

Brick City Homecoming 2005

State of the Institute

Good morning everyone and welcome to RIT's Brick City Homecoming. It is wonderful to have so many parents and alumni together to join us for this magnificent weekend. We consider ourselves a family at RIT – students, faculty, staff...and parents and alumni are certainly a big and important part of our family.

The RIT family certainly has a lot going for it. We are undeniably a university on the move. See for yourself as you tour the campus this weekend. You will discover classrooms with exciting new courses in the hottest careers. You will find partnerships with business, industry and government prospering. You will find new laboratories and facilities throughout the campus. Staying ahead of the curve is an RIT attribute.

Let me review some of our significant accomplishments of the past year and some exciting new initiatives for the coming year:

- First, let's review our Enrollment:
 - More than 15,300 students call RIT home. Enrolled students come from all 50 states and from more than 90 countries.
 - Our students are among the best and brightest. The new class had a mean combined SAT score of approximately 1220, about 200 points higher than the national average.
 - This fall we welcomed 3,115 new freshman and transfer students to RIT.
 - 52 percent of the Class hails from outside of New York State.
 - International students make up 5 percent of the Class.

- One of the hallmarks of an RIT education is the Cooperative Education program, where students get hands on, practical experience with the best big and small companies in America. The 2004-05 academic year was stellar:
 - Annualized co-op placement was 4,200, an all-time high.
 - Career fair employer participation was up 21% (from 124 to 157 companies). I should note that 31 percent of these corporate recruiters were RIT alumni.
 - Overall campus interviewing was up 14% (to 1,538 students).
 - Microsoft has emerged on the top 10 co-op list (number 4) for the first time.
 - Microsoft, Honda, and Standard Register emerged for the first time on the top 10 permanent employment list, with Microsoft leading the way.

- In Academic Affairs, a Ph.D. in Computing and Information Sciences has been approved. This program will be a complementary and synergistic partner with our two existing Ph.D. programs in Imaging Science and Microsystems.
- We are now in the review process of examining Ph.D. programs in Color Science, Sustainability and Astrophysics.
- We have also added several new programs at the master, bachelor and associate degree levels. In total, we have approximately 340 professional and career-oriented programs at the university.
- RIT is dedicated to diversity. In the past four years, the percentage of faculty hired who were of African American, Latino American, or Native American background was above 30 percent annually. Given the national percentage of minority faculty in the disciplines we recruit is 6 percent, these are outstanding results.
- As you walk around campus, you will see a few construction projects. We broke ground on the following projects in the past year:
 - The Center for Bioscience Education and Technology.
 - The Information Technology Collaboratory, which was established by the New York State Office of Science, Technology, and Academic Research. This is a partnership with the State University of New York at Buffalo and Alfred University.
 - The Student Development Center at NTID, the National Technical Institute for the Deaf.
- And this year, we expect to launch the following construction projects:
 - Kate Gleason College of Engineering Expansion.
 - College of Business Expansion.
 - A Center for Telecommunications.
- Despite our best efforts to enhance the campus, some students still tell us there is something missing at RIT. That something is “College Town,” a proposed commercial venture that would bring a variety of shopping, dining and housing to a 90-acre parcel on the northeast corner of campus. When planned and developed over the next few years, College Town is going to change the face of this campus. It will enhance the RIT experience and be an extension of the university.

Some features of the project include:

- 70,000 to 90,000 square feet in retail space, with perhaps 20-25 stores.
- A variety of housing with room for up to 800 occupants. This could include town houses and apartments.

- Theme restaurants.
 - A new campus bookstore.
 - Galleries highlighting arts and crafts from students and faculty.
- We have a very vibrant campus in terms of student life. We offer diverse programming (9,000 programs within Residence Life, for example), 161 active clubs and organizations, and a student government team focused on enhancing school spirit and development of a campus community.
 - We are partners on a senior housing project along the Genesee River, called Rivers Run. Rivers Run will include 70 cottage homes and 82 independent-living apartments. The partnership will allow residents to sit in on classes and use the Gordon Field House and Activities Center. When built, Rivers Run will house the RIT Athenaeum, our learning academy for people over 50.
 - RIT has again received high marks in the annual *U.S. News & World Report: America's Best Colleges*. Since the magazine began ranking colleges in 1983, RIT has consistently been listed among the top regional universities. RIT ranked sixth overall in the "Best Universities – Master's " category in the North while scoring first in peer assessment among competing universities. This is a survey of presidents, provosts and deans from other universities judging a school's academic excellence. In the "Programs to Look For" category, RIT was listed as one of only 12 colleges nationally recognized for excellence in the "internships/co-ops" category. Our Kate Gleason College of Engineering and College of Business were also cited.

Now...let me tell you about our most ambitious initiative to date aimed at securing vital resources for RIT.

A few years ago, some of our most committed Trustees and generous donors launched "Powered by the Future: The Campaign for RIT" with a goal of raising \$300 million by the year 2006. Thanks to our more than 30,000 donors and hundreds of volunteers, the Campaign currently stands at \$234 million. These funds make all the difference in RIT's positive momentum. Specifically, the following enhancements would not have been possible without the Campaign's success to date:

- The launch of RIT's eighth college, the B. Thomas Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences, which opened its doors in 2001 as the most comprehensive computing college in the nation.
- The new signature, 160,000-square-foot Gordon Field House and Activities Center, which has become the center of student activity across campus.
- The establishment of 145 new student scholarships and awards.
- The creation of six new endowed chairs.
- The addition of more than \$25 million to the RIT endowment.

- The transformation of the former Thruway Marriot Hotel, a gift from the E.J. DelMonte Corporation, into the RIT Inn and Conference Center.
- The creation of the Eastman Kodak Quad, a stunning new landscaped space in the center of campus.
- The installation of the *Sentinel*, the largest sculpture ever from world-renowned metals artist and RIT professor Albert Paley.
- The addition of an all-weather turf field to our Tiger Athletics facilities.
- An astounding 63% participation rate for RIT faculty and staff giving to The Campaign.
- An increase in the average number of donors supporting RIT in a single year from 9,000 to over 12,000.

To all who have helped, we extend a gracious thank you. We look forward to sharing even more good news of the Campaign successes throughout this last year.

So what does the future hold? Let me tell you about our new Strategic Plan for RIT.

RIT will lead higher education in preparing students for successful careers in a global society.

RIT's vision statement sets the tone for a new Strategic Plan that will chart the university's future through 2015. We seek to become "A Category-of-One University," meaning that RIT will stand alone in the eyes of its constituents. For students, parents and employers who seek what RIT is and what RIT does, RIT will be the standard of comparison to which others aspire.

Let me explain further in terms of what I have been discussing with the faculty this year. I believe in a balance among Teaching, Scholarship and Practice. This approach will lead to a curriculum that will be balanced 1) between theory and application 2) between experienced-based and scholarly-based learning.

What I am suggesting now is that we do not neglect RIT's beginnings, which were rooted in practice, with faculty who came to teaching with many years of solid professional experience – in business, printing, the arts, and technology. I am proposing a "balanced" faculty portfolio, which includes expertise in, and commitment to teaching, scholarship, and practice ... all three dimensions integrated in cohesive fashion, with each dimension drawing strength from the other two. This model will build on our history and tradition in teaching and practice, while synergistically incorporating our more recent focus on scholarship. It should help us prepare our students for careers and life better than ever before.

With the support of our campus community, our friends and our alumni, we will raise RIT to the next level of excellence. In the end, RIT students succeed because RIT blends experiential learning into its academic programs in a comprehensive and innovative fashion that no other university can match, and because at all times, RIT holds the educational welfare of its students above all else.

Let me take just one more moment on the topic of alumni, and this affects current alumni as well as our “alumni-in-training”, our students. This weekend’s reunion activity is just one example of the new programming recently added to our alumni relations program. We recognize the important role our alumni will play in the continued growth of RIT. That is why we are making a greater effort to enhance our alumni relations programming, services and benefits over the next several years. We will also be looking for more ways to engage our alumni with current students – as mentors, guest lecturers, and career advisors. This goes for parents, too. I invite you all to get involved as we continue enhancing our RIT family connections.

These are some of the highlights I wanted to share with you today about where we are and where we are going.

We have a full weekend planned for you, so we hope you will take this opportunity to participate in the variety of activities. We encourage you to visit any one of the eight colleges to mingle with faculty, administrators and staff. Enjoy yourselves at some of the keynote events, including presentations by former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, comedian Jon Stewart, and one of RIT’s very own, Ken Bielenberg, Class of 1987. Ken was a visual effects supervisor in the movie *Shrek*, which won an Academy Award for animation.

Thank you for being a part of our family and sharing this special weekend with us. There are nearly 4,000 of you here this weekend. We hope that you will leave here feeling a stronger connection to RIT and to each other.

Thanks again and have a great weekend!

(Breaks into Question and Answer Session)