

September 10, 1992

Pride, Pinnacles, and Community

The following text contains portions of President Albert J. Simone's Address to the RIT Community, Sept. 1, 1992.

September 1, 1992—today—is my first official day at RIT. Yet it seems that I already know so many, so well. More than 100 letters have been exchanged, and many reports and memoranda shared. There have been telephone conversations, chance on-campus and RITskeller chit-chats, and heavy and light breakfast, luncheon, and dinner meetings.

I have been introduced to community leaders from the private and public sectors, and have been impressed with their knowledge of and commitment to RIT.

The welcome that my wife, Carolie, and I have received from students, faculty, professional and technical staff, secretaries, maintenance and support personnel, alumni, deans, vice presidents, trustees, and friends of RIT has been warm, enthusiastic, and complete. Carolie and I would like to thank all of you very genuinely for all of your courtesies. So—thank you.

Pinnacles on the Horizon

We have come a long way. We have many accomplishments and achievements of which we can be proud.

But what about tomorrow? What are our future targets? What pinnacles are on the horizon?

Let me suggest a few. I present them now as topics for future discussion and subsequent action.

TQM and more. Let's discuss TQM for just a moment. A quality experience for our students is one that meets or exceeds their total requirements—and this changes from one year to the next. We are talking about our students' total requirements, covering their experiences in the classroom, in the admissions office, in the registration lines, in the parking lots, in the dormitories and dining rooms, on the athletics fields, in the placement office, on co-op assignment, and so on. TQM has been called a "top-to-bottom, end-to-end, strategic, organizational, and cultural change."

However, what I want to emphasize here is that TQM is not all there is. While I believe that RIT must do and be TQM in the months ahead, there is still much more that is required here. For example, TQM is no substitute for "KKD," which is a Japanese expression that translates into "Knowledge, Experience, and Guts." To have a successful university, you need both TQM and KKD. Without the KKD, you can't achieve the TQM.

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Strategic Planning

Moreover, TQM is not a substitute for strategic planning and strategic decision making. RIT needs strategic thinking to gain focus and momentum over a period of years. Clear targets and specific objectives must be identified, and actions must be executed to achieve these objectives over a long period of time.

TQM is also no substitute for an effective organizational design. Such a design provides the organization the ability to innovate quickly in order to respond to changing external factors. I am much impressed with RIT's ability to execute strategies and actions over the past several months which have significantly enhanced our enrollment results, and, hence, our financial health. We have to have an organizational design and philosophy which permits innovative, speedy, and responsible decision making.

Finally, and most important, we need the right people. In particular, we need people of integrity and creativity who are willing to take risks. Most of all, we need people who can learn. We must have people who can learn from our students, from other universities, from parents of students, and from the employers of our students. We must have people who can learn from their own and others' successes and failures.

What better organizational setting is there to promote and encourage learning than a university campus? It is unconscionable that we would do otherwise. Therefore, we will delegate and encourage creativity and entrepreneurship, and empower people to the fullest extent possible.

As we talk about people and empowerment, we, of course, are talking about leadership. What is leadership? It seems that everyone talks about it, but no one really defines it. Leadership has been described, in a recent *Harvard Business Review* article by Kim and Mauborgne titled "Parables of Leadership," as an "unseen space."

Ethics and Values

Every day we see and hear about violations of professional and personal conduct and expressions of personal and professional values which, to say the least, appear questionable to most of us. The violations could involve firms and industries into which many of our students enter each year.



Can we and should we teach values? Some academics argue that we should not because of the risk of imposing our personal values on students. Others will argue that "values inquiry" is all right, but the "teaching of values" is not.

Yet, as academicians, we all support a common sense of values. The academy certainly is not value free. For example, all of us in this room support the values of preserving, transmitting, and advancing knowledge; the centrality of reason; the insistence on inquiry, critical thinking, and an open mind; democratic principles; and academic freedom. Ernest Boyer, head of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, in an address at the 1990 Annual Meeting of the American Council on Education, proposed five "values" that relate to all of us here. He proposed that each university must be a *purposeful* community, a *just* community, an *open and honest* community, a *disciplined* community, and a *caring* community.

A report of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education Task Force on Values in Education about a year ago frames this issue of values and whether and how we might teach them. It talks about achieving value education by looking at the institution as a whole, and by assigning value enhancing strategies and roles to the president, other administrators, and faculty, and by introducing value-enhancing activities both within and outside of the classroom and the curriculum.

If nothing else, I believe our students should not be turned loose with an RIT degree unprepared, at least from an educational perspective, for the value-laden and ethical challenges that they will face over their entire lives as parents, citizens in a democracy, and individuals following a particular career path. Accordingly, I would like to propose to the RIT Policy Council that we establish a systematic study of how RIT as a total community fulfills this—probably our most important—obligation to our students. I will suggest that the August 1991 report,

Emphasis on Values: A Priority for Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education in the 1990s, will be a good place to start our inquiry.

Scholarship

A recent issue of *Change* magazine discusses "Equilibrium in the Research University." Actually, the equilibrium which is discussed is needed in the comprehensive university, such as RIT, as well. The equilibrium balance point will be different, on average, among universities in different categories, as well as among universities within the same category. The equilibrium depends on the university's values, mission, history, and particular circumstances. The equilibrium is necessary because universities must pursue several objectives simultaneously. In particular, at the same time universities must be dedicated to post-secondary instruction, basic and applied research, and professional training and service.

What is RIT's equilibrium point now? What should it be several years from now? Remember our earlier discussion on TQM and change.

I shall ask provost and executive vice president Dr. Thomas Plough to lead a process, involving the Council of Deans, the Faculty Council, and the Policy Council, that will result in a substantive statement on this issue. I will be giving Tom a short time frame for this assignment, since its result will be critical to our strategic planning process, which as I said before will be a major effort for this year. This work is important as well to the work of the Priorities and Objectives Committee which, because it has done such an outstanding job, will probably never be deactivated and will always be held at the ready when we need to close the breach and bridge the gap.

In my own view, wherever the equilibrium point settles (and I have some ideas where that ought to be), we can never compromise the concept of scholarship. In each and every course taught in every corner of our university—in the sciences, the humanities, the professions, the arts—each professor, at a minimum, must be absolutely up to date in his or her field. Each professor must be conveying the current state of knowledge in the field as well as introducing a discussion on the questions currently at issue and currently open in the field. There should be no exceptions to this minimal expectation of scholarship. Our promotion, tenure, and annual faculty evaluation and assessment processes should assure our students and the entire community that this is indeed the case.

I also believe that there are areas at RIT where we can take scholarship to the most developed phase, to actual discovery, development, and presentation of new knowledge in the field to the community of scholars as a whole. I am referring here to original research undertaken with the expectations of being peer reviewed, published, and critiqued. We are not a research university, and supporting this kind of research can be expensive. Research is often associated with Ph.D. programs, of which we have just one at the moment. Nonetheless, I believe we should be open to this direction where it makes sense for us, given our mission and particular expertise and opportunity. Moreover, I strongly believe that our research efforts, as a very general rule, should be in the applied rather than the basic or pure research arenas.

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RIT Can Celebrate Diversity *And* Unity, Says Chair of Pluralism Commission

The following is a transcript of the speech made by Professor Isaac Jordan, chairperson of the RIT Commission for Promoting Pluralism.

The RIT Commission for Promoting Pluralism appreciates this opportunity to share with you its visions, hopes, and plans for making pluralism a reality in the Institute community. These aspirations are entirely the product of your ideas, thoughts, and dreams to see this university become a pacesetter in establishing the highest level of respect and appreciation for pluralism. Let me first say that the other commission members and I are pleased to be caught up in the wonderful feeling of excitement that seems to be rippling through the Institute—an excitement due, in part, to new leadership, new aspirations, a new school year, and the many new challenges new beginnings always bring.

We believe that pluralism and building a sense of community are very much a part of the dream of that new leadership—for two reasons.

First, our new president, Dr. Albert Simone, did not have to be persuaded that the Commission for Promoting Pluralism is both necessary and critical to the persons who look to RIT for the best education they can receive. Dr. Simone did not need to be sensitized to the need for such a group to guide the Institute's efforts to bring about a pluralistic community.

The second reason has to do with a meeting I had with Dr. Simone not long ago. A list of minority leaders in the Rochester area was prepared for him as he took office. When Dr. Simone told me he wanted to meet these community leaders, at first I expected that his office would convene a luncheon for them on campus. I was astounded when he said, instead, "Professor Jordan, I'd like you to *take me to meet them.*" To me, this was critically important—part of the excitement I feel today, for this is the kind of leadership attitude that will not only enhance community building within RIT, but expand that feeling of community off campus as well.

You might ask, how can we foster pluralism and community at the same time? How can we promote a feeling of together-

ness while calling attention to that which sets people apart from others? The goals seem contradictory, yet they complement each other.

All around us, the universe is pulsing with diversity, yet all the parts work together to constitute the whole. Animal and plant life is full of variety, and we accept and appreciate it. But when it comes to dealing with diversity in people, we sometimes seem confused and not only unappreciative, but intolerant. If we choose to celebrate our diversity—a mark of our human creativity—rather than reject it, we can build on our commonality to enhance our unity. The world is highly interdependent and fast changing. RIT needs to prepare students to become resilient, which requires understanding and the ability to relate well to others, because others are really part of us. There is no conflict between unity and diversity unless we perceive conflict.

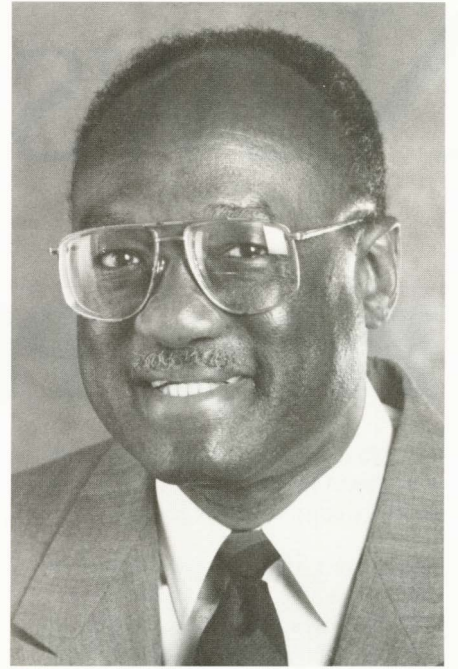
Students need to learn about their own culture along with those of others so they have a better understanding of themselves and others. American history is the story of many groups contributing to the overall national character. It is important that students learn to appreciate the rich inheritance derived from living in a pluralistic community. Appreciation comes from learning that people other than our kind have built and enriched this nation and an understanding that those others should not have to strip off their cultural identity to be accepted as members of the community.

Community is more than a number of subgroups who share the same locality, discipline, or university. Unless people living in juxtaposition with one another feel they share a common bond, they don't generate a sense of community. Without that bond of kinship—of sharing—a community cannot emerge. At a university, one of the bonds that builds a sense of community is the Alma Mater—a traditional song of devotion to the university and lifelong commitment to the values learned there. Singing the Alma Mater gives students, faculty, staff, and administrators a sense of being part of something larger than themselves—of being connected to the past and future. Yet many of us have

never heard RIT's Alma Mater. We in the commission are pleased to see that it was played during this meeting. We have asked for an ad hoc committee to study our current Alma Mater and to make recommendations that may promote renewed tradition at RIT—the kind that creates a symbolic bond from generation to generation.

Community means connectedness. One of the challenges of higher education is to connect the two domains of intellectual life and everyday life. Yet we continue to separate and divide our students' education into disconnected parts, as if each student were bifurcated. We need to break that dichotomy if we intend to create a sense of community on campus. We must assume that every student is an encapsulated whole with powerful dimensions of both intellect and affect. As long as we pretend the two can be handled separately, we cannot help students break down the tendency toward territorial behavior and separation.

An important step in reaching a pluralistic community is to celebrate diversity within our campus. The Commission for Promoting Pluralism has developed a framework including programs and activities supporting both the celebration and the implementation. Such programs as "Is Your Difference Appreciated?" are designed to bring into the spotlight any group of people that has been unjustifiably excluded from the mainstream of our society and allow it to highlight its dissimilarities and uniqueness in a supportive and positive setting. Another program will specifically address homophobia. A decade or more ago, the American Psychological Association removed homosexuality from its list of officially recognized mental disorders. Yet as recently as two years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld state laws denying the right of lesbian and gay adults to express themselves sexually. In October, one of our commission's subgroups will sponsor an open forum to address the ROTC's policy on homosexuality. The commission has designated several themes for programs during this academic year. One is "Diversity and the Political Process—Assessment of the Future," coinciding with the November presidential election. We will



also present "Pursuing the Dream—Tensions in the So-Called 'Melting Pot'" and "RIT as a Prototype for Change."

Activities sponsored by the commission, alone or in cooperation with other campus constituencies, are planned with the purpose of working toward building a community that affirms, validates, and values differences, and reflects respect for diversity—a community that guides each of its members toward feeling and demonstrating that respect.

The commission hopes to empower students to take responsibility for their own learning and growth. An engaging process in which students, faculty, staff, and administrators participate and share openly will lead to a view of diversity that is harmonious, balanced, and free of hostility. Therefore, the involvement of students in developing and implementing ideas and programs is critical.

A final note, if you please: the commission has no intention of becoming confrontational. It believes an effective pluralistic community can be achieved without strife or discord. Our goal is to facilitate community for all, and we take it seriously. Because of this trustful charge, we cannot and will not remain indifferent.

May I ask your indulgence for a moment longer and that you acknowledge the members of the commission and its scribe. Thank you!

Faculty Council President Optimistic About Future



The following is a transcript of the speech made by Joan Stone, president of RIT Faculty Council.

Three years ago, when I first had the privilege of speaking to you on this opening day in Ingle Auditorium, I was able to announce that President Rose, in discussions with Faculty Council, had agreed to establish a Presidential Commission on Cultural Diversity. Today, we have heard about the work of that commission, now called the Commission for Promoting Pluralism, from Isaac Jordan.

Three years ago, on this day, there was no student government as such. There was only Student Directorate. Today, for the second time in two years, Adrian White has spoken to us as president of Student Government.

Three years ago, this morning meeting was designated for faculty only. Staff met separately in the afternoon. Last year, for the first time, we all met together. Perhaps, on this day next year, we will also hear from a representative of RIT's staff, as this day comes to signify more and more RIT's commitment to community and shared governance.

The progress we have made toward true and inclusive shared governance has been remarkable in the last 12 months. In a year when many fine universities were search-

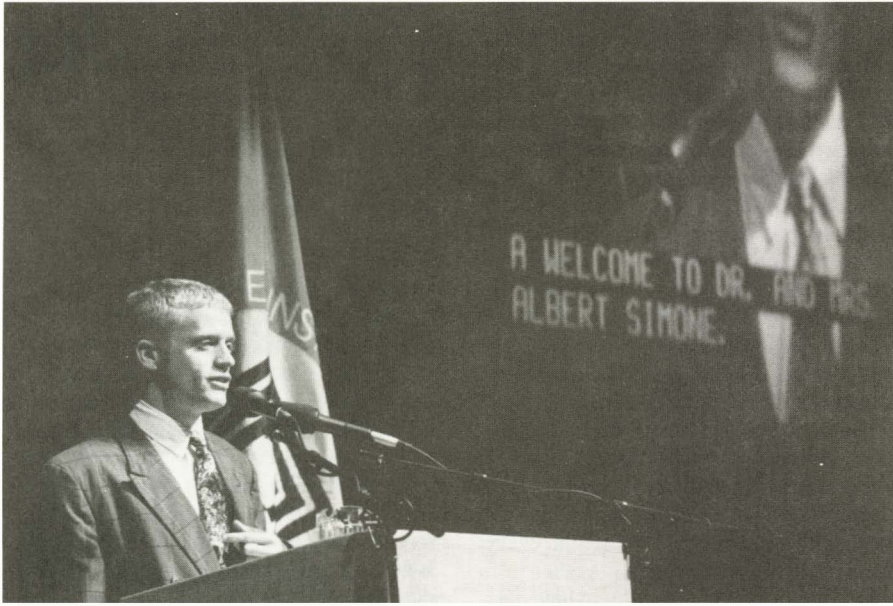
ing for presidents, the stunning success of our search committee is a tribute to both the leadership of Colby Chandler, our next chairman of the Board of Trustees, and the truly collaborative work of the trustees, faculty, and staff who worked on the committee. In the early stages, Faculty Council worked closely with Mr. Chandler in an effort to insure that a significant number of representative voices from the faculty would be heard on the committee, and that, in turn, faculty would have an opportunity to listen to and understand the perspective of the trustees.

Another major step toward shared governance occurred when a call for nominations was made for the Priorities and Objectives Committee. Over 200 names were submitted, and Faculty Council, together with student, staff, and administration representatives, provided counsel to Vice President Plough on the selection of the committee membership. The committee has been working very hard this summer, and we all look forward to hearing the outcome of their efforts.

A third important step toward shared governance has been the establishment of a working relationship between the Faculty Council Salary and Benefits Committee and Vice President Dempsey. Faculty,

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Student Government President Thankful for 'New Energy'



The following is a transcript of the speech given by Adrian White, president of RIT Student Government.

Good morning. To start my remarks, I offer a note of thanks. A "thank you" to the entire community—to the students, to the faculty, to the staff, to the administration, and to the trustees. A "thank you" for the immense maturing of relationships that we have witnessed in the last year; a "thank you" for enduring the hardships of late; a "thank you" for the new energy that has engulfed this institution; and a "thank you," in advance, for where we will go in this year to come. I do thank you, and I hope you will thank one another.

We are beginning to appreciate that there exist many small communities within RIT that contribute to the overall well-being of our academic home. We are starting to understand that students should be an integral and essential component of policy making. We are commencing a push forward in a spirit of shared governance. But let us neither rest, nor tire, for we have miles to go. And that first step in our trek might be to examine how we speak to our brothers and sisters in this academic family.

I was born Adrian Sherwood White. My parents spent much time and deliberation on my naming, and I am not alone in that vein. But here, I exist as 230-96-3744.

How long did government computers spend developing my nine-digit identity? How much deliberation did the Social Security office require? How well does it describe me? How often am I asked for my Social Security number, and not my name? And we wonder why students feel that RIT is dehumanized. We wonder why students feel that RIT just wants their money. We wonder why students leave and lend little support to this institution.

It's intriguing, really. Somewhere along an economic and mercantile spectrum, my identity, my individuality, and my personality dwell between a "Full Time Equivalency" and "the customer." We are apt students here at RIT. We will learn what is taught to us. Teach us to be "Full Time Equivalencies," and we will be. Teach us to be "the customer," and we will be.

I am just one "FTE." If I fail, there will be another "FTE" to fill my place. The financial void will be eliminated, and the accounts will be quelled. The personal sacrifice, however, will be disastrous.

We talk often of improving retention. Retention has clear financial advantages; nevertheless, retention should never be a goal of what we do. Retention should be a by-product, a side effect, a collateral issue. We should be improving the quality of life on this campus—not just for we "FTEs," but also for you who exist as "Position Control Numbers." Let us not, though, forget the impact of our phraseology as we enhance RIT.

"The customer" is a dangerous term—a phrase belittling of a student's place in an academic community. When we tell our students that they are "the customers" and that we sell the "educational product," we reduce a student's role in education to the most passive of places. I do not wish to be a customer, and I do not wish faculty and staff to be service representatives. There is no "educational product"; there is no 24-hour service hotline; and there is no money-back guarantee, nor should there be. Education is a metamorphous process—not a production process. It cannot be measured by ruler, by scale, or by graduated cylinder. We are students. Why not call us what we are?

Being "student-centered" and making students the "customers of education" are quite different. If there is a customer for education, it is society. We tell our students that we wish to teach them to "earn a living and live a life." A first lesson might well be to treat students as colleagues—a group of scholars that is free to learn all we have to teach.

But not all of our students are free to learn all we have to teach. We write that "RIT will admit and hire men and women, veterans, and persons with disabilities, individuals of any race, creed, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, or marital status . . ." and we are almost correct. ROTC, as guided by the Department of Defense, discriminates on the basis of sexual orientation.

A fine and prestigious organization, RIT's ROTC should be complimented on that which it brings to this campus and many others. Yet the exclusion of homosexuals from ROTC sends a dangerous message to all people in this community. RIT is not responsible for affecting Department of Defense policies; nevertheless, it is RIT's responsibility to enforce its own policies.

Students come to RIT to find out more about themselves and how they may im-

pact society and those around them. When students are admitted into the ROTC program, they sign a contract with the government stating that they know who they are and, implicitly, who they will be in the next few years. If a student later determines or admits that he or she is homosexual, the student will be disenrolled from ROTC and required to pay back any financial aid given him by the government.

This is not an anti-ROTC issue, nor should it be construed as such. This is an issue about being true to what we state, and being true to ourselves. ROTC is on the RIT campus through invitation, not through mandate. RIT therefore inherently endorses that which ROTC does. How then can we allow discrimination to occur? If now through homosexuality in the Department of Military Science, in which department and on what premise next? Can Mechanical Engineering say "No Caucasians allowed"? Can Social Work say "No men allowed"? Can Imaging Science say "No Canadians allowed"? Clearly the answer is an emphatic "no!" to these questions, but why not to ROTC?

We cannot allow this to continue. Access must truly exist for all our students and to all departments within RIT. We help to sculpt the future of this nation and of others. We promote the cause of pluralism and wave the banner of acceptance. And we must demonstrate that we practice what we preach, not because it is the political thing to do, but because it is the right thing to do.

And now, the right thing to do is to offer a welcome to two new members of our academic community. It is an enthusiastic and hopeful welcome—a welcome filled with aspirations and expectations, a welcome to Dr. and Mrs. Albert Simone. Chapter eight of RIT's history opens today, and I am thankful to be fortunate enough to witness this new genesis.

We have, over the past decade, grown at immense speed. Our reputation, physical plant, and endowment have soared to new heights. In some ways, however, we have grown too fast. Now is a time to concentrate on ourselves, internally, as an academic community. We must endeavor to build bridges between constituencies and to foster respect between disciplines. It is my strong conviction that Dr. Simone has both the capability and initiative to flagship such an operation.

In the few experiences I have already had with Dr. Simone, I have come to respect his fairness and intellect. He speaks often of shared governance and is making strong strides in such a system. His leadership might well develop the sense of community we so urgently need.

This day opens also another year—a year that has the most promise I have seen in my short tenure. I am impressed by the fervor that Dr. Simone shows in wanting to improve this institution. Let us not, though, solely rely on the president's energy. We must individually do what we can to aid in attaining our collective ambition.

And ambition is that which we must have most—ambition to better ourselves, and ambition to better our community. Student Government has this as its goal. We will work strongly with the president, with Faculty Council, and other members of RIT's governance structure. Together, we will create a sense of community. Together, we will succeed. Together, we will better RIT.

Faculty Council . . .

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fully informed of the financial status of the university, are far better able to contribute in a meaningful way when there are problems that need to be solved.

In a system of true shared governance, it is important to acknowledge and honor the unique prerogatives of each constituency, including a responsibility to determine and establish curriculum and to determine and establish the standards for student success in a particular curriculum. Faculty prerogatives also include the right and responsibility to choose our colleagues through the tenure process. It is imperative that we either adhere to established policies or that we change or refine unclear policies through appropriate processes. Throughout the summer, Faculty Council Executive Committee has been working toward an orderly change in existing Institute policies and procedures so that priorities are set with input from all; so that decision making is appropriately shared and fully informed; so that faculty, students, staff, and administration are represented appropriately in what may soon become a university senate.

Shared governance requires that we see as our real work not only our teaching and student advising, not only our research and consulting, but also the maintenance of the university itself, whether that work has occurred on the Presidential Search Committee, the Priorities and Objectives Committee, the Faculty Grievance Committee, the Institute Hearing and Appeals Board, the Intercollege Curriculum Committee, the Graduate Council, the Review Panel, the Classified Research Oversight

Study Group, or Faculty Council. Involvement in groups such as these is also our "real" work, for without them the university cannot be sustained as a university. The dedicated work of a number of faculty members has brought us this far, and I am sure most of them would say that the sense of empowerment and self-determination that accompanies shared governance is well worth the effort involved. Chairs of some of the active committees—Stephen Aldersley, Joan Carr, Sarah Collins, Stan McKenzie, and Mary Sullivan—have worked relentlessly in more or less visible ways to keep us moving forward. Now, as we move into this new year, we extend an invitation to all of you to participate in the activities that sustain RIT as a university.

Today is the beginning of the 1992-93 academic year, but more than that, it is the beginning of Albert Simone's tenure as our president. On another day, Dr. Simone—sometime later this year—we will all gather again at your formal inauguration, but for now let me say on behalf of the RIT faculty, "Welcome." A few of us have had the pleasure of meeting and talking with you this summer. As this year unfolds, we all look forward to continued conversations with you. As you have said before, RIT is one of the 15 or 20 largest private universities in the country. Together, with your leadership, we look forward to one day becoming one of the 20 best.

CIMS Open Meeting

The RIT community is invited to learn firsthand about the CIMS initiative at 3 p.m., Mon., Sept. 28, in Ingle Auditorium.

President . . .

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I expect to find most of our faculty in between the minimum expectation of being absolutely up to date and the maximum possibility of pushing forward the latest frontiers. Some of us will be presenting papers at professional meetings; some of us will be turning out textbooks and monographs; some of us will be publishing articles which have more of a descriptive turn meant to serve the practicing professional more than the academic theoreticians. Some of us will continue to apply some of the latest ideas developed by our colleagues to the community at large outside the university in an attempt to contribute, from the university's perspective, solutions to private and public sector problems and challenges.

I would like to propose that we institute a monthly inquiry-based faculty colloquia, led by RIT faculty, which will present, in layman's terms, the current state of the art in the discipline for faculty outside of the discipline. In this way, we can promote scholarship, promote community, and learn what's happening in such fields as sociology, imaging science, packaging, and ceramic sculpture.

All of this is not to say that we will in any way devalue teaching. In fact, what I am talking about is being sure that our teaching is as strong and rich as our students deserve. Teaching and scholarship are never in conflict. I do not believe that you can define one (teaching) without observing the other (scholarship).

This means that every opportunity should be taken to involve our students in our scholarship. This means we should find creative and productive ways to have our undergraduate students assist us in gathering data, writing papers, working in the lab performing some of the basic research, and even presenting the papers. What better way to learn—and better way to teach—than to dance on the leading edge of the knowledge base of your field of endeavor?

Many of our faculty already are doing precisely what I am discussing. However, as president, I don't want to make that assumption. Moreover, "many" is not good enough. It needs to be "all." Hence, I would like a process which checks this out, and recognizes and rewards this activity when it occurs at an exceptional level. In particular, most importantly, I want to be sure that at RIT we provide a system for faculty development which makes it possible for each professor, individually and with the help of colleagues, to assess his or her own status with regard to current scholarship. Faculty should be able to turn to the university for support to raise the level of their scholarship when that is needed or desired.

How Do We Get There?

For RIT to achieve its destiny—for all of us gathered here today and those we represent to be fulfilled—I believe three foundation stones must be firmly established. What are these foundation stones?

First, we have to know who we are and what we are about. Second, we have to clearly identify and commit to a special culture—the RIT culture. Third, we must be dedicated to a genuine and living commitment to shared governance. Let me treat each of these foundation stones in turn.

Who Are We and What Are We About?

We must be absolutely clear at all times that Rochester Institute of Technology is for the students, by the faculty, with the assistance of the administration and the professional and support staff, and under the authority and fiduciary responsibility of the trustees.

It is the students who bring us all together, who define our work and aspirations, and who provide (or at least *should* provide) the basis for evaluating the university's performance. Without the students, there would be no university. At many universities in recent years, I believe that certain administrations and faculty have lost sight of this truism. Fortunately, the pendulum is slowly swinging back to center.

While the work of the university serves the students, it is performed primarily by the faculty. It is the faculty who teach. It is the faculty who discover new knowledge through their research. It is faculty scholarship which preserves, disseminates, and applies knowledge and raises leading-edge questions. It is the faculty who counsel and advise students. It is the faculty who serve as role models in the quest for and use of knowledge and intellectual activity as a basis for living with integrity, responsibility, and purpose. In my judgment, no profession is more noble or sacred.

The role of the administration is to provide leadership, management, coordination, focus, and assessment. It has to assure that appropriate and effective communication occurs internally and with regard to external constituencies. Its fundamental mission is to facilitate the work of the faculty in service to students. The "creative" and "innovative" ideas that I project as president, the "aggressive" and "entrepreneurial" activities that I initiate as president, almost without exception come from the heads and pens of faculty and students. It is the faculty who are in direct contact with the students on a daily basis and, therefore, know what is needed and what is working and what is not working. It is the students—sometimes while they are still enrolled and many times after they have graduated and serve as loyal alumni—who provide insight and perspective. I would be lost—I could not do my job—without the important input of faculty and students. I know I speak for every successful and effective vice president and dean when I make this observation.

Moreover, the administration and faculty could not exist without the strong allegiance of the professional and support staff. It is the professional staff who make the administration and faculty effective. It is the people in records and admissions and placement and counseling who often provide the lifeline to students. The secretaries are the glue which holds the university together. Often, the positive lasting first impression of a visitor to this university is provided by the person who greets him or her at the information booth or in the parking lot, or the person who cares for the grounds and buildings in a way which projects institutional pride and achievement.

Finally, but not least, are the trustees. They are the only members of the RIT family who do not receive direct biweekly monetary payments, but who shoulder the ultimate responsibility for the viability of the university. They volunteer their time and energy. Often they contribute their own dollars. It is they who have a fiduciary responsibility to see that the endowment monies are invested in ways that will maximize scholarships for students, scholarship for faculty, and proper maintenance for facilities. It is they who are the key interface with the public on behalf of the university. It is they who are charged legally with the ultimate evaluation of the performance of the university. It is they who are charged with the responsibility to make whatever personnel, financial, and broad programmatic changes might be required to sustain a university which is successfully pursuing its mission.

Shared Governance

Shared governance is based on four elements. First, there must be an acceptance of basic values among all the parties in the governance structure. Second, there must be agreement on long-term goals pursued in ways consistent with these values. Third, there must be mutual trust. And fourth, there must be ample and meaningful communication.

The governance of the university must recognize that the fundamental obligation of the faculty is working directly with students and contributing personally and directly to scholarship. Faculty are held directly accountable for their performance in these areas. Administration (e.g., deans, vice presidents, and president) are held accountable for the leadership and management of the organization. The professional and support staff are held accountable for their effectiveness in facilitating the work of the faculty and administration. The trustees are held accountable, ultimately, by all of the constituencies of the university for the values, mission, broad policy, long-term goals, and strategic dimensions of the university. Students are held accountable for their performance in the classroom and recognized for their work in extracurricular activities on behalf of the university.

The job of the president in this area of shared governance is to be sure that every one of the governance constituencies just identified has the opportunity to have its voice heard and its input felt. Decisions that are properly within the realm of faculty should be made by faculty, and they should be held accountable for those decisions, but the input of vice presidents and students should be duly considered. Similarly, decisions that are within the realm of a vice president should be made by that vice president, and he or she will be judged by the effectiveness of that decision, but that vice president should have the benefit of input from other members of the governance team.

Input given, whether it comes from higher or lower in the organization, must be honestly considered before the decision is made. Openness shall prevail to the fullest extent possible, it being recognized that sometimes the press of time and the personal or political sensitivity of information may abort communication that would otherwise be desirable. These latter cases should be at a minimum and, when they are unavoidable, the rationale for the restriction should be made known.

I believe that individual accountability is essential for effective management. I also believe that group identification and responsibility for successes and failures are essential for effective leadership. Shared values and goals, mutual trust, and effective communication—if all of us buy into them—will result in a shared governance of the university that will move it expeditiously towards its destiny.

RIT Culture

When I speak of an RIT culture, I am speaking of a culture in which students, faculty, staff, administration, and trustees are a family. What is a family? It is individuals—men and women, young and old, healthy and disadvantaged, successful and not successful—who are bound together by the fact that they care for one another. They support one another. They share in each other's successes and cry for any one of them who is in pain. They sometimes argue and disagree. In the end, they are a family, sharing common values and accepting the fact that ultimately they may choose different directions over life's journey, always returning to one another in the end.

Through it all, I hope that all of us here today can care for and support one another. When one of us succeeds, we all succeed. When one of us misses a beat, we all share in the criticism.

My predecessors and your predecessors, as well as all of us here today, I believe, have called for this kind of a culture at RIT. You want to be competent. You want to be aggressive. You want to be recognized and appreciated. You are very concerned about quality. You want to serve your students. You want to serve your community.

I am saying what we all know. For all of this to happen, we must do it together. We must care for and be sensitive to one another. We should seek support from and offer support to others who share our mission.

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