

RIT | University Council

Meeting Minutes: September 30, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m.

Spring Semester Planning Committee Report (*presentation file available on [RIT Digital Archive](#)*)

Chris Licata, Vice Provost & SVP Academic Affairs

The committee includes a number of returnees from the Fall Semester Planning Committee and we worked to ensure that we have cross representation from faculty, staff and students, including faculty members from Senate and from each college, a Council of Chairs representative, faculty nominated by the deans, as well as consultants and functional partners. Complete list of members is available in the slides for this presentation. The committee will recommend the processes and structure for delivering an outstanding and safe education for our students this spring term.

Focus #1 - Calendar

- Prepare three different scenarios for the spring calendar: Nearly normal start, Modest delayed start, significantly delayed start. Evaluate how significant advances in therapeutics and vaccines influence each of the scenarios. Evaluate how the trajectory of COVID-19 transmission, mitigation strategies and expected start of the flu season affect semester start dates and outline implications and ramifications. The longer we wait to open, the better our chances for getting through flu season, testing options and opportunities to be outdoors.

Focus #2 – Academic Operations

- Advise Provost on efficacy of teaching modality models and recommend modifications and other key issues affecting faculty, staff and students for spring and recommend mitigation options.

Recommendations

- Cancel Spring Break because travel increases the risk of transmissions
- Determine Spring term start date by October 8th
- More recommendations to follow

Approval of Minutes from September 2, 2020 Meeting

The minutes were approved by 35-0-8.

President's Report

A remarkable amount of planning went in to the launch of fall semester, but it wouldn't make a lot of difference if our community wasn't observing the safety guidelines. Our community is doing a wonderful job – kudos especially to our students! The total number of cases since we opened on 8/19 is 10 students and 2 employees. I am very proud of our community and how we are handling this. We have done far, far better than other schools of our size.

The Cybersecurity building will be opening in October and it is a remarkable building that will put us at the forefront in cyber security research and education. The IMLC project will include very heavy renovation in the library itself and we are now in the more detailed design stage, but plans are not yet finalized. The Performing Arts Center is still in the conceptual design stage. Athletics space plans are delayed due to the pandemic, but could see the re-location of the track to the north side of loop road in the summer. No decision yet been made regarding winter sports, which include basketball and hockey.

Work on plans for diversity, equity, inclusion, anti-racism and social justice is proceeding. Keith Jenkins and his staff will be at the helm, but several other VPs are also heavily involved, as well as the trustees and committees from each of the governance groups. We will present our draft plan in PowerPoint to the trustees at their November meeting.

We will then produce a written document by the end of the calendar year and will involve faculty, staff and students in further developing the plan. This Friday via Zoom, we will unveil the Frederick Douglass statue and 3 of the 4 planned diversity flags in the Student Alumni Union.

Compliance with RIT Ready Safety Plan (*presentation file available on [RIT Digital Archive](#)*)

Nicole Boulais, Assoc. VP, Student Affairs

Dave Armanini, FMS (Facilities & Vendors)

Dawn Herman, Coll. Restoration Program (Students, Visitors)

JoAnn Howard, HR (Employees, Adjuncts, Temps)

Back in the summer knowing that we would need a way to be able to collect and respond to concerns or complaints that came forward, we created a diverse university wide accountability planning team. The largest piece of the plan - 80% - is education because members of our community come from areas with differing expectations re: face covering, distancing, etc. The next 15% of the plan is re-education for those who haven't quite figured out what the university community expectations are. The remaining 5% are the accountability measures. We knew that there would be some people who either were uncomfortable giving direct feedback or felt that the violation was more significant or severe and needed something more than a gentle reminder. Information regarding community and self-accountability as well as how to report violations can be found at <https://www.rit.edu/ready/adhering-rit-protocols>. While reports are accepted through the electronic system, they can also be sent to Human Resources (HR) and Public Safety. All are handled in an expedited manner. Employee reports go to HR, facility and vendors to Dave Armanini and student or unknown go to Student Affairs. A small number may move on to the Student Conduct office. Thus far, we have not needed to suspend any students due to COVID-19 violations.

Q: If someone in the residence hall is not being a threat, maybe they just overlooked something or have a health reason, if they're not endangering people, why are they being reported?

A: The endangering behavior language specifically comes from our Student Code of Conduct and would only apply as a charge for a case that was referred to Student Conduct. This term is part of our existing policy as a charge, so endangering behavior would typically come in if someone knowingly was violating our COVID protocols, meaning that they had been told multiple times before about this behavior and they continue to do it those cases.

Q: Follow up...it's kind of a sticky situation what's endangering other people. I am feeling conflicted about this. Those who are not endangering other people are still being reported on. I'm just feeling conflicted about that.

A: What I would offer to that is, in planning for how we would re-open the campus, we had to submit to New York State a reopening plan which included our safety plan. It also needed to respect the regulations of the Monroe County Department of Health. Among the components are agreements about what standards we will hold on campus and include things like face covering, distancing, quarantine, etc. Those things that someone may say are not endangering, actually are if it is in violation of one of those safety protocols. An example would be that you must be wearing a mask in class. A faculty member can't just say, well, it's okay with me if you don't wear them in my class. They don't get to make that decision because wearing a mask in class is a university standard. Accountability reporting is based on whether or not there is a violation. We do, however receive some reports that we deem there is really no action needed, there was not a violation and the report is closed.

Wastewater & Community Member Testing (*presentation file available on [RIT Digital Archive](#)*)

Enid Cardinal, Sr. Advisor to President for Strategic Planning & Sustainability

Wendy Gelbard, Associate VP Wellness

Quick overview of how the wastewater sampling works.

- We have 16 sampling locations. It's done twice a week and is a composite sample which allows us to capture samples from toilet flushes over a 24 hour period. A few milliliters of water are collected every 15 minutes. The samples are pulled by a contractor and then driven to the lab in Syracuse NY. We get results in 48 hours.

- At the lab, the solids are pulled out for each collection location, then they pull from 3 different sites on the solid samples and test for any RNA fragments of COVID-19.
- It's an imperfect science, but it's a great tool to help guide us in understanding what the viral prevalence is on campus. Although there is an element of randomness, it is still very helpful for us when we look at trends.

Community Member Testing

Wastewater is mass testing and while not individual focused, it gives us information about the prevalence of the virus in an area. We also do two other kinds of individual testing:

- 1) for cause (symptoms) with a deep nasal pharyngeal swab in the Student Health Center
 - student is placed in isolation until results are available and close contacts are placed in quarantine.
 - The student maybe had a sore throat. But when the test results come back the next day they're 100% better. We might release that student from isolation. But, if their symptoms perhaps worsen, we would likely keep that student in isolation, keep those close contacts in quarantine and retest the students. So there's a lot of clinical judgment that comes into play here.
- 2) Surveillance – which includes wastewater testing but also targeted testing of groups or populations because we might have heard some credible information or because of a lifestyle associated with a group. In the past few weeks we have tested athletes, dining service employees, off-campus students. When we get a signal from wastewater testing that suggests a specific living area has been infected, these students will also be required to be tested. We have a great staff of volunteers and can rapidly set up a testing site and process hundreds of students in a matter of hours. This system was developed and honed by Jeff Siegel in Athletics. To date we have tested 4,200 people and the prevalence of COVID on campus remains remarkable low. I am impressed with the actions of the entire campus community. There isn't anything fancy or shiny that is going to get us out of this pandemic, but rather some simple and basic things: wear a mask, wash your hands and watch your distance.

Q: I've heard you use the term diagnostic testing as well. Is that equivalent to testing for cause?

A: Yes, testing for cause is diagnostic testing as well. But, the surveillance testing that we do is also diagnostic testing. The testing for cause we do on site locally and we send it usually to local labs, and we get the results, usually within 24 hours. For surveillance testing we partner with the Broad Institute in Boston, and we overnight our samples to them and get those results, usually within 48 hours. We are talking about seeing what we can do on campus and looking into other testing opportunities where we would be able to set up a lab on campus to do some testing that would not be a formal laboratory certified by the Laboratory Association of the Americas, but it would be a screening test. We would then have to do a secondary test for cause, which would again likely be Broad Institute test.

Q: Is there a danger of particles being released into the air during the wastewater testing?

A: No the individual who does the sampling is in full PPE with mask and shield but, there is no danger of it volatilizing. It's really just fragments of the viral RNA not the virus itself.

Enrollment Update (*presentation file available on [RIT Digital Archive](#)*)

Ian Mortimer, VP Enrollment Management

Fall 2020 Enrollment Recap

We had great momentum as we headed into the pandemic last spring. Our visits were way up and we were able to figure out a way to keep that going when campus shut down. We now have students here, but the budget consequences of this headcount was a little bit more costly than for previous cohorts. I want to thank the deans and the provost for allowing us to expand headcount in some of the programs where we knew we had enough demand to do so. This was instrumental in ensuring that we didn't run short in terms of headcount coming out of COVID. The second piece is that thanks to some great work in CHST, we've positioned our place in the pre-med space which is a

huge part of the market. We were able to create a partnership with the SUNY Upstate Medical University which allows direct entry for 10 of our students.

We found that when we execute our virtual campus tours and events at a really granular level, we have great success. The percentage of students that enrolled without having actually visited campus was great. Our events were not compromised by being virtual. We knew that transfers recruitment was going to be difficult, but we were able to close the gap here somewhat. The graduate student side is complicated. About 67% of this population are international students. Due to COVID, the likelihood of having full cohorts coming to campus was low. We allowed them to start their program online at a distance with the expectation that they can arrive here in the spring. Without this, we might have had only 300-400 students which would have had implications for 3-4 years. Other schools were not able to achieve this. We can't count on students coming to the U.S. at the same level. Again, thank you to the deans, faculty, and staff in RIT Global who were involved in this effort.

I also want to spotlight Project Lead the Way (PLTW) and the work of George Zion. I don't give him and his team enough credit for the wonderful work they do to provide a set of leads and prospective students from the PLTW program. In addition, the PLTW program allows us to subsidize the work that we do both within the division and institutionally. And I would like to commit to in this forum and others to really highlighting the work of George and his team as a standard report out because it's becoming much more valuable asset to our work, especially as we go into a world where SAT and ACT testing is going to be decreasing a part of higher education. Programs like Project Lead the Way, are going to become more important in terms of building awareness and building pipelines in the high schools into RIT. So thank you to George and his team.

This slide is a quick snapshot and in terms of the 21 day main campus full time equivalency budget and it is a testimony to our community. It feels amazing that we're able to stand here and say that based on the works on retention and the work on the new student enrollment that on the undergraduate side, we're positive compared to fall 2019. I think it's testimony to the grit and work that's happened over the last nine months.

I also want to put a spotlight on the Performing Arts Scholars program for a couple of reasons. One is that over the last two years, it's more than doubled in terms of head count. But the thing that's most amazing about this program is that once a student becomes aware of the Performing Arts Scholars Program and my office engages with them along with Laverne and Jonathan Kruger in the College of Liberal Arts, we do incredibly well articulating the uniqueness and the distinctiveness. And at this point in time, I do believe we have a unique position in the market. And so when you consider that almost 7 out of 10 of the students that were admitted to RIT last year as Performing Arts Scholars enrolled, it's kind of mind blowing. And in addition, when you look at the gender equity of this population as well as the academic preparation, this is something I truly believe will be foundational to the success of RIT moving forward. There is a lot of evidence that this is not only a great cultural decision, it's also a great business decision. Thanks to Joan Graham and the Institutional Research (IR) team, we are able to do look at persistence rates for Performing Arts (PA) Scholars v. none PA scholars. We are seeing that they retrain at a 6% higher level, which is real revenue, in addition to making our campus more creative.

I've been having some conversations with faculty around the distribution of females throughout the colleges and how to increase this number. This slide shows the percent of females within the first year cohorts by college compared to the total new headcounts. You can see that the tallest blue bars (colleges) have some of the lower percent females in them and the lower blue bars have the highest percent female. And so when we look at the strategic plan and diversification of the student body by program, college, and discipline, one of the big benefits of that strategy is not only hedging against risk in the market, but it also will bring If we if we do this well, a more gender equitable student body.

One of the great successes of this year was our AALANA diversity numbers. When you look at the number of admits and the number of enrollees and the percent and that enrolled, we had a fantastic fall in terms of keeping our commitment to diversity. This year's entering class is more than 18% AALANA diverse and that's the highest on record in the history of RIT. Credit goes to a lot of people throughout the university for this this momentum.

Fall 2021 Direction

So we did a couple of days of planning recently focused on tactics and things that we could focus on to offset some of the hedge and risk of working and living in a COVID world. Here are some of the pieces that we identified as opportunities as well as offsetting threats.

- We have a lot of deferrals that we as a university need to organize around. I know that there's some really great work going on over in Student Affairs area on this topic and on the Academic Affairs side as well. But one of the things that is going to be relatively unique is that we're going to have a larger cohort of spring entrants coming in than we've ever had before. One of the questions is how do we engage these deferrals making sure that they're still feeling optimistic and connected to RIT. Carla Dilella in RIT Housing has already started this process. And then how do we make sure that their first semester, although in the spring, is positive and optimistic?
- Project Lead the Way, we've already talked about the importance of that as a pipeline.
- We're working on some rewards and recognition programs within our division.

High Level Assumptions for Fall 2021

- Competitive shifts and behavior: there's going to be a lot of twitchiness in the market as schools come out of COVID. Our sense is that they're going to be hedging quite aggressively with aid and with scholarships right out of the gate. Making sure that the science behind our financial aid packaging is as good as it can be will be really important
- Anticipating lower international student counts based on the reality of the world right now. And so how do we offset that with domestic students as well as new segments, such as transfer students at other schools, etc.
- We're seeing is that we spend a lot of time and energy segmenting our market based on academic major, college, profile, etc. But we are also finding that there are some really unique narratives within our pool based on things like socio-economic status. So one of the data points that Joan and the IR team provided us is that in the class of 18, I believe it was maybe was 19, but essentially a third of the graduating seniors that came out of that class had starting salaries higher than their family incomes on their financial aid forms. And so when you think about the idea of social mobility and you think about the idea of being able to better your life you know through career and through outcomes there are some really rich stories we need to tell in really creative ways to help people understand that this is a place that is committed to social mobility and we're really, really good at it.
- We're working on how to be able to predict test scores, when we don't have test scores because the market essentially has gone test optional. We're anticipating that about 50% of our students will provide SAT or ACT scores and the rest won't. And that puts a little bit of risk in terms of our science.
- We're trying to figure out if our deadline date. Should be June 1st or May 1st, and how to anticipate what spring is going to look like. So there's all kinds of noise in this process, but I do feel well prepared and our team had been just phenomenal and getting ready for this.

Q: So in you mentioned about some really great progress in terms of AALANA which I appreciate you. Thank you. And also I think you may have mentioned this in a different presentation that we're over 35% female this time around and that's close to a record or possibly is a record. So I was wondering if you might be able to address the possibility of us getting up over 40% female and what sort of things we might do and how long it might take.

A: So I think there's a couple of things and one of them is going back to this idea of academic programs. Just by the nature of the way the market is currently aligned, I do believe that as we build more pre-med and other programmatic opportunities in healthcare, we will see more gender equity. Another good thing we're seeing in some of the Project Lead the Way data is that the gender distribution of students at the high school level taking engineering and tech is increasingly female and so just by nature of shifts of demographics and behavior, we should improve our gender ratio. Also on the Project Lead the Way frontier, George is interested in expanding some of our coursework in the K-12 environment that is more historically aligned with female participation.

Without a doubt, the Performing Arts Scholars Program can and will be a significant driver of gender equity. If you remember from the chart that I showed you, 50% of the participants in that program are female. And it's representative of our whole university, a lot of Golisano and Gleason. These are women who are studying STEM that just so happen to be

incredible performers. I did a little back of the envelope math and if we hit our numbers in the Performing Arts Scholars program this year and with similar gender equity distribution, we will have a three percentage point increase in next year's class compared to this year.

And then this is actually the most inspiring and the most interesting piece and this is all fresh data, but if I have time, I'd love to share some of this with you. So we got some really rich data from a survey process with our admitted students. One of the things that this research is able to do is aggregate questions into topical areas that align with learning priorities and then map those to how the student perceives our institution as well as benchmarks relative to how they believe we perform on that. And so on this slide, the green bars represent the percentage of our admitted student pool that indicated that topical learning area was a top priority. So internships and other applied learning, 64% of our pool said that that is really, really important to their decision making process. And then to the right of it, you can see their assessment of how we perform on that topical area. And as you would suspect the things that kind of our RIT bread and butter brand attributes are well represented in these areas. So these are the things that people who came to RIT and their perspective of why how we perform on them. And this seems, fairly common sense.

What's really interesting is that when you look at those who did not choose RIT. These are individuals who chose other schools but provided various identical data. And here you can see are the perception of us in the market on things that we actually do quite well that are not coming across the way we should be. This is brand evolution and John Trierweiler and his team are doing amazing work and deserve a lot of the credit for the success we've had. This research, shows that there are things that we do well that the market just does not give us credit for. So this is a marketing challenge, a sales challenge, and visibility challenge. Take Study Abroad as an example. One out of 3 of students who did not choose RIT said it's really important, but only 1 out of 10 thought that we were superior in it and 3 out of 10 said that we were inferior. The same with working with faculty on research. These numbers suggest that when we talk about gender equity, there are things that we can do to kind of stack the visibility of these really great experiences that we offer and kind of bend the perception little bit. Not to cannibalize or watered down our commitment to career and co-op, but really put a spotlight on research and things that we just know would create more gender equity within the market. And so you'll be hearing more about the output of this research, but I do think it's going to help and answering some of these questions in terms of how to build a more gender equitable student population. So I hope that's helpful. Thank you for the question. But those are some kind of those are three tactics that don't cost a lot of additional aid money.

Update on Televisit Copay Issue (*presentation file available on [RIT Digital Archive](#)*)

Jo Ellen Pinkham, Chief HR Officer

Prior to pandemic, very few local health providers offered telehealth visits. The fee for telehealth is the same as fee for in person visit. Copays should have been charged for telehealth visits. Under Federal law, the no copay only applies to COVID-19 related telehealth visits. At start of pandemic, Excellus erroneously programmed their system to NOT charge a fee. So, members who used the system from Mar-June, were not charged. When Excellus discovered the error, they billed patients.

We requested data (in aggregate) from Excellus – no individual health date was received. A number of staff had more visits than expected and did not expect a copay. The fees totaled \$113K. We requested that Excellus reprocess the claims and they will pay the providers. They are also sending letters to all impacted providers and members. Letters are targeted for week of Sept. 28th. Info is available on HR website to assist employees with refund process.

Brick City Homecoming and Imagine RIT (*presentation file available on [RIT Digital Archive](#)*)

Lynn Rowoth, AVP Community Relations & Special Events

Ann Miller, Director, Imagine RIT

Brick City Weekend

Typically we welcome parents and alumni to campus for Brick City Weekend, but cannot this year. We have adapted programming over what would have been the break weekend (Oct. 8-9) so we can accommodate COVID-19 safety protocols. CAB Cinema Series will feature “The Hammer” which features NTID alum Matt Hammill and was filmed in part on campus. Dueling Pianos, always popular, will be streamed so more people can enjoy them. It was difficult for colleges to come up with individual programming, so they are working together, including Pumpkin Carving, Stroll and Smash. No hockey game this year, but we will feature film of the 2012 Women’s Hockey team Division III championship game as well as the 2010 Sweet 16 Men’s Hockey Game. The popular 5K event will be virtual. There will be a series of Performing Arts concerts replacing the Kaleidoscope Concert.

Tiger Alumni Week

As we can’t have alumni on campus this year, we’re offering exclusive tours, interactive programs, reunions and everything they’ll need to celebrate Tiger Alumni Week (October 19-24) digitally. Events include Distinguished Alumni Speaker Elan Lee ’98, co-founder and CEO of Exploding Kittens, Master Class with celebrity chef Gale Gand ’81 and Goat-to-Webinar a virtual tour of Sweet Farm, a non-profit sanctuary owned by Anna Sweet ’04.

Imagine RIT

- Performing Arts Challenge has been moved permanently to Freezefest and will be held on Feb. 5, 2021. This works better for students who want to participate in the challenge as well as Imagine RIT.
- Due to unknowns concerning COVID-19 and as a way to engage our global community, will launch a virtual Imagine RIT experience in conjunction with our on-campus festival experience. The 2020 poster will be used as this year’s K-12 promotional flyer. The new website is live.
- Poster Contest will be announced soon with a submission deadline of Jan. 15th.
- We are continuing the Futurists Symposium, but it will likely be moving to a virtual platform.
- The K-12 curriculum will be available for year-round engagement with the Imagine RIT brand.
- List of Sponsorship Opportunities was shared.

New Business

- None

Meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

Attendance – see next page.

Attendance September 30, 2020

Name	Relationship to UC	Attended	Name	Relationship to UC	Attended
Aguilar, Christian	Member-SG		Lindsay, Susan	Member-SC	x
Buckley, Gerard alt. B. Hurwitz	Member-Dean	x	Liu, Manlu	Member-AS	x
Castleberry, Phil	Non-Voting Member	x	Loffredo, Joe	Non-Voting Member	x
Clarke, Cathy	Member-SC	x	Lutzer, Carl	Member-AS	x
Castillo, Jaime	Member-SC	x	Maggelakis, Sophia alt. Larry Buckley	Member-Dean	x
Cohen, Lindsay	Member-SC		McQuiller, Laverne	Member-Dean	x
Cuculick, Jessica	Member-AS	x	Miller, Heidi	Member-AS	x
Cummings, Twyla	Member-Dean		Mortimer, Ian	Non-Voting Member	x
Custer, Jacob	Member-SG	x	Mozrall, Jacqueline	Member-Dean	
DeHarder, Shine	Member-SG	x	Munson, David	Non-Voting Member & EC	x
DeMay, Patrick	Member-SC	x	Nasr, Nabil	Member-Dean Alt	
Doolittle, Dick	Member-Dean	x	Nickisher, Heidi	Member-AS	x
Durand, Joline	Member-SG	x	Ortega, Jared	Member-SG	x
Edwards, Doreen	Member-Dean	x	Pinkham, Jo Ellen	Non-Voting Member	x
Edwards, Patrick	Member-SG	x	Prescott, Joanna	Member-SC	x
Ellis, Jacob	Member-SG	x	Provenzano, Susan	Non-Voting Member	x
Esterman, Marcos	Member-AS		Raffaella, Ryne	Non-Voting Member	x
Engström, Tim	Member-AS		Ramkumar, S. Manian	Member-Dean	x
Fagenbaum, Barb	Member-SC		Reeder, Gina	Member-SC	
Ferrari, Christopher	Member-SG	x	Rutenber, Daniel	CMember-SG	
Finnerty, Bob	Non-Voting Member	x	Simpson, Emi	Member-SG	x
Granberg, Ellen	Member & EC	x	Sood, Harshita	Member-SC	x
Haake, Anne	Member-Dean	x	Stendardi, Deborah	Non-Voting Member	
Hall, James	Member-Dean Alt		Stiner, Holly	Member-SC	x
Heyman, Emily	Member-SC	x	Teal, Michelle	Member-SC	x
Hull, Clyde	Member-AS	x	Thomas, Shawn	Member-SC	x
Jenkins, Keith	Non-Voting Member	x	Trierweiler, John	Non-Voting Member	x
Johnson, Sandra	Non-Voting Member	x	Vallone, Lindsay	Member-SC	x
Jokl, Todd	Member-Dean	x	Velamuri, Sri Chartitha	Member-SG	x
Juergens, Alyssa	Member-SG	x	Watters, James	Non-Voting Member	
Kiely, Becky	Member-SC		Zion, George	Member-AS	x
Krutz, Daniel	Member-AS	x			

Key: EC=Executive Committee; AS=Academic Senate; SC=Staff Council; SG=Student Government

Interpreters: Catherine Kiwitt and Jeneca Saeva