what is placing pressure onto the university.
 - The pressure for private universities to contribute more and more resources to be competitive and allow for students to attend is making financial decisions difficult, as the institution looks to find the fine balance between Pell eligible students and full price students.
- RIT has been trying to be available to families that cannot afford the institution, but it is important to consider the overall economic factors.

BUDGETARY GUIDELINES AND STATE

- The overall picture of the revenues of the university are dominated by tuition and fees, the major source of money to run RIT. Endowments also make up a large portion of the institution, with about 1.3 billion dollars returning about 5.37% over 12 months.
- The trustees and the state of NY govern our endowments, and subject a 5% spending rule on the university restricting use of the endowment to a figure calculated based on the operating costs of the past 20 quarters. And for balances from donor-restricted projects, the institution cannot dictate where to spend the money outside of the outlined rules of the donation.
 - RIT collects dollars from tuition costs and aggressively invests the money to get the interest from those investments to use toward university costs without having to push those costs onto students and families through tuition increases.
- Auxiliary operations are all required to generate the revenue needed to contribute toward the operations of the university, and underwrite the academic costs of the admissions process, things like parking, bookstores, housing, etc.
 - The lion share of monies goes toward instruction, with the colleges of RIT and the expenses of each college contained in the 224 million dollars of costs, supporting the operation of academic institutions like the library.
 - Debt services of the institution as a not-for-profit, means we take the dollars we save and take those to fund construction on campus, and by doing so we generate investable dollars we can invest tax exempt with. So by borrowing money using this method and putting it into safe investment methods like CDs, we can raise 5.5% returns effectively.
 - Construction of the institution is strategically thought through, and we strive to borrow less and make more to stay in operation.

DIFFERENTIATING RIT

- There will be about 25% less students between now and 2029 based on our projections, which begs the question how we can ensure the economic vitality of the university going forward. We are striving toward that goal through differentiating the institution, and providing classrooms and competitive programs like performing arts, athletics, experiences, and more. What we know is that RIT students tend to choose RIT to explore their interests not just in, but outside of the classroom and value our opportunities.
 - About 6 to 7% of students are athletes, which is a large number, pushing us to invest into athletics. 16.5 million dollars are being put into sports and equipment, replacements of bleachers, and putting in a stadium that will take 18 to 20 months to construct following the groundbreaking in the spring.
 - The groundbreaking of the performing arts theater, which will have 750 seats, is going to be a positive expansion for the north of 1,500 students currently registered as performing arts scholars. This building will take about 24 months to construct, and we are bringing in architects from Los Angeles to make this very epic building.
 - Ryne Raffaele heads the office for research of the institution, and his group is in need of extra space for the expanding team. The new research building is being constructed to provide brand new state of the art facilities for faculty to utilize for research.

- This year we are hoping to report a record breaking number of awards for research in the institution, and with these new facilities students will have the opportunity to work in these spaces alongside faculty to conduct critical research. This construction will make us competitive against other research institutions, and we are working with the trustees to bring in a lot of research space, strengthening the research value statement for the university.

Q: Can you speak a little bit about how the auxiliary units set their prices and whether there is a difference for external and internal customers? Prices and costs are increasing and they have to cover costs obviously, but people on campus are beginning to look off-campus with the rising prices.

A: Housing operations benchmark dormitories against our peer competitors, and we are right now in the bottom third for costs against that competitor group, and we have a competitive advantage that we operate at a lower cost for families to afford. We are in the middle of a facelift to all dormitories, costing us 50 million dollars to execute. As those renovations come in, there may be some raises in costs to cover those debts. As we look to purchase services from the university; pricing is driven by the external marketplace and what our neighbors are doing. What is apex charging? What is park point charging? Etc. We are the lowest priced option against competitors while maintaining occupancy rates. The same goes for our dining plans, considering the rising inflation costs over the past 18 months.

Q: If a department is seeking services from catering, the department budgets have not been increasing along with the increases in costs for on campus services. Why is that?

A: During the pandemic while trying to balance budgets, we wanted to preserve our employees and workforce despite the situation, and to do so we cut the hospitality and transportation budgets by around 88%, and the budget has only been restored about 25% since. It is our priority to restore these budgets as soon as possible, but with the fall in continuing students it has been slow to ensure monies are returned to the budgets.

Policy Changes for D19.0 (Student Gender-Based and Sexual Misconduct Policy)

Stacy DeRooy, Director of Title IX and Clery Compliance

POLICY D.19 BACKGROUND

- Policies typically get reviewed at least annually, and after the past year we decided to make some revision to D.19 after some trends we noticed occurring on campus and the language of sister policies for faculty and staff.
 - Title IX spawned from this policy, so some of the language may show the spirit of the prohibited behaviors present in the policy.
- The primary focus of the changes are to sync the definitions across the board of the language and prohibited behaviors and processes, aligning when investigations occur.
- While we are awaiting significant changes to the Title IX policy, instead of waiting for both policy changes to be ready simultaneously and push both changes at the same time, we wanted to address these changes ASAP.

POLICY CHANGES

- One change is the adjustment to the sexual exploitation policy with assistance from the College of Art and Design Dean.
 - Changes with the advisor of choice and advocate language are being made to ensure that students have a similar experience with an RIT advocate or a non-RIT advocate to ensure equal access to support during the process.
- There was no opening statement prior in the policy. This will allow for respondents to accept responsibility at the start of the process should they choose to do so, accelerating the process. This has been a success through testing by human resources in Title IX thus far in making the process smoother for all parties involved.
- Impact statement has changed to have more procedure and reduce undue influence.
- Losing statements for parties to sum their experiences during the process will showcase whether there should be policy sanctions or punishments.
- Policy outcomes change to have mutual resolution agreements as a formal outcome, following a review of the investigation materials and allowing parties to make a decision making the process more transparent, putting the decision in the hands of the parties involved.
- Non-member procedural rights are being altered to provide them the majority of equal rights to RIT members to ensure that they are treated the same throughout the process outside of having access to RIT specific resources. This will ensure an equitable process overall throughout the investigation and processes.
- The removal of hard timelines for the investigation procedures and length will reduce confusion for students who may feel threatened by the time limits when gathering evidence and testimonies. This should ensure transparency throughout the process.
- Added more business days to the witness list aggregation to ensure that there is enough time to gather names so it is not done last second. Some students exploited this loophole to enroll elsewhere and transfer out of the university while using the witness aggregation as an excuse, which we needed to address.
- Student terminology is being removed in the bill of rights to ensure it is inclusive to all parties on campus.

Q: Can you explain the timeline of the “no fewer than five business days” clause?

A: Students were able to have three business days up to the date of the hearing to schedule individuals, and notify the scheduling team which always resulted in scheduling conflicts and issues that slowed the process.

Policy Changes for C03.0 (Intellectual Property Policy)

Ryne Raffaele, VP for Research

POLICY C.03 BACKGROUND

- C.03 is an intellectual property policy. There was a provision in the policy in which we would pay any individual who registers a provisional patent filing \$500, and later a further \$500 upon successful completion of a non-provisional patent.
 - This was a point that largely no one at the university was aware of until an audit of our policies were completed by the office. After discovering this, we realized that we have not been successfully paying out these amounts as written in the policy.
 - As no one knew it existed, and we are technically non-compliant with this policy, we brought it to the attention of the higher administration to determine what to do next.
- This is a unique situation, and is especially problematic for the finance office given the current economic climate. As a result, it has been determined that this language and policy needs to be altered to remove the financial incentives for patents to ensure we return to compliance.
 - This situation is most likely the result of a lack of IP management offices from years ago, which led to the institution electing to use financial incentives to bolster its research portfolio. It no longer makes sense given the size and strength of our university, and since the language was so vague to begin with it opens up even more questions about who else would be owed money as well.

POLICY CHANGES

- Rather than quickly cropping the language out, we are bringing it to the attention of the governance groups to follow our protocol of how we do things at RIT, and to enlighten everyone of this change and language, and why it's going away, before making the change.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Update

Taj Smith, Exec. Director of Culture and Diversity Education

Teresa Long, Director of Assessment and Research Management

SURVEY BACKGROUND

- We have analyzed the qualitative results of the DEI survey we conducted previously, which has presented interesting information. Qualitative data is a challenge to interpret with how rich it can be, but have been able to analyze the results.
 - This survey was completed in the spring of 2022 for the first time at RIT, and about 2,600 individuals responded to the survey. About 2,100 respondents provided free response answers to the sense of community at RIT.
- This survey being qualitative, we need to be careful of how much we extrapolate from the results, remembering this data represents a smaller subset of the community at RIT, but should still be used as indicators of the greater community's thoughts and opinions.

INITIAL SURVEY FINDINGS

- When looking at the results regarding harassment and discrimination on campus, you will see there is a divided house here with 400 respondents leaning toward positive, negative, and the remainder being in the middle.

- There were notable differences between groups responses based on role, ethnicity, and gender, but looking at the data we see about 15% dissatisfied responses. These provide opportunities for growth.
 - Folks across the board used words like “home” and “family” to describe community at RIT, and it is positive. Individual groups similarly coded their answers with an emphasis on inclusion and belonging. White and Asian students echoed this, making up about 37% of respondents, and 43% being international students.
- The most common negative theme was a lack of connectivity in three areas. The campus felt polarizing across things like socioeconomic and racial, hierarchical, and political subjects. Others felt the campus groups were contextual, and that attachment across smaller groups was not true for RIT as a whole. A tertiary chunk of responses felt disconnected, with 25% of students feeling this way. African Americans and black respondents were 3%, while faculty, staff, and non-binary respondents were 25%.
 - Non-binary and transgender respondents were more likely to distrust the institution and system, and felt RIT held performative views and support.
 - While these are negative thoughts held by the respondents, this presents opportunities and areas in which RIT can shift focus to grow.

FURTHER ANALYSIS

- These responses could have been submitted multiple times, so we kept that in mind when analyzing the negative responses going forward. We believe that 15% of respondents were faculty, 36% were staff, and the rest were students, but we do not have specific numbers.
 - Gender identity includes experiences across genders, and intersectionality across identities is taken into account as well.
- Graduate students that participated made gender identity and nationality a large part of their experience on campus through their responses. There was not a large amount of explicitly aggression illustrated in the responses, but there was a number of micro aggressions and other experiences that degrade the mental state over time.
 - Disability related discrimination is mostly being spurred by faculty and staff according to the respondents, not necessarily peers.
- Respondents indicated that some believe that RIT does not care about them as an individual, and they don't trust RIT to follow up on any reports or issues they have, making them less likely to file reports. They valued the experiences of their peers when considering making reports, which were largely negative.
 - Some white, cisgender Republican men don't feel included within the campus space, feeling they are discriminated against on campus.
 - 48% of respondents recommended we create more spaces to allow for interaction across identities, using spaces across all buildings on campus.
 - 14% believe in increasing diverse recruiting for better representation through diverse students.
- Institutionally, staff and faculty felt discrimination strongest through a lack of pay equality and rank, while students felt a need for better socioeconomic status equality, and equity in housing

- and tuition costs. Faculty also feel a pressure to perform as RIT moves toward being an R1 institution, and this pressure makes them feel disconnected from opportunities to interact with students and peers.
 - The results boiled down to a greater emphasis on transparency from students and administration.
- There was a 9% view from respondents that doing away with DEI efforts and activities would be the best course of action, but considering the respondents' identities, it seems that no black or non-binary students stated that as a course of action, and white women were most likely to state the above in faculty and staff sections.
 - Deaf and HoH individuals felt structural inequity on campus.
- The results of this survey were to discover what campus feels at this point in time. These results should be shared and communicated with one another. To continue these efforts, we will be reinforcing our research and marketing efforts, and moving to collect more data through focus groups with faculty to get more in-depth understandings of groups on campus.

Q: Are there themes or similar findings emerging at other universities where these surveys are being conducted?

A: Unfortunately no, there is no codebook that is universally applied as this was a survey done and created "in-house." We can compare our quantitative findings against other universities, but qualitative data is difficult to accurately compare.

Q: How do the findings of this survey align with the findings of the COACHE and other faculty climate surveys conducted?

A: Those faculty-centric surveys are being done across campus, and the climate being monitored is similar to those monitored with students.

Q: Regarding the focus groups; is there a time frame set for them? How are the participants being selected?

A: We have not gotten that far into the planning process yet, but timeline wise, it would go into the spring where we would work with governance groups to select an accurate representative group.

Q: The results of respondents make up a small portion out of nearly 19,000 individuals on campus. How do we or do we not interpret that data, and draw conclusions?

A: This is a small group of campus yes, however you'll find it difficult to have a larger part of campus open up with their experiences from their respective groups. We found our surveys to be robust and ensure the value of opinions expressed by respondents to be effective indicators of their groups. Taking these responses seriously and ensuring they feel heard is key to ensuring that regardless of size, students can feel comfortable and heard.

Q: This university houses a large number of affinity groups of interest, and there is value in having all of these groups. But to some extent, this has caused a lack of connectedness as students enter their

representative groups and stay isolated from interacting with other groups as a result. How would we go about ensuring students balance out the coin of interconnectivity, and provide opportunities for students to get interactive and involved?

A: Community is big on campus, with students building layers of community from their school, to their classes, to friend groups, and more. There are definitely a number of responses showcasing that students are bleeding through these layers of community and interacting with other groups on campus, but it isn't always intentional interactions. Groups want to interact with other groups on campus, but if the interaction isn't intentional and feels artificial, there will be no progress made toward bridging interconnectedness on campus.

SHED Update (*presentation files available on the [University Council website](#)*)

Tiffany Brodner, Exec. Director, Student Hall for Exploration and Development

SHED OPENING

- We officially opened our doors on August 28th, 2023, and it was no small task to get the doors open for students. It was through the help of so many offices and people and some luck that we pulled it off.
 - We know the SHED to be the new jewel, and want to show off what we have accomplished so far.

ADDITIONS

- About 120,000 sq. ft. of new renovations, and five new classrooms hosting 150 students each are in the SHED. There are 159 class sections being taught in the SHED, and 22 classrooms between the SHED and Wallace. Students have been relaxing and leveraging the over 34 reservable spaces, and there have been 37 new student employees enabling the group.
- Classroom-wise, the spaces are being insulated with technology, with tech exceeding other spaces on campus, like interpreter cameras and microphones, table microphones for students, and multiple displays in each room. These spaces are excellent and are currently awaiting some things like blinds for the windows which are critical for an "all-glass" building.

PERFORMING ARTS

- The performing arts spaces include individual practice spaces, a music instruction studio, and glass box theater. Students can practice their craft in the environment built for them with support from Erica and Ben from the school of Performing Arts, and the bridge between the dance and music instruction studio has been fully opened. Other studios and spaces in the A level will open in mid-November.
 - The 180 seat Sklarsky glass-box theater will be opening its doors for the homecoming weekend, and the inaugural production of Astrodance will be performed.

MAKERSPACES

- Makerspaces make up around 15% of the building, allowing students to circulate the building to walk through the problem solving process, to give them all the tools and spaces needed to solve their problems.
 - The second floor textiles space will overlook the performing arts spaces, with a level two project team shop centered around the non-vehicle teams like VEX Robotics, AR/VR teams, and more.
 - The makerspaces in the SHED will replace those currently on campus, but until they open, the existing spaces will remain in operation.
 - Our schedule to move our performance teams into their new homes in the SHED will be during the Winter break to allow us and them time to adjust.
- Large performance teams will be moving their groups to the team shops and makerspaces in the SHED on the A level, placing about 400 permanent residents into the SHED working to determine how to use the SHED and figuring out balance as a team.
- We've had over 600 students experiences, events hosted by COLA, non-written form drag classes, 220 mechanical engineering marshmallow launchers, and more all hosted in the SHED already and it has been resoundingly positive receptions all around.
 - This space will enable students to feel excited about making, and push them to get excited about things in their majors before they have to encounter tough subjects.

OPERATIONAL CHANGES

- We have planned collaboration with faculty students and companies for the spring to leverage the space, and can't wait to make it a place for people to gather.
 - We are hiring new staff members, adding a Senior Staff Assistant, and a Makerspace Lab Technician (recent RIT graduate) to our staff. We are still seeking a Technical Operations Manager, and a Makerspace Manager.
- The largest important visual detail in the SHED is our new LED wall referred to as the Jumbotron, which is excellent at getting our students and groups to be collaborative. We have already amassed over three hours of sizzle reel content, and if anyone has requests, please let us know.
- The building is currently open temporary hours until building construction finalizes, but the closer we get to Thanksgiving the closer we get to finalizing everything.
 - If anyone is interested in a tour, we are happy to accommodate scheduled tours of the SHED, just reach out for times, or take the self-guided tour available at the info desk and fall in love with the building.
- If you are curious about scheduling space in the SHED, we are happy to report that classroom reservations have been available, and student groups are taking advantage of the viewable spaces. We hope to open further spaces in November.

Q: Will the Formula and Baja teams be moving into the SHED?

A: Those teams have agreed to not move into the shed as their current spaces in their respective buildings are larger and more specialized than the space that they would occupy in the SHED. It was the best decision for everyone.

Q: Is there a registration form to schedule tours?

A: Reach out to shed@rit.edu to schedule a tour.

Q: Will the spaces in the SHED be available to reserve through reserve.rit.edu?

A: Yes, the spaces will be available through reserve.rit.edu. The spaces will be split into three templates; classrooms, performing arts, and meeting spaces for each respective room.

Q: Will there be a lost and found in the SHED?

A: Yes, if you go to the info desk on the first floor, there is a lost and found located there.

Q: How can students best utilize the space?

A: Classroom spaces will provide an opportunity for students to meet in groups of all sizes. The building will house a number of different opportunities to get engaged and creative, and will allow students to explore interests and topics that may interest them, even if not relevant to their degree.

Comment: We'll have to change the word "performance" when referring to our performance teams with the performing arts groups being in the same building as the engineering teams to avoid confusion.

New Business

None.

Meeting adjourned at 4:33

Attendance – see next page

Attendance 10/11/2023

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 (Ivan Puchades)	Member-FS	X
Blixit, Hailey	Member-SG		Lezette, Michelle	Member-SC	Excused
Bobryk-Ozaki, Myren	Member-SG Alternate		Loffredo, Joe	Non-Voting Member	
Brinkman, Olivia	Member-SG	X	Long, Jake	Member-SG	X
Buch, Neeraj	Non-Voting Member		Lynch, Aidan	Member-SG	X
Buckley, Gerard	Member-Dean	X	Masaline, Melissa	Member-SC	Excused
Butler, Janine	Member-FS	X	McQuiller, Laverne	Non-Voting Member	X
Castleberry, Phil	Non-Voting Member	X	Milliken, Renee	Member-SC	X
David, Prabu	Member & EC	X	Mozrall, Jacqueline	Member & EC	X
Davis, Kathleen	Non-Voting Member		Munson, David	Non-Voting Member & EC	X
Deese, Franklin	Member-FS	X	Nasr, Nabil	Member-Dean	
Dibble, Leah	Member – SC Alternate		Newman, Atia	Member & EC	
Edwards, Doreen	Member-Dean		Norris-Martin, Kelly	Member-Dean	X
Erllich-Scheffer, Katherine	Member-SC	X	Olabisi, Joy	Member-FS	
Faber, Josh (Joe Lanzafame)	Member-FS	X	Pauley, Darnae (Jada Jennings)	Member-SG	X
Finnerty, Bob	Non-Voting Member	X	Pinkham, Jo Ellen	Non-Voting Member	
Flowers, Rosaline	Member-SG	X	Provenzano, Susan	Non-Voting Member	
Giasi, Lia	Member-SC	X	Raffaella, Ryne	Non-Voting Member	X
Hall, James	Member-Dean		Ramkumar, S. Manian	Member-Dean	
Harrington, Gabrielle	Member-SC	X	Redman, Emily	Member-SC	X
Herman, Vanessa J.	Non-Voting Member	X	Santer, Jon	Member - SC	X
Heyman, Emily	Member-SC		Seyler, Andrew	Member-SG	X
Hudson, André	Member-Dean	X	Sheffield, Chip	Member-FS	X
Huenerfauth, Matt	Member – Dean	X	Slusarski, Diane	Non-Voting Member	X
Inclema, Ali	Member - SC Alternate		Smith, Evan	Member - SC	X
Islam, Sadman	Member-SG	X	St. Jean, Bill	Member-SC Alternate	
Jenkins, Keith	Non-Voting Member	X	Stowe, Brendon	Member & EC	X
Johnson, Dan	Member-FS	X	Thomas, Bolaji	Member-FS	X
Johnson, Sandra	Non-Voting Member		Trierweiler, John	Non-Voting Member	
Johnson, Scott	Member-FS	X	Ulin, Robert	Member-FS	X
Johnston, Joe	Non-Voting Member		Vogler, Gene	Member-SC Alternate	X
Jokl, Todd	Member-Dean	X	Wang, Yong Tai	Member-Dean	
Jones, Darcie	Member & EC	X	Watters, Jim	Non-Voting Member	X
Keeney, Morgan	Member-SG	X	Zehr, Jeremy	Member-SC	

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

Interpreters: Kirsten Borkowski & Nicole Lupinetti

UC Coordinator: Tamaira Brown

Student Assistant: Scott Franco