

SPRING / SUMMER 2010

FOCUS

NTID

National Technical Institute for the Deaf • Rochester Institute of Technology



Shaping NTID's Future Through Innovation



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Imagine RIT

Celebrating Innovation and Creativity A record crowd of more than 32,000 people marveled at the cutting-edge technology and world-class artistry on display at the third-annual Imagine RIT: Innovation and Creativity Festival May 1. Students, faculty and staff wowed visitors with more than 300 interactive exhibits, demonstrations and live performances. Pictured here are just a few of the many exhibits and activities led by NTID students, faculty and staff. Learn more about the festival at www.rit.edu/Imagine and plan to attend next year's festival May 7, 2011.

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COVER PHOTOS BY MARK BENJAMIN

ABOUT THE COVER

RIT/NTID's focus on innovation and creativity encourages students to explore new avenues and, in the process, to discover new things about themselves and the world around them. Students, faculty and staff are working together to implement exciting ideas for change that will propel NTID into its next decade of excellence. Learn more about NTID's plan for the future on Pg. 5 of this issue.

RIT/NTID 2010 *FOCUS* magazines are printed on a paper that has 10-percent postconsumer recycled fiber, which results in a total environmental savings of 10.02 trees; 28.96 pounds waterborne waste; 4,260 gallons wastewater flow; 472 pounds solid waste; 928 pounds net greenhouse gases and 7,103,110 BTUs.



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FOCUS

NTID

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MARK BENJAMIN

Defining Excellence

Those who know me know of my belief in excellence rather than success. Growing up in a family led by my hardworking first-generation-citizen parents, excellence meant never taking shortcuts and always accepting responsibility for our actions. My father, a veteran of World War II who was decorated for valor in the Pacific Theater, spent his modest but robustly full life repairing trucks and autos and instilling in his children the core values of honor, social responsibility and integrity. Those three qualities defined excellence in the DeCaro household.

The same is true of NTID as an institution. From the moment that we opened our doors in 1968, our college has teemed with excellence. It began with the indomitable Dr. Robert Frisina, NTID's first director, who hired me in 1971 to teach civil technology. I often have said of Bob, "He was never my mentor but always my mentor." While he didn't formally instruct me on how to be a good teacher, and later, an administrator, I only had to watch him in action to see excellence defined.

NTID's strategic plan for the next decade, *Strategic Decisions 2020*, continues this legacy. My summary of this plan, titled *Experto Credite* (trust one who has proved it), is reprinted on the facing page. I hope that you will take the time to read it, for it describes the direction our college is going and outlines how we will get there.

Implementing any strategic plan requires much collaboration and at least a small dose of risk taking. This scenario is most agreeable with me, as I always have enjoyed a good challenge. I accepted one when I came to NTID nearly 40 years ago. I had no experience with either deafness or teaching, but when Bob Frisina shared during my interview his vision of what NTID could be, I began to believe in what this college could accomplish.

Four decades later, I am still a believer. We have managed to change with the times and continue to grow in ways that no one would have dreamed possible. The technological preparation our students receive today is second to none, and the barriers that have been broken in terms of accessibility and career options for them are mind-boggling.

In the forefront of everything we do, day in and day out, is the belief that our job no longer is to advocate for these students, but instead to give them the skills they need so that, upon entering the competitive job market, they cannot be denied.

We must be singular in our focus in this regard, and we do not strive to emulate others. We must aspire, every day, to be "NTID at RIT."

James J. DeCaro
 NTID Interim President
 RIT Interim Vice President and
 Dean for NTID

Focusing on the Future

RIT President Bill Destler appointed Dr. James J. DeCaro as interim NTID president and RIT vice president and dean for NTID, following the departure of Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz in December 2009. For the past 39 years, DeCaro has held a variety of academic and administrative positions at NTID, including serving as dean 1985-1998, two of those years as interim director and CEO.

“From the first time I set foot on this campus as a new member of the faculty in 1971,” says DeCaro, “it was clear to me that I was expected to take risks and develop and implement new ways of teaching people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, finding

innovative ways to meet their educational needs. RIT is an institution that has thrived on innovation and change and has been nimble and flexible in providing its people with the opportunity to innovate.”

In the first few months of his presidency, DeCaro led NTID through the development of the college’s new strategic plan, *Strategic Decisions 2020* (learn more about the plan on Pg. 5), and will oversee implementation of the plan until NTID’s next president is selected.

In February, DeCaro presented his vision for NTID’s future in his State of the Institute Address, reprinted below in its entirety.

— Pamela L. Carmichael

Vision Quest 2020: Excellence, Integrity, Credibility and Innovation “EXPERTO CREDITE” (Virgil, XI.283)

by James J. DeCaro

I would like to muse about those descriptors that must characterize NTID in the year 2020: excellence, integrity, credibility and innovation.

Some years ago, a commentator on National Public Radio compared and contrasted success and excellence. I found the distinction intriguing at that time, and even more so today.

Success can be, and often is, fleeting—the exhibition of some behaviors that might eventually blossom into excellence. It is more often than not, measured by comparison

to others and marked by competition with others...be they individuals, schools, departments, institutions and the like.

“A commitment to success is a commitment to being on the top, while a commitment to excellence is a commitment to quality in perpetuity.” —James J. DeCaro

Excellence, on the other hand, requires a commitment to being the best one is capable of being, irrespective of the actions taken by the competition. Excellence requires a commitment to continuing quality improvement, even though one may be at the top as compared to the competition. Excellence is marked

by a resistance to short-term profit taking, even incurring short-term hardship, in order to make an investment in the achievement of strategic goals possible.

As author John Gardner has suggested, excellent individuals and institutions extend themselves, challenge themselves, and demand the best of themselves. Excellence

is not measured by star quality or notoriety, but rather by continuous improvement in products and services. A commitment to success is a commitment to being on the top, while a commitment to excellence is a commitment to quality in perpetuity. To paraphrase the philosopher Toulmin, excellent people and institutions analyze their practices not simply for what they are, but for what they might be made to be.

But, we cannot be excellent without integrity. **Integrity**: an incorruptibility regarding the trust placed in us by this nation to educate people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing; a trustworthiness regarding our pledge to prepare them to enter society and the workplace and compete on a par with their peers who hear; the ability and will to remain true to our responsibility to prepare honest and moral human beings who can contribute to the welfare of our society at all levels. And what is it that will

lead us, in the year 2020, to be characterized as an educational enterprise of integrity? Three things:

1. The continuing willingness to critique and analyze our educational practices and procedures to determine what they might be made to be;

2. An unflagging commitment to evaluating our efforts, improving that which needs to be modified, keeping that which meets our goals, and discarding that which has outlived its usefulness; and,

3. The desire, and the will, to place improving the educational circumstances of people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing at the top of our personal list of professional objectives; as well as recognizing it as the primary mission of NTID.

As an educational enterprise, NTID must also be credible. **Credibility:** NTID will be credible if it does what it professes to do; a credibility based upon an honest reporting of successes and failures in the teaching and learning processes; a credibility founded in the fundamental belief

that people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can and will continue to grow and develop; a credibility derived from an ability rather than a disability approach to teaching and learning.

And finally, **Innovation:** exploring, developing, implementing and evaluating new and improved ways of achieving the objectives we set for

“Experto credite—Trust one who has proved it”

(Virgil, Aeneid, XI.283)

ourselves and our college. To do so, we will need to liberate our minds so that the intellectual, attitudinal and behavioral constraints we place upon ourselves do not limit our abilities to be creative and to stretch and expand our views about how, where, when or why we do things as we do. We will also need to create an environment that liberates us from fear of failure...after all, we must try many interventions in order to identify those that will work... this is a lesson we have learned during our 40-plus years of existence. We will need to take risks that are calculated

and not shackled by conventional wisdom...simply because something has never been tried is no reason to dismiss it. However, we need to carefully analyze the outcomes of our interventions, and learn from our accomplishments and failures as we do so.

When our contributions to improving the circumstances of men and women who are deaf or hard-of-hearing are assessed in 2020, when we are judged, the words of Virgil should ring true, “Experto credite—Trust one who has proved it” (Aeneid, XI.283). NTID should be trusted because it has contributed in significant ways to improving the circumstances of deaf and hard-of-hearing people; because of excellence, integrity, credibility and innovation.

About Dr. DeCaro



MARK BERLJAMIN

James J. DeCaro is a professor and interim president of NTID. He is the immediate past director of NTID's Postsecondary Education Network-International, a multinational collaborative network of colleges and universities serving deaf students that is funded by more than \$11 million in grants from The Nippon Foundation of Japan. DeCaro also is immediate past director of the NTID Center on Access Technology, which focuses on the application of innovative technologies to facilitate access to educational settings for deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

He served as dean of NTID for 14 academic years (1985-1998), two of those years as interim director and CEO. In 2009, he was named Dean Emeritus by RIT President Bill Destler.

DeCaro holds bachelor's and master's degrees in civil engineering, and a Ph.D. in instructional technology. He was awarded an honorary doctorate in 2003 by Bauman Moscow State Technical University (Russia) for his contributions to the postsecondary education of people who are deaf.

He has been a Rotary International Scholar at University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne (England), and a Fulbright Senior Scholar at Orebro University (Sweden). He holds an honorary professorship at Tianjin University of Technology (China). In 2008, he received the FESCO award of Japan for his service to humanity. In April, he was inducted into the inaugural class of RIT's Innovation Hall of Fame in recognition of his many achievements and his positive effect in our global society.

Strategic Decisions 2020: Shaping NTID's Future Through Innovation

by Susan L. Murad

This spring, NTID completed a community-wide strategic planning process, culminating in the creation of *Strategic Decisions 2020*, a roadmap that will guide NTID in the coming decade.

From the early visioning process, through student, faculty and staff participation in a first-of-its-kind Innovation Forum, NTID Interim President James J. DeCaro charged various teams with providing a transparent, collaborative process for determining the direction of NTID in the years ahead.

The Process

The overall process began with a strategic vision committee, co-chaired by Professor Mary Lou Basile and Assistant Professor Christopher Kurz, who conducted brainstorming sessions with a variety of on- and off-campus constituents, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, employers and community partners. The committee then distilled what they learned into a report, *NTID 2020: Shaping our Future by Embracing Change*.

The NTID community participated in open-forum sessions to provide feedback on the report, and NTID's administration took all of that feedback and created *Strategic Decisions 2020: Shaping NTID's Future through Innovation*.

NTID is now taking steps to systematically address implementing the strategic decisions outlined

in the plan. The decisions have been grouped into six categories: Students, Program and Curriculum Development, Communication, Access, Faculty/Staff, and Innovation and Scholarship Research.

Some of the initiatives include:

- Pursuing enrollment targets and admissions and programming strategies that will result in increasing numbers of graduates achieving baccalaureate degrees and higher, while maintaining focus and commitment to quality associate-level degree programs leading directly to the workplace.
- Improving services to under-prepared students through working with regional partners to implement intensive summer academic preparation programs in selected high-growth, ethnically diverse areas of the country.
- Expanding NTID's role as a National Resource Center of Excellence in the education of deaf and hard-of-hearing students in senior high school and at the postsecondary level.
- Enhancing efforts to become a recognized national leader in the exploration, adaptation, testing and implementation of new technologies to enhance access to, and support of, learning by deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.

At NTID's annual State of the Institute address in February, DeCaro announced the creation of a \$1.5 million Innovation Fund that would

provide resources for members of the NTID community to develop creative solutions to implement SD2020 and advance NTID's mission to prepare deaf and hard-of-hearing students to be successful in a global marketplace.

"The Innovation Fund is intended to serve as a grassroots mechanism for unleashing creativity in addressing SD2020," says DeCaro. "Many a strategic plan has fallen short on projected outcomes because of failure to systematically implement the plan within a reasonable time frame... either overly aggressive or too timid. For this reason, we will not rush to implement all decisions, but will establish a reasonable timeline for each. Further, we will assure that the fiscal and human resources are appropriately allocated so that the implementation process does not collapse from being overly aggressive or underfunded."

Developing and implementing a collaborative strategic planning process in which the entire campus community participates allows RIT/NTID to explore new areas of growth and development while keeping true to its guiding principles.

SHAPING NTID'S FUTURE THROUGH INNOVATION



“Chunky Creativity with a Kick”

MARK BENJAMIN



MARK BENJAMIN



MARK BENJAMIN



MARK BENJAMIN

On April 17, more than 466 faculty, staff, students and community members, including NTID’s National Advisory Group, attended the first NTID Innovation Forum. The full-day event was intended to generate innovative ideas for implementing SD2020.

The keynote speaker and chief motivator for the forum was Diego Uribe, a creativity consultant and specialist who is an adjunct professor and research resident at the International Center for Studies in Creativity at Buffalo State College, and head of IDEMAX, a creativity consulting firm. Uribe’s presentation set the tone for the approach that he feels is necessary to move beyond normal limitations in thinking creatively and generating ideas—a recipe he calls, “Chunky Creativity with a Kick.”

“Combining knowledge, imagination and education with a healthy dose of attitude

leads us to that place where we can defer judgment on an idea and take a leap into the extraordinary,” he says.

According to Professor Emeritus Dane Gordon, who served as the Innovation Forum’s final speaker, innovation and creativity will lead NTID to 2020 and beyond.

“*Strategic Decisions 2020* is concerned with shaping NTID’s future through innovation,” Gordon told the audience. “You will be part of that. If it succeeds, it will be because of you. That’s your challenge. It’s a big one. But I am convinced, especially after being here today, that you are up to it. You are called as it were to light a candle on behalf of RIT and NTID. But to light a candle, a match must be struck. My parting words to you are: Strike that match!”

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Righty or Lefty? Dr. Peter C. Hauser, associate professor in NTID’s Department of Research and Teacher Education, presented on the right/left brain implications for innovation and creativity at the opening of the NTID Innovation Forum.

Outside the Box Keynote speaker Diego Uribe explains a new way of thinking outside of the box. Uribe is a creativity consultant and head of IDEMAX consulting, and serves as an adjunct professor and research resident at the International Center for Studies in Creativity at Buffalo State College.

International Innovation As part of the mini-session presentations at the Innovation Forum, Dr. Anita Small (left) and Joanne Cripps, co-directors of the Deaf Culture Centre in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, provided information on their program.

Creating a Movement NTID Assistant Professor of Cultural and Creative Studies Thomas Warfield led Innovation Forum participants in a series of hand gestures as part of his presentation on *Performing Arts – Partnerships in Innovation and Creativity*.

Innovation and Creativity Abound

by Kathleen S. Smith

Two years ago, NTID's "left" and "right" brains got a jolt of positive energy when RIT introduced Imagine RIT, an annual campuswide innovation and creativity festival. The event, which attracted more than 32,000 people to campus this year, is designed to showcase the college's unique blend of technology, research, and fine and creative arts. Momentum from the event has carried into classrooms and research labs at NTID, where growing numbers of faculty/student and multidepartment student projects are taking place, and students, in general, are being encouraged to think outside the technological box.

Cory Behm

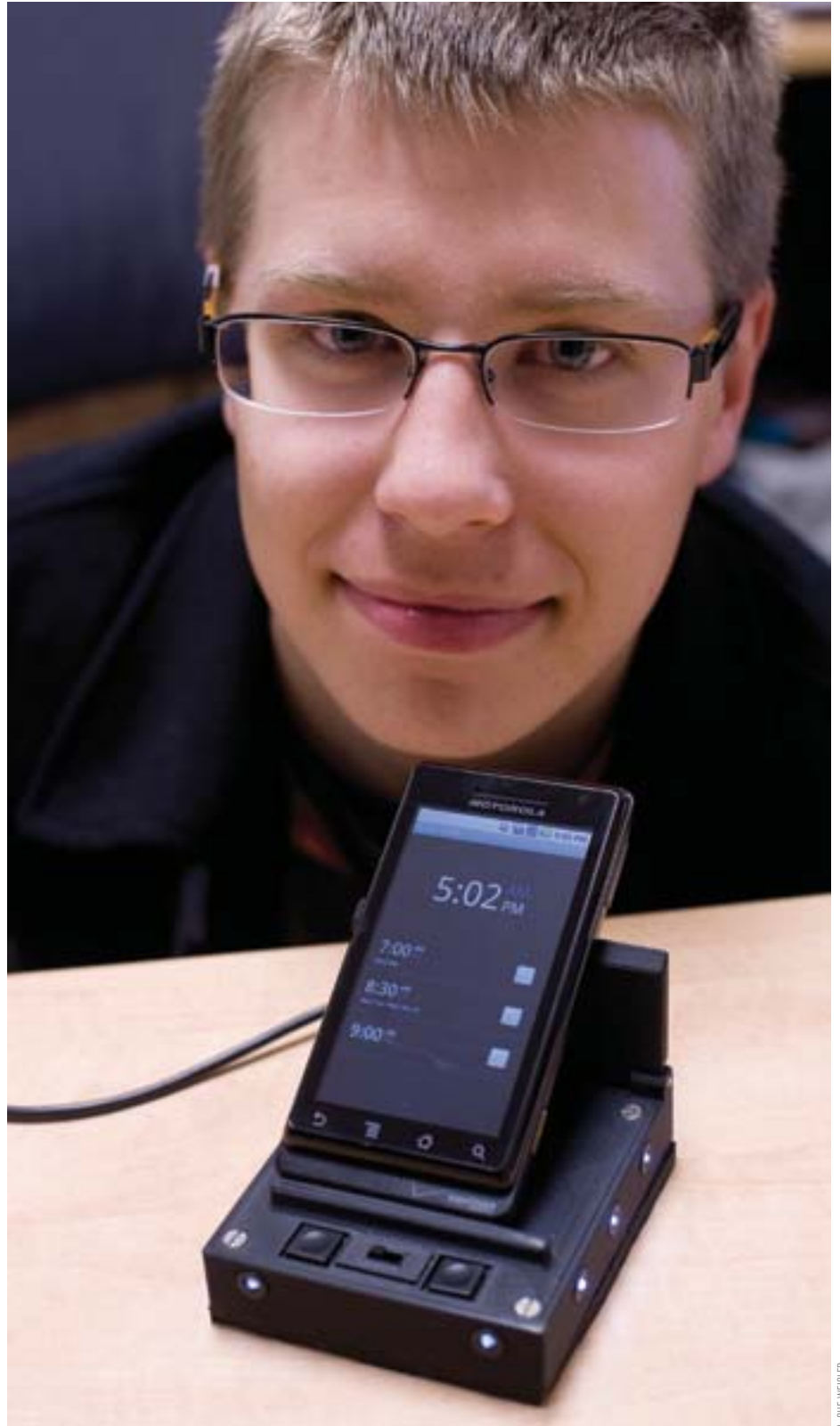
Third-year Mechanical Engineering student Cory Behm joined the innovation surge by taking an idea straight from his head to his hands.

Behm spent 10 weeks designing and creating a PDA/telephone notification system that works with a cell phone or pager to transmit electronic signals to a bed shaker or lamp to awaken a deaf person. He worked with several faculty mentors on his project, which was supported by NTID's Center on Access Technology, and unveiled at Imagine RIT in May. Plans are underway to patent it.

"The project really covered multiple disciplines for me," Behm says. "I learned about electrical engineering, project management and mechanical engineering. Completing the project was the best feeling."

Emily Schreiner

Just months after RIT's inaugural Innovation Festival in 2008, Emily Schreiner became the first NTID-supported undergraduate student mentored by a deaf scientist faculty member. The Biomedical Science major, who graduated in May, worked with Dr. Angela Foreman, assistant professor of Biology, to investigate



Wake-Up Call Cory Behm's telephone notification system transmits electronic signals from a cell phone or pager to a bed shaker or lamp to awaken a deaf person.

A. SUE WEISER

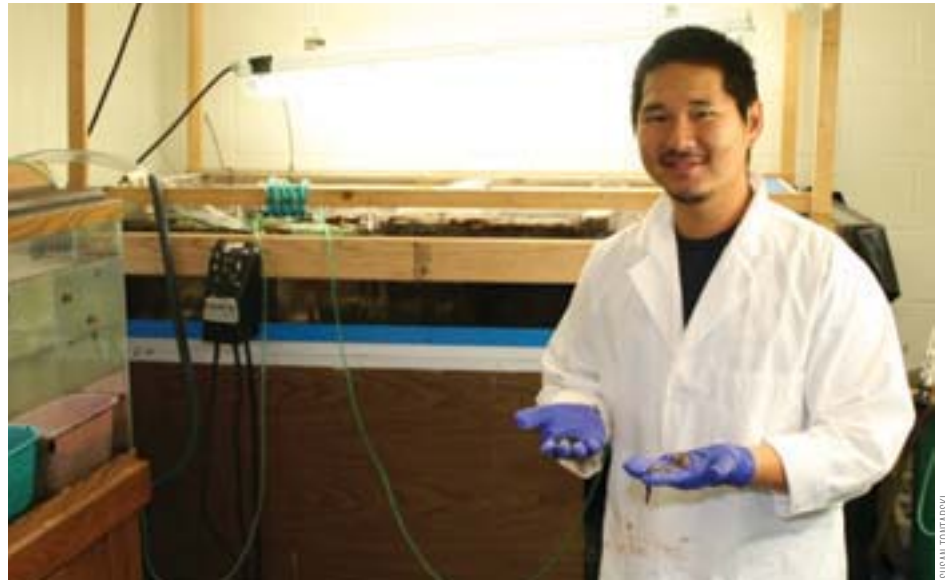
differences in immune systems in patients with an autoimmune disease of the liver. She presented her research findings at an undergraduate research symposium, as well as at a meeting of the Rochester Academy of Science.

"I felt like I learned as much from that one summer project as I did in two years of classes," Schreiner says. "Dr. Foreman was a great mentor, and I was extremely lucky to work alongside her."

Jeff Barnette

Fellow student Jeff Barnette, who will begin graduate studies in Environmental Science at RIT this fall, was supported in his research efforts by RIT's Undergraduate Research and Mentoring Program, which was in turn supported by the National Science Foundation. The program's goal is to increase the number of deaf and hard-of-hearing students performing undergraduate research in preparation for graduate school, and features a two-year research project, seminars and prep work.

Barnette is spending the summer in Costa Rica researching how heavy tourism affects rainforests and their associated biodiversity. Last summer, he studied the effects of excess nutrients in West Falmouth



SUSAN TOMARSKI

Lab Rat Environmental Science major Jeff Barnette enjoys the combination of lab and field work that his research projects have afforded him.

Harbor, Massachusetts.

"I really have enjoyed the combination of field and lab work that I've experienced at RIT," Barnette says. "I like working with other student researchers and graduate students in an interactive environment."

Joel Skelton

RIT's Publishing & Scholarship Support Center helped Professional and Technical Communication major

Joel Skelton get his creative project off the ground. Skelton spent five years tinkering with a fantasy novel idea before self-publishing the book, titled *Cry'Ran* last year. He was encouraged in his efforts by Gail Hosking, a lecturer in RIT's English Department.

"Joel is a confident writer whose stories live in his head, stories he can't let go of and insists on moving forward," says Hosking. "His enthusiasm spills out into the classroom, making him a pleasure to teach."

Skelton, who has sold roughly 30 copies of *Cry'Ran* through Lulu Publishing, is now working on three sequels to the original story.

"I never imagined that something that began as a one-page short story would completely engulf me, trapping my spirit within the confines of its world until its tale had been told in its entirety," Skelton says. "Now I know what it feels like to be a passionate writer."

Says RIT Provost Jeremy Haefner, "We have to unleash the spirit of innovation in our students. When they are confident of their skills and aware of the world around them, they become 'innovation receptive.' With these characteristics, our students will do great things."



MARK BELMANT

Published Author Books now surround Joel Skelton, who, with encouragement from RIT faculty member Gail Hosking, a lecturer in RIT's English Department, self-published his fantasy-fiction novel, *Cry'Ran*, the first in a series of four novels he's planning.



Danielle Previ

Christopher Samp

Study Abroad: A Lifetime of Benefits

by Ilene J. Avallone

“Among the challenges facing higher education, none is more compelling than the need to provide campus environments that prepare students to live and function productively in a global society,” says Tynelle Stewart, RIT study abroad director. “If today’s educated students are to be able to move comfortably in many different cultures, they must have the advantage of a global education.”

The study abroad opportunities for RIT students are abundant, and global experiences and studies among RIT deaf and hard-of-hearing students are on the rise.

“More deaf and hard-of-hearing students are taking advantage of study abroad programs than ever before,” says Dr. Peter Lalley, NTID study abroad liaison. “This year, we anticipate about 15 students will be traveling to Italy, Croatia, Australia, New Zealand, England, Costa Rica and the Turks and Caicos Islands, to name just a few of the countries.”

RIT ensures that access services such as interpreters, notetakers and captionists are provided at no cost for deaf and hard-of-hearing students participating in any RIT faculty-led or affiliated study abroad program of six weeks or less. Students must provide six months notice.

Kenneth DeHaan, 22, an RIT graduate student majoring in Multidisciplinary Professional Studies with concentrations in Business, Tourism Management and Service Management, has done extensive traveling overseas. Last summer, he studied in Denmark, and in 2007 he went to India with Global Reach Out (GRO), a non-profit organization that

encourages deaf youth from around the world to address social issues that limit the potential of deaf people.

“My study abroad experiences have broadened my views of the world,” he says. “They’ve made me more confident, and helped me realize how we are all basically the same, but live our lives differently. I love traveling, and it’s the best way to learn, grow and gain lifelong skills. I’ve been to 22 countries already, and I seize every opportunity to see the world.”

Like DeHaan, many deaf and hard-of-hearing students who return from a study abroad program often see it as an experience that matured them personally and intellectually. They credit their exposure to new ways of thinking and living with encouraging their growth and independence.

“My study abroad experience in Siena, Italy, was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for me,” says fourth-year Psychology major Danielle Previ. “It helped me realize my potential to be independent and make it on my own.”

Stewart says that for many deaf and hard-of-hearing students, going abroad to study is the first time they’ve had the opportunity to leave the United States.

“After immersing themselves in a new culture, mastering the challenges of learning in a new and different academic environment and experiencing the challenges that come with being a ‘foreigner,’ students typically return home with increased self-confidence and justifiable pride in what they have achieved,” she says.

“My study abroad experiences have opened up my eyes and expanded my knowledge about the world, and made

me a more confident learner,” says Christopher Samp, a graduate student and Public Policy major who attended a GRO outreach effort in Guatemala and also a leadership program in East Sussex, England, as an RIT undergraduate student.

But study abroad does more than promote academic enrichment and personal growth. It also can enhance students’ employment prospects. Studies show employers increasingly seek graduates who have studied abroad because they are likely to have flexibility, resilience and the ability to adapt to new circumstances and deal constructively with differences.

Environmental Science major Jeff Barnette is participating in a hands-on field study program in Costa Rica this summer, researching the effects of globalization on Costa Rica’s parks and reserves.

“I hope to experience personal growth, intercultural understanding and education and career attainment while improving my post-graduate employment prospects,” says Barnette.

Study abroad participants agree that the experience they gain presents a lifetime of benefits and so many life-changing and enduring academic, personal, career and social rewards. Few other opportunities in life have proven to net such a positive and sustainable effect.

For more information on RIT’s study abroad opportunities, contact Tynell Stewart at goabroad@rit.edu, or visit the study abroad website at studyabroad.rit.edu. For information on the availability of access and support services, contact Peter Lalley, Ph.D., at palbgs@rit.edu.

Eric Cardenas

by Kathy A. Johncox



A. SUE WESSLER

With an associate degree in Applied Computer Technology in hand, and on his way to a bachelor's degree in Urban Community Studies, Eric Cardenas, 22, is well-positioned to follow his chosen career path and achieve his goals.

Cardenas, a fourth-year student from Pharr, Texas, says he has learned a lot at RIT about race, class, gender and deafness, and he enjoys studying, researching and analyzing deaf urban communities.

"My goal is to write a book about deaf urban communities in Latin America," says Cardenas. "My plan to help me reach that goal is to travel in Latin America and study deaf communities in the various countries."

He attended a Baptist temple in his hometown where he worked with deaf professionals who became his role models. Attending RIT/NTID's Explore Your Future program as a high school student made him certain that RIT was where he should pursue his career goals.

Leadership comes naturally to Cardenas. He was banquet chairperson for the Texas

Latino Council of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, and NTID's Hispanic Deaf Club has benefited from his leadership as president.

Cardenas has won many awards and scholarships, including the Horatio Alger Association Scholarship, a national award given to high school students who have overcome obstacles while demonstrating strength of character, a commitment to pursue a college education and a desire to contribute to society.

"When I won the Horatio Alger Association Scholarship, they paid all my expenses, including interpreters, for a trip to Washington, D.C., where I met celebrities like Oprah Winfrey and corporate CEOs," he says. "It was one of the most awesome experiences of my life."

Cardenas has completed one co-op in the computer field in his hometown, and is seeking another in urban community studies. Between studying, club work and a part-time job, Cardenas still has time to reflect on a favorite quote that speaks to his sense of accomplishment and desire to achieve—"Don't miss your moment."

James Curley

by Kathy A. Johncox



A. SUE WESSLER

What's a self-professed beach bum from Carlsbad, Calif., doing at a high-tech, innovation university in upstate New York?

"I'm getting a great education at RIT/NTID where there are outstanding services for deaf students, and taking advantage of the wonderful science and photography programs," says James Curley, a fourth-year Biomedical Photographic Communication major. "I totally love my major. It perfectly combines my passions for photography and science, and it's one of only two bachelor's degree programs in the world in this field."

Born into a hearing family, Curley became deaf after contracting a rare occurrence of blood poisoning during the birthing process. He attended mainstream middle and high schools before choosing to come east.

"I love my family endlessly, but when I was around 18, I knew I needed to get away and be on my own," he says. "I won't say it has been easy without my family to support me, but it helps that RIT has quite a support system for deaf students."

An avid outdoorsman, Curley took a leave of absence from RIT to hike the nearly 2,800-mile Appalachian Trail and the International Appalachian Trail, which run from Georgia to Newfoundland. He hiked a personal best of 1,400 miles, most of them solo, from Georgia to the New York City area. Two months after the hike, he competed in the World Bodysurfing Championship in California.

"I've adapted to Rochester weather and taken up racquetball, rock climbing, hiking and showshoeing," says Curley. "I started the Racquetball Club at RIT and am the current president, trying to get competitive status so we can compete in college tournaments."

Curley intends to go on for a master's degree and possibly a Ph.D. He'd like to teach at RIT/NTID, and living in Hawaii is a long-term goal. He's very focused on his career as evidenced by this favorite quote: "If you don't know where you are going, you might wind up somewhere else—and not even know it."

MaNeesha McIlwain

by Ilene J. Avallone

A visit from an NTID admissions counselor to her high school in Knoxville, Tenn., peaked MaNeesha McIlwain's interest in learning more about RIT/NTID. McIlwain, who is hard-of-hearing, felt a mainstream campus with a large number of deaf and hard-of-hearing students seemed like it would be a good fit.

The first quarter at RIT/NTID was an adjustment for McIlwain, 21, an Accounting Technology major.

"I was very shy when I came here," she says, "but I was connected to the NTID Student Life Team shortly after my arrival. They quickly got me engaged in extracurricular activities on campus, and soon I forgot about being homesick."

McIlwain is president of the NTID Ebony Club, has worked as a camp counselor for Explore Your Future and Summer Vestibule programs, and currently is a peer mentor for NTID's Step-Up program, an organization for deaf and hard-of-hearing African-American, Latino, Asian and Native American students who are undecided on a major.

She recently was recognized as an NTID Student Ambassador for her leadership skills and her successes in and out of the classroom.

McIlwain says she's learned to manage her time wisely so that she doesn't feel stressed out.

She is considering pursuing a bachelor's degree in business.

"I'd like to go into cosmetology, and a bachelor's degree will prepare me better for managing a hair studio and supervising others," she says.

When she's not working on campus, she enjoys cutting, coloring, perming and styling her friends' and family members' hair. Shopping, baking and texting are other favorite pastimes.

"RIT/NTID has given me the ability to expand my horizons and learn more about my Deaf culture," she says. "The opportunity to meet a diverse group of students who are very different from back home has been so rewarding, and a learning experience."



A. SUE WESSLER

Hannah Worek

by Susan L. Murad

It's no surprise that Hannah Worek's family suggested she attend RIT. The Rochester, N.Y., native is the 13th member of her family to enroll, and she feels it was the right choice.

"I took the advice of friends and family, but followed my instincts," says the 17-year-old Criminal Justice major. "Even though I'm only a freshman, I can definitely see that RIT is already preparing me to work."

Among her favorite classes is Brave New Past, an honors course about the history of Rochester. Worek, who graduated from nationally ranked Brighton High School in Rochester at age 16, has been named to RIT's College of Liberal Arts Dean's List.

"My primary motivation is to make my parents proud," she says. "I also want to do well since I plan to go to law school and eventually become a trial lawyer. I want to work for a civil rights or deaf advocacy agency. I would like to co-op in either a police department or law office."

Worek also has found a new passion at RIT/NTID—theater.

"I never was interested in high school

theater productions because all the shows were musicals, and I don't sing," she explains. "But my roommate encouraged me to try out. I went to the audition, and landed a role."

Since then, she has been assistant stage manager and stage manager for other RIT/NTID productions.

"It's definitely a lot of work and responsibility, but I enjoy it tremendously," she says.

In addition to theater, Worek has been on RIT/NTID's Deaf Basketball Association team, and was on the dodge ball and the flag football teams at the Rockfest competition against Gallaudet. She also has been practicing with RIT/NTID's College Bowl team, and will compete at the National Association of the Deaf convention.

Worek has some advice of her own to share with students making their college choice.

"If you want a college with a great reputation that will train you for the workforce, then RIT is the place for you," she says.



A. SUE WESSLER



MARK BEJAMIN

Award-winning Effort Carl Kriger (left), manager with IBM Software Group, presents NCE Director John Macko (center) and NTID Assistant Vice President for College Advancement Dr. Gerard Buckley with IBM's Excellence in Career Services Award.

Collaborations and Partnerships Get the Job Done

by Kathy A. Johncox

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicated in its March 2010 Employment Situation Summary that the number of unemployed persons in the United States was 15 million, and the unemployment rate was 9.7 percent. That employment picture can be somewhat discouraging as RIT/NTID students search for summer cooperative work experiences (co-ops) required for their majors, and as spring 2010 graduates look to enter the workforce. In these tough economic times, the staff of the NTID Center on Employment are using current and developing employer networks, collaborations and partnerships to help make it easier for students to get that first co-op or job.

“We know that hiring deaf and hard-of-hearing RIT/NTID co-op students and graduates gives businesses a competitive advantage by bringing high-tech skills as well as diversity to the workplace,” says John Macko, NCE director. “It’s our job to help employers see those

benefits by bringing awareness to organizations looking for employees with the type of skills our students and graduates offer.”

Bringing awareness means NCE staff members spend about one third of the year on the road. Trips to conferences such as the Society for Human Resource Management Diversity Conference allow NCE staff to network with human resources people from around the nation. They travel to present *Working Together: Deaf and Hearing People*, a workshop designed to help employers learn about working with deaf employees, and to inform employers all over the country about the quality and skills of RIT/NTID’s deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

“Creating and maintaining strong recruiting relationships is important,” says Macko. “Personal visits to organizations and contacts throughout the year let them know that we are committed to working with them and helping them benefit from the skills and diversity our students bring.”

Networking Reaps Rewards

Last year, NCE visits to California resulted in emerging relationships with potential employers such as Qualcomm, Solar Turbines, Pepperdine University, NAVSEA and Aerospace Corporation. As a result of previous West Coast networking, the University of California San Diego hired three visual arts majors for co-ops, and the City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works hired four students—one graphics intern and three engineering interns.

“The NTID Center on Employment representatives contacted me in 2008 to ask if we had a need for interns,” says Bill Weeks, personnel director for the City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works. “We had no experience working with deaf interns or co-ops, so we invited NCE staff to come and meet with some of our personnel from different agencies. A few managers were interested right away, and by the end of the summer, program managers and supervisors were so excited about the wonderful experience of working with deaf interns that they arranged

to award certificates to the students affirming their excellent summer efforts for us.”

An Enduring Collaboration

Information Technology students benefit from a longtime collaboration with IBM, which involves field trips to IBM’s New York State facilities where groups of students meet deaf and hard-of-hearing IBM employees, and begin to see what types of jobs and skills are required, so they can be prepared upon graduation.

“I’ve been working with NCE since 1999, and IBM and NCE have developed a close working relationship,” says Bill Strachan, technical recruiting program director, IBM Research. “And there is a clear understanding from NCE as to the caliber of student IBM seeks. I would describe our relationship with NCE as enduring. Business relationships tend to change over time for a number of reasons, however, the relationship between RIT/NTID and IBM is as strong today as it was 11 years ago.”

As a testament to this long and successful relationship, NCE this year received IBM’s Excellence in Career Services Award—one of only two colleges worldwide that have received this honor, which recognizes efforts in

preparing students for a career upon graduation, and helping IBM recruiters find students with the skills they need.

Partnering with Government

“Our relationship with NCE started in 2006 after the NTID career fair. Our then-deputy director requested that I work with NCE to establish a partnership,” says Michael Duignan, a human resources consultant for the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) in Rome, N.Y. “Our collaboration has been exceptional. We work closely with NCE staff by describing the type of work, and the staff suggests applicable majors. With this close collaboration, co-op placements have always worked well, and I believe, from the students’ perspective, have provided meaningful work and career experience.”

NCE’s relationship with the Department of Defense has led to an additional collaboration. RIT is one of the first of a growing number of college campuses where the Department of Defense hires a student to educate fellow students and alumni about employment opportunities for people with disabilities, and encourage them to apply. This year Kyle Edenzon is both an RIT graduate student in Multidisciplinary Studies, and an

on-campus recruiter for the United States Department of Defense Student Training and Academic Recruitment (STARS) program.

“The partnership between the NTID Center on Employment and the Department of Defense through the STARS program has benefitted not only me, but the RIT community in general,” says Edenzon. “I have opportunities for both co-ops and full time positions as well as some great networking. The program also has benefitted a number of students and faculty here at RIT. This has been an absolutely wonderful experience and given me the opportunity to learn a lot!”

Another such partnership is with The Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities, which connects federal government agencies nationwide with interested college students and recent graduates with disabilities from all over the country. Since the mid-1970s, NCE has partnered with the WRP to bring recruiters to campus annually to interview students and place information from these student interviews in a searchable database available online to federal human resources specialists, equal employment opportunity specialists, and other hiring officials in federal agencies. Last year, WRP interviewed 80 RIT/NTID students, and 15 students accepted job offers and worked last summer.

Networking is the Key

Once a relationship begins, NCE staff can provide resumes for employers to review and schedule pre-screened on-campus interviews. Employers can benefit from NCE’s job posting services, access to a dedicated employer website and *NewsNotes*, an electronic newsletter. Employers also are invited to attend the annual NTID Job Fair in October where they can meet hundreds of potential employees.

“What we emphasize to students and graduates looking for co-ops and jobs in this economy applies to our own efforts with employers as well,” says Macko. “The key is networking.”



JASON WITIG

Government Jobs RIT graduate student Kyle Edenzon (left) and Roland Omnipieg from the Department of Defense teamed up at NTID’s annual Job Fair to talk with, interview and encourage students to apply for federal jobs.

Sara Gould

by Susan L. Murad



PROVIDED PHOTO

“A goal without a plan is just a wish.”

“I keep getting fortune cookies with variations of this quote,” says RIT/NTID alumna Sara Gould. “It’s kept me moving forward and helped me come up with Plan B when Plan A wasn’t looking very good.”

The 30-year-old has made many of her plans into reality since she lost her hearing suddenly at age 14 when she was in ninth grade. She graduated from RIT in 2002 with a bachelor’s degree in Mechanical Engineering and earned a master’s degree in Systems Engineering from Stevens Institute of Technology in 2005.

“Thanks to my co-ops at RIT, I’ve worked in design, manufacturing and testing,” says the Binghamton, N.Y., native who now lives in Charlottesville, Va. “I enjoy the testing side of engineering, and work as a mechanical engineer in the test department of a Navy subcontractor.”

While a student at RIT/NTID, Gould played saxophone in several music groups,

was involved with the RIT Student Music Association and served as the club’s president. She rowed on the RIT crew team and was in the RIT Outing Club.

Gould says of her time at RIT/NTID, “I learned to not be afraid to seek out people who I could learn from. There were so many people who took an interest in me and wanted to know how I was doing.”

She advises students to always try new things, and heeding that fortune cookie’s message, is working on starting a storefront business.

“It will offer laser engraving, 3D printing, electronics, coffee, snacks, Wi-Fi and space to make almost anything,” she explains. “Technology is a great connector, and I would like to find a way to include the deaf community in my plans. I’ve been looking into the entrepreneurial scholarship program that exists at NTID, and think it’s a great idea.”

Kevin Symons

by Susan L. Murad



COURTESY MACKY MITCHELL ARCHITECTS

Uncertainty in the economy doesn’t have to mean disaster. Just ask 2002 Computer Aided Drafting Technology graduate Kevin Symons.

“Having dealt with a poor economic climate in New York, then being laid off 18 months ago, I filled my time with more education and occasional jobs to add to my resume until an opportunity opened up,” says the 28-year-old from Jacksonville, Ill., who now lives in St. Louis, Mo. “I’m working again because of my unique resume, which listed former jobs that, combined, perfectly match my current job description.”

Some of the skills Symons points to as keys to success are combining technical expertise with a passion for his work.

“The lessons I practice today are from my two CADT professors, William LaVigne and Jim Fugate,” he explains. “Clarity and attention to detail are critical when there are large projects and teams, because documentation and presentations are the best ways architects can explain how they want their work to be constructed.”

Symons’ NTID associate degree training led

to his current position with Mackey Mitchell Architects in St. Louis, providing building information modeling support as part of a firm of 40 architects whose design work includes colleges and schools for the deaf.

“John Macko from the NTID Center on Employment was helpful with my job search,” he says. “He connected me to my first employer, John Stanton, [a 1980 RIT/NTID graduate] who helped me start in this field.”

In addition to classroom lessons, Symons gained valuable experience from Joe Hamilton in NTID’s Department of Cultural and Creative Studies.

“I got to know Joe from working in the theater,” he says. “He emphasized showing up on time and working hard. He also knows how to create a positive work environment.”

When asked about the future, Symons says he would like to begin working toward a bachelor’s degree, perhaps in architecture.

“My wife and daughter and I hope to add to our family,” he says. “And another St. Louis Cardinals World Series championship would be fun!”

Creating an Innovation Laboratory

by Susan L. Murad



A. SUE WEISER

“Students who are involved in innovative projects develop leadership, teamwork and communication skills,” says E. William Clymer, interim director of the Postsecondary Education Network-International and interim director of the NTID Center on Access Technology. “Their experiences instill in them a passion for innovation, and ultimately, deaf and hard-of-hearing students and graduates become empowered to be more independent and to participate more fully in the benefits of our free market system.”

The NTID Center on Access Technology Innovation Laboratory,

Mixing It Up A variety of projects are underway in NTID’s new Access Technology Innovation Laboratory, bringing together faculty, staff and students from various NTID departments and across RIT.

a first-of-its-kind initiative, provides a place for students to get involved in the innovation process. The lab is located on the first floor of NTID’s Lyndon B. Johnson building, and brings together faculty and associate degree-level deaf and hard-of-hearing students to collaborate on multidisciplinary projects related to developing and adapting access and instructional technologies, health care technologies and services, and more.

Cisco Systems has provided gifts-in-

kind of equipment; Internet Protocol, or IP, phones; and network servers to equip the new lab.

“NTID has a vision of creating learning partnerships among students, faculty and external partners that will respond to future challenges and shape future opportunities with innovation,” says Gary Behm, visiting instructor and support faculty in NTID’s Engineering Studies Department. “The NTID Innovation Lab holds a central place in this future.”

NTID Scholarship Fundraising Priorities

by Susan L. Murad

One in three deaf and hard-of-hearing students at RIT/NTID come from families making less than \$30,000 per year. Without scholarship support, these students are not able to afford the cost of an RIT/NTID education. Your support gives these students the opportunity to complete their education.

Three scholarships are current funding priorities for friends and potential donors to consider.

Johnson Scholarship Foundation Endowed Scholarship for Innovation & Entrepreneurship

- Benefits deaf and hard-of-hearing students who seek to become successful entrepreneurs.

- In addition to the federal match, the Johnson Scholarship Foundation is also matching gifts to this fund 1:2 (i.e. for every \$2 donated, the foundation matches \$1). Combined with the federal match, donor contributions are matched 3 to 1.

NTID Endowed Scholarship in the Visual Arts Disciplines

- Benefits deaf and hard-of-hearing students pursuing careers in the visual arts.
- This scholarship is \$7,200 shy of reaching the \$25,000 needed to become permanently endowed. Once permanently endowed, the federal government will contribute an additional \$25,000 to the fund.

LaSala Doctoral Endowed Scholarship

- Benefits deaf and hard-of-hearing students pursuing doctoral degrees.
- This first-of-its-kind scholarship is \$11,000 shy of reaching the \$25,000 needed to become permanently endowed. Once permanently endowed, the federal government will contribute an additional \$25,000 to the fund.

A complete list of NTID scholarships can be found at www.ntid.rit.edu/friends/endowed_scholarships.php. You can make a gift online at www.rit.edu/giving/home_makeagift_giftNTID.php, or by calling 585-475-6836 (v/TTY).

E. William Clymer

by Ilene J. Avallone



A. SUE WEISLER

The challenge of designing, developing and evaluating instructional materials and products is what attracted E. William Clymer to NTID in 1975. The talented people he works with every day, the challenges he encounters on his job and the entrepreneurial opportunities he can take advantage of to add value to the institute are why he's remained.

"Leading the way in innovative technological teaching methods for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, and working with colleagues on campus and around the world to benefit student learning, has been very exciting and rewarding for me," says Clymer.

He has both an MBA and a master's degree in education, and serves as the Interim Director of the Postsecondary Education Network (PEN)—International, a partnership between NTID and The Nippon Foundation of Japan that helps universities, primarily in the Asian-Pacific Basin, serve postsecondary deaf students, by applying instructional technologies and improving and updating their technical curriculum.

Clymer also serves as Interim Director

of the NTID Center on Access Technology, and investigates, evaluates and trains faculty and staff to use innovative technologies in educational settings for postsecondary students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

His duties have led him around the world—not only to countries throughout the Asian Pacific region, but also to Russia, England and Australia.

This extensive travel allows Clymer to pursue his passion in photography. He also is an avid collector of old cameras, and has authored three books on the administrative applications of microcomputers.

One of the things he is most proud of is chairing the biennial NTID International Symposium on Technology and Education of the Deaf for the past 15 years. It's the premier venue for professionals in instructional and access technology fields, and attracts more than 250 deaf education professionals from more than a dozen countries.

"It's enlightening and inspiring to have so many people all over the world whose goal is to provide the best education for deaf and hard-of-hearing students," he says.

Kathleen Szczepanek

by Ilene J. Avallone



A. SUE WEISLER

"Live and behave honorably with kindness" is the motto that Kathleen Szczepanek, a faculty member in the NTID Business Studies Department, strives to model for her students and in her life every day.

"That is how I want to be remembered," she says.

Currently a faculty member in the Administrative Support Technology program, Szczepanek has held several positions since joining RIT/NTID 12 years ago. She worked in NTID Alumni Relations and the NTID Vice President's office, and then worked for five years as an NTID admissions counselor.

"I think my varied roles within the institute have helped me become an effective teacher today," she says.

A graduate of RIT/NTID, Szczepanek earned an associate degree in Office Technologies, a bachelor's degree in Graphic Design and two master's degrees in Secondary Education and Multidisciplinary Professional Studies with concentrations in Human Resources and Management and Secondary Education.

"My professors at RIT/NTID were big influences on why I went back to school to get my teaching degree and seek a job here," she says. "I enjoyed my experience at RIT/NTID so much that I wanted to give something back to the institute."

Her students motivate and inspire her.

"They get me up and going every day," she says. "My goal is to teach them how to be flexible and adaptable to the fast-changing technology that is all around them, and help them understand good business practices and ethics so they can be successful when they get out in the real world."

Her Business Ethics course has been approved by the NTID curriculum committee as a permanent course in the Business Studies Department—one of the proudest achievements in her career.

Szczepanek serves as the cochlear implant mentorship coordinator at RIT/NTID, and pairs students with cochlear implants with mentors—other students, faculty and staff who are cochlear implant users—for social events and learning experiences throughout the academic year.

Congratulations to the Class of 2010!



A. SUE WEISER

MARK BENJAMIN

Proud Graduates Corey Axelrod and Adriana Gaylord were selected as 2010 commencement delegates.

Corey Axelrod

A native of Arlington Heights, Ill., Axelrod, who graduated with an MBA in Marketing and Sales Management, is the first-ever deaf or hard-of-hearing student selected as the graduate delegate for the E. Philip Saunders College of Business. In 2008, he earned a bachelor's degree in Business Management from RIT. He is the recipient of a number of scholarships and was a semi-finalist in the ESPN Dream Co-op Competition. He worked four years as a senior field sales manager for Vector Marketing, a Cutco Cutlery distributor. He also has been director of marketing and sales for Hager Productions, a multimedia company in Rochester, N.Y., a position he will continue to hold now that he's graduated.

Adriana Gaylord

Gaylord, from Houston, Texas, graduated with an associate degree in Computer Integrated Machining Technology. She was selected as NTID's commencement delegate. While a student, Gaylord held leadership positions with the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, the Hispanic Deaf Club and the Department of Engineering Studies Engineering Club. She has worked at the Corpus Christi Army Depot and Concept Computer Services in Corpus Christi, Texas. Gaylord will pursue a BS in Manufacturing Engineering Technology at RIT in the fall.

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Classic Comedy The form of comedy presented in 17th century French playwright Moliere's *The Bachelors* is one of the roots of modern comedy later adopted by Charlie Chaplin, Wile E. Coyote and the Roadrunner, and the Three Stooges. The NTID Performing Arts Program's spring offering directed by Jim Orr, featured lavish scenery, period costumes and talented and dedicated hearing and deaf actors—all of which combined to give theatergoers an evening of entertainment that showed just how many ways, true to the title of the play, the boy doesn't get the girl.

ALLIE TRINGOLI