

# **Committee on Academic Support and Student Affairs (ASSA) Final Report, 2021/22AY**

## **ASSA Committee Members**

- Dennis Andrejko (GIS)
- Claudia Bucciferro (CLA)
- Sandi Connelly (COS, at-large)
- Hannah Davis (SOIS)
- Helayne Drell (Student Government))
- md Abdullah al Faruque (CET)
- Matthew Fluet (GCCIS, chair)
- Austin Gehret (NTID, at-large)
- Neil Hair (Provost's Delegate)
- Sandra Johnson (Student Affairs)
- Kate Leipold (KGCE)
- Tracy Magin (NTID)
- Deana Olles (COS)
- Elizabeth Perry (CHST)
- Michael Radin (COS)
- Vanessa Sweet (CAD)
- Phillippa Thiuri (CSB)

## **Charges for 2021/22AY**

1. Investigate mechanisms for reducing the cost of textbooks to RIT students, including the Bookstore of the Future project, and report findings to Senate with motions for action as appropriate.
2. Consider the experience of female students at RIT and how it might be improved. Report to the Senate with recommendations as appropriate.
3. Consider a way to develop an Early Alert system for graduate students.

**Charge #1:** Investigate mechanisms for reducing the cost of textbooks to RIT students, including the Bookstore of the Future project, and report findings to Senate with motions for action as appropriate.

ASSA Sub-committee: Dennis A. Andrejko (GIS); Claudia Bucciferro (COLA); Sandi Connelly (COS, at-large); Austin Gehret (NTID; Faculty Senate at-large rep); Neil Hair (Provost's Delegate); Michael Radin (COS); Phillipa Thiuri (COB); Tracy Magin (NTID)

The Bookstore of the Future project was well underway this academic year by the RIT administration when this charge was given to ASSA by Faculty Senate. Moreover, this was a deadline-driven project with dedicated administrative staff; diverse faculty members working with their limited service-work time budget had a difficult time interfacing with this project. A number of ASSA committee members volunteered at various times to provide feedback, although the aggressive timeline to have a bookstore in place for Fall materials adoption meant that decisions were made before there was an opportunity for our committee to provide meaningful input. After Akademos was selected as the next bookstore vendor, we were asked and were able to give some modest feedback on the RIT Virtual Bookstore (after it went live).

We recommend that ASSA be given a charge to evaluate Akedemos/RIT Virtual Bookstore during either 2024/25AY or 2025/26AY, after two or three full academic years with this vendor. Should there be concerns with the vendor, they should be consolidated and voiced to RIT administration well in advance of renewing the contract with this vendor.

**Charge #2:** Consider the experience of female students at RIT and how it might be improved. Report to the Senate with recommendations as appropriate.

ASSA Sub-committee: Kate Leipold (KGCOE) (chair); Hannah Davis (SOIS); Abdullah al Faruque (CET); Matthew Fluet (GCCIS); Sandy Johnson (Student Affairs); Deana Olles (COS); Elizabeth Perry (HST); Vanessa Sweet (CAD)

Our committee process:

- Committee members solicited feedback from individual colleges.
- Student government was invited to have a representative on the committee.
- Committee members spoke to programs within their colleges regarding support for female students.
- Collected existing survey responses from Program directors and students.

Takeaways:

- We acknowledge that the experience of female students can be improved.
- There are existing structures on campus that need more analysis to identify opportunities to improve or expand programs and services for female-identifying students.
- There is a climate survey being administered in the spring of 2022. Data from this survey will assist in identifying areas in need of improvement.
- This charge was too large and vague to make specific recommendations or take specific action on.

Recommendations:

- Increase support to existing on-campus resources. Space, fundraising, training, recognition, ...
- Include SRATE question on in class climate

**Charge #3:** Consider a way to develop an Early Alert system for graduate students.

ASSA Sub-committee: Matthew Fluet (chair)

This charge was undertaken during the 2019/20AY and was reported in the ASSA 2019/20AY final report (<https://digitalarchive.rit.edu/xmlui/handle/1850/21452>), but was not presented to Academic Senate due to higher-priority COVID-19 issues at the time. Matthew Fluet presented at the October 14, 2022 Faculty Senate meeting.

## **Feedback and Future Charges**

ASSA found the charges this year difficult to address, due to their large scale and unclear actionable items. We would recommend that future charges be made with guidance on the kinds of actions that could conceivably result from the charge (and to seriously consider the rationale for the charge if it is difficult to anticipate suitable actions). This is especially important in the cases where the charges relate to initiatives underway by RIT administrators, in order to clarify what is actually within the purview of a Faculty Senate committee.