

RIT | University Council

Meeting Minutes: August 31, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

Approve Minutes of April 13, 2022 Meeting:

Dr. Munson advised change of wording in the report on Individual Conflict of Interest section of the President's report: "These in themselves are not a problem and some exist that *are not in our control* to that *"cannot be avoided"* and "Dr. Munson monitors some of these cases, one he oversees is an individual with a company that *licenses IP matters for the University* to *licenses IP matters from the University*."

The minutes were approved unanimously.

President's Report

Introductions of attendees were made around the room and a special welcome to the new leadership from the three governance groups.

The semester is off to a great start. There is a sense of energy and excitement on campus.

Incoming Class

- As noted in the President's opening address to the campus in the week before classes started, this year's incoming class is the second or third largest incoming class in RIT history. Final numbers will be included in the 21 day report. Last year's class was the largest.
- This year's numbers were just a little under expectations. Some competitive schools were able to offer very large discounts to some potential students at the very end of recruiting season, so the incoming class was slightly smaller than expected. We will be on the lookout for that kind of behavior in the future and will prepare for it so that we can increase the incoming class by a percent or two.
- The percentage of women is very similar to past years and we would like to increase that percentage over time as we add more majors.
- The College of Art and Design is now launching the American Crafts experience. It will initially start with approx. 100 - 150 students but ultimately hope to make it available to nearly any student on campus. It is a very distinct experience and it will help to attract even better students.

Performing Arts

- We recruited almost 500 new performing arts (PA) scholars, nearly half are women. On average, these students come in with higher GPAs and better academic preparation. The persistence rate from freshman to sophomore years is higher than the campus average as well.
- The PA scholars are housed in the new School of Performing Arts, Erica Haskell is the new director. She joins us from the University of New Haven.

COVID Update

- We are taking fewer precautions at beginning of this academic year. We are less concerned about the current variants COVID that have been circulating over the last several months. They are extremely contagious, but in general they are not putting that many people into the hospital.
- Among the RIT population, virtually no one is in the hospital. Roughly 100 cases have been reported on campus in the first week of classes, but no hospital cases and in many cases, the illness was very mild. This number may be slightly higher because all cases may not have been reported. We expect to see this throughout the semester, at least until a new vaccine is made available.
- The current vaccine is not as effective against Omicron and its variants and that is what is currently circulating. It may help you from becoming extremely ill, but it may not help you from catching COVID. Many of the population may have developed immunities because they have had a version of COVID or they may not get it at all. Many people are not as worried as they were in the past. Masking is still optional and we are supportive of those who choose to mask but things are returning to normal.
- There is an extremely high vaccination rate among the student body (close to 100%) which is very helpful.
- No wide scale individual testing, but we are continuing with waste water testing. The waste water results show that COVID is somewhat elevated over last spring, but not to an alarming rate. We will be monitoring in case the levels really rise.

Construction

- The SHED and Wallace Library renovations are on track. The entire library was gutted and has been completely redesigned. The work in the library is very far along; many of the interior elements are now in place.
- Athletics has had many changes, some of it beginning last spring. There are new fields for softball, baseball and track/field. Over the summer, there was a large amount of work in order to complete a new field that sits in front of the old stadium. At some point the stadium will be also be replaced. There was a donor celebration for the new field this past Saturday and we are excited about what has taken place.
- Construction prices are quite high at this time. These costs may cause us to delay construction on one or more projects. If we were building the SHED today, we would not be able to afford it, but thankfully the bid took place during a time when construction costs were low.
- There is significant construction taking place at NTID. The area surrounding the Panara Theatre has been redesigned and is going to be redeveloped along with supporting spaces. There will also be major improvement and expansion of what is offered for dance.
- Last month in July, the Board of Trustees passed \$120 million bond issue to be used:
 - To add air condition the remaining residence halls that are not air conditioned, plus upgrades to hallways and bathrooms in the residence halls.
 - Funds will also go toward air conditioning for the spaces on campus that currently have no air condition (ex. academic areas in the College of Art and Design and some spaces of the College of Science).

- Money will also be used to construct a new research laboratory building (near COS by Global Village)

A billion dollar fundraising campaign currently underway and we have raised \$920 million dollars so far. We hope to complete the campaign in June 2023. Kudos to the faculty for their research proposals; a significant portion of the \$920 million has come from federal and state research.

We need to make a new academic year resolution to be present and more connected and to recover/recoup what we had before the pandemic onset. Part of my resolution will be to spend more time with students by attending at least one athletic competition of every varsity team. I also plan to attend many Performance Arts performances and other things in which the students are involved.

Starting in a few weeks, both the President and Provost will be visiting every college to hear from faculty and staff about concerns and suggestions.

I hope each of us will work hard to recover what we have lost over the past two years.

Facilities Update Campus Projects (*presentation files available on the [University Council website](#)*)

John Moore, Assoc. Vice President, Facilities Management Services

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

There is more capital construction going on now within the campus than there has been in the entire history since this campus was constructed in the late 1960's, early 70's. It is a huge investment in students and everyone here and it is a very exciting time to be here and to be a tiger.

Projects

- Facilities is having to change the process concerning project requests. They are overwhelmed with the current work load and some of the very important high risk projects. Supply chain issues, constantly changing construction costs, etc. make it difficult to process all the requests since it takes a lot of time to assess them.
- Changes will now go to John Moore with justification so that he can assign where there projects need to go. The facility managers will be advised of this change tomorrow (Sept. 1st).
- We need to be careful with our resources and stay focused on the very important work to which people have been assigned. Hopefully, everyone can understand that and be patient with facilities.
- Tours of the SHED have started, hoping to do more in the future. It is over 200,000 sq. ft. of new and renovated building. It will have approximately 1600 classroom seats including five large, flexible classrooms, Makerspace team space, performing arts space and many public areas.
- Java Wally's is expected to open around Sept 9th. Some of the A level classrooms may be delivered sooner than the rest of the project which is scheduled for fall 2023.
- It is roughly a \$120 million investment
- The Lowenthal addition will be approx. 36,000 sq. ft., a major expansion. This will include teaching spaces, faculty spaces, meeting room spaces, etc.

More communication will be coming out soon.

Athletics

- There are new fields for baseball, softball and track & field. A new stadium building is being planned. We will go from one to five turf fields which will change the way our teams can use the campus.
- We have been having conversations with the coaches about the new fields and they are excited for the changes.
- Tiger stadium – there is a plan to put something behind the current seats. This will include hospitality facilities, team facilities, space for press, etc. We want it to be the first building that you see when you come onto campus. There is a \$30 million budget for this project.
- When all projects for athletics are complete, it will be close to a \$100 million investment in students and RIT.

Interior Improvements

- Renovations in hallways of Booth, Gannett and Gosnell
- There will be a major expansion for performing arts at NTID - (750 seat hall) entry plaza, support spaces, etc. Updates on this soon.
- Air conditioning will be added to buildings that need it.
- There were major gifts for renovations which is great news as this did not happen in the past.
- The residence halls will receive a refresh for a three year span in hallways, restrooms, stairwells, and common areas. Some will also have air conditioning added.
 - The Baker Hall refresh was an experimental project that was started and is currently a success. 2.5 years more renovations in hallways, restrooms, stairwells, common areas and air conditioning. There are pretty major renovations taking place. We are moving forward with the plans and we hope to complete on time. These plans will be rolled out to other dorms in the future.
 - Research has several projects underway – Brown Hall, Engineering and a new building near the current trailers. This will include 25,000 sq. ft. of flexible research with \$25 million in costs. This is planned to be completed by fall 2024.

Q: At the beginning at presentation, you talked about priorities. I am curious about your prioritization process?

A: We take a look at the projects, what our capacities are, and make decisions from there. We talk about the strategic plan. In smaller projects, recommendations are made and then authorization is given for what makes the most sense.

Q: What about the other projects?

A: The parking lot in Bausch and Lomb is definitely on the list. The Jefferson Rd. entrance and others are put on hold but still on the master plan. We are still waiting on the final plan but we were able to make accommodations with the designs and we are able to persevere and keep going with the projects.

Q: Any plans for gender neutral bathrooms for the buildings on campus that currently do not have any?

A: That is on the list. We have to think about existing space and what we can and cannot do. There may be other solutions besides building a new bathroom. Another place to discuss this is within the committee for Student Government. Wallace will have more gender neutral bathrooms.

Q: Will Jefferson Rd have more signage?

A: That is not on the list at this time but can be added in the future. We are working on a design process now.

Q: Can you talk about the other areas of FMS and any changes that have occurred, especially in shipping and receiving?

A: It is a matter of becoming efficient in custodial areas as well as shipping and receiving. Staffing is an issue and we are trying to do what we can to be operational.

Q: The current trailers house instruments and recording equipment for students, will that be stored elsewhere when construction begins?

A: We are working out the logistics for that and don't have answers at this time. We are looking at CLA and other areas for storage. There are plans that will be released in the future. We are happy to speak with any group about the how and why in the future.

Ratification of 2022-2023 University Council Plan of Work:

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

There is a list provided of all the items taking place this year. Significant events include Juneteenth holiday and the review of the academic calendar. This plan was put together by the executive committee which includes governance heads.

The Plan of Work was endorsed unanimously.

Policy C24.0 Ombuds Office – REVISIONS (*presentation files available on the [University Council website](#)*)

Joe Johnston, Ombuds

Ashley Meyer, Associate Ombuds

Changes:

- Added the positions of Associate Ombuds and Coordinator into the language,
- The advisory board is inactive and had not met in a decade, so it is no longer needed and has been removed. Ombuds are present at all governance meetings.
- Ombuds is new name (instead of Ombudsperson and other previous names).
- Other minor edits by legal affairs

Revisions approved unanimously.

Comment: Any student, staff or faculty can go to Ombuds with concerns. Information is kept private and anonymous. Kudos for the work that they do.

New Business

- None

Comment: If you have any issues let the Executive Committee or Tamaira know.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Attendance – see next page

Attendance August 31, 2022

Name	Relationship to UC	Attended	Name	Relationship to UC	Attended
Abushagur, Mustafa	Member-FS		Luciani, Teo	Member-SG	x
Aldersley, Stephen	Member-FS		Marhevka, Ashton	Member-SG	x
Bamonto, Suzanne	Member-FS	x	Masaline, Melissa	Member-SC	x
Blixit, Hailey	Member-SG		Mckeen, Jenai	Member-SG	X
Buckley, Gerard	Member-Dean	x	McQuiller, Laverne	Non-Voting Member	X
Buckley, Larry	Member - Dean		Milliken, Renee	Member-SC	X
Castleberry, Phil	Non-Voting Member		Mortimer, Ian	Non-Voting Member	
Crawford, Denton	Member-FS	x	Mozrall, Jacqueline	Member & EC	
D'Amanda, Elisabetta	Member-FS		Munson, David	Non-Voting Member & EC	X
Edwards, Doreen	Member-Dean		Nasr, Nabil	Member-Dean	
Erich-Scheffer, Katherine	Member-SC	X	Newman, Atia	Member & EC	x
Faber, Josh	Member-FS	X	Olabisi, Joy	Member-FS	x
Finnerty, Bob	Non-Voting Member	X	Peterson, Dustin	Member - SC	X
Genseler, Sam	Member-SG	x	Pinkham, Jo Ellen	Non-Voting Member	X
Ghazle, Hamad	Member-FS		Prescott, Joanna	Member-SC	x
Granberg, Ellen	Member & EC	x	Provenzano, Susan	Non-Voting Member	
Hall, James	Member-Dean		Raffaella, Ryne	Non-Voting Member	
Harrington, Gabrielle	Member-SC	x	Ramkumar, S. Manian	Member-Dean	X
Herman, Vanessa J.	Non-Voting Member		Rosenberg, Morrgan	Member-SG	x
Heyman, Emily	Member & EC	X	Sheffield, Chip; SOIS (sprg 2022)	Member-FS	
Hoops, Trishelle	Member-SG	X	Slusarski, Diane	Non-Voting Member	X
Hudson, André	Member-Dean	x	Sparkman, Torrence	Member-FS	
Huenerfauth, Matt	Member – Dean	x	Springer, Greg	Member-SG	
Jaff, Malik (alternate attended)	Member-SG	X	St. Jean, Bill	Member-SC	x
Jenkins, Keith	Non-Voting Member	X	Stenport, Anna	Member-Dean	
Johnson, Dan	Member-FS	X	Strowe, Brendon	Member-SC	x
Johnson, Sandra	Non-Voting Member	x	Trierweiler, John	Non-Voting Member	X
Johnson, Scott	Member-FS	x	Wang, Yong Tai	Member-Dean	X
Johnston, Joe	Non-Voting Member	X	Watters, Devon	Member-SC	X
Jokl, Todd	Member-Dean	X	Watters, Jim	Non-Voting Member	
Khanna, Aditya	Member & EC	x	Zehr, Jeremy	Member-SC	
Laury, Dino	Member-FS	x			
Lezette, Michelle	Member-SC	x			
Loffredo, Joe	Non-Voting Member				

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

Interpreters: Danielle Cohen and Kirsten Borkowski