

RIT | University Council

Meeting Minutes: March 31, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 p.m.

Approval of Minutes from February 17, 2021 Meeting

The minutes were approved by 24-0-4.

President's Report

We continue to test our students who are on campus once per week. We had thought we might back off to testing half each week because things were really looking very good in terms of the virus on our campus, but not as well nationwide and not quite as well in our region and state. And so we're going to continue testing all of our students weekly and will likely continue until the end of the term. We need to continue to buckle down and just be as safe as we can be with the new variants that are taking hold, some of them are more contagious. We continue to find about one positive in every thousand students tested on average. The occupancy of our isolation and quarantine facility on Jefferson Road continues to be remarkably low. I would say we have typically 96-97% vacancy there. So it's kind of a lonely facility and we really want to keep it that way.

Regarding commencement, I think this group knows we have been working toward an in-person commencement and that planning has been done in Ellen Granberg's office by Sue Provenzano and others. We are optimistic that we will have in-person commencement ceremonies in both Gene Polisseni Center and the Gordon Field House. For the 2021 class the dates are Friday, May 14th and Saturday, May 15th. We have reserved Sunday, May 16th for any 2020 graduates who would wish to come back for an on campus commencement. For the 2020 class, we will also offer some other alternatives later in the year. I will be traveling to various cities around the U.S. will be able to hold abbreviated ceremonies in those cities, and we might also do something in conjunction with Brick City Homecoming.

Imagine RIT will be virtual this year. We're going to do the best job we can, but it certainly isn't going to be the same. We're not going to have 30,000 people milling around on our campus. We just simply can't do that at this time. We do have, I think, well over 246 projects submissions. We will have a special opening ceremony on the web and also have some sessions that can be interactive, where if one tunes into various channels on the web, you will be able to actually interact with our students who are presenting their projects and ask questions and so forth, to make that a little bit more like what we would have in person. So, we're looking forward to that.

Regarding athletics on our campus, as you know, we are competing in all of the Liberty League spring sports in which we normally do. The season has just opened up and so you will see our sports teams active. We're still determining exactly what we're going to do with regard to spectators. New York state had not issued any guidelines on spectators for collegiate sports until just a few days ago, and so it was not clear whether spectators would be permitted. On the other hand, New York state was allowing spectators for both high school and professional sports following certain guidelines that they had issued. So we were pretty optimistic that spectators would be allowed, but we also didn't want to be out of step with what other schools in the Liberty League might wish to do in that area. So at the end of last week, there was a meeting of the Liberty League presidents and a compromise agreement was reached that the League would not sanction having "Outsiders" at any athletic events this spring. Regrettably "outsiders" means, in our case, everybody outside the RIT community at events being held on our campus. So, that means that parents and family members will not be allowed to attend events unless those parents or family members are actually part of the RIT community.

So we're still deciding on our campus just what our policy will be with respect to spectators, I do believe that we will allow spectators at a number of our athletic contests, especially the outdoor contests. Masking and physical distancing will be required and probably an RIT ID to get in. Personally, I feel like the safest place any of us can be is

outdoors and when you add the mask and make sure you stay six feet apart, it's hard to imagine being safer than that. Personally, I would rather see our students attending athletic events as spectators than congregating together back in their apartments and residence halls.

I'm not prepared to announce the result of the name the IMLC contest, but I can talk about the process. IMLC was never meant to be the permanent name of that facility, it was a placeholder name. Austin McChord, the largest donor for the project, asked that his name not be on the facility, but rather that we allow the students to name it. I believe there were about 260 submissions and that set of potential names was then turned over to Student Government. And they must have had quite a session trying to winnow that down. I'm told that the methodology used was similar to March Madness with various brackets and competitor names and they went at it, down to not a final four, but a final seven. Those final seven were voted on by our students and those names are not secret - a lot of people know what those names are because they were pretty heavily publicized. I did meet with Austin McChord and with university architect, Jim Yarrington, and also a staff member from University Advancement. And I can tell you that we unanimously agreed to go with the name that won the student contest in pretty much a landslide. I just can't tell you the name now, because we want to involve Austin McChord in the announcement. So, stay tuned.

Policy C03.1 Commissioning of Educational Materials – REVISIONS

Corinna Schlombs, Associate Professor, Dept. of History

I presented the revisions to this policy to University Council in January and have received endorsement from all of the other governance groups.

The policy revisions were endorsed by University Council 24-0-3.

Request from Academic Senate to Amend University Council By-laws re: Membership *(presentation files available on [RIT Digital Archive](#))*

Clyde Hull, Chair, Academic Senate

Background is that Academic Senate (AS) has, since inception of University Council sent representatives by college to UC. With the recent change to give SOIS representation in AS, we've reached the point where we can't do it anymore unless the number of reps to University Council, as stated in its [by-laws](#), are modified. I've been told that at the time, this was the original idea. It just wasn't anticipated that the number of colleges would ever change. It seems fair for each governance group to have the number of representatives to University Council equal to the number of colleges, plus one. So, we are proposing that next year we go from 40 to 44 representatives, plus the president.

Tait Preserve *(presentation files available on [RIT Digital Archive](#))*

David Brault, Farm Manager

Thank you for inviting me to talk about the Tait Preserve. My background is in plant soil science. I worked for many years in agriculture in different forums including big organic farms outdoors, big greenhouses, and hydroponic operations. I ran my own farm business for about five years in the Finger Lakes doing greenhouse vegetables, field crops, and chickens. I joined RIT as a Farm Manager when the decision was made within Dining Services to grow some of our own produce, which we have been doing in a recycled shipping container. I'm happy to expand my role in taking on the Tate Preserve and Leenhouts Lodge.

Our concept here is that we're trying to develop this into RIT's premier event and learning facility. Some of the priorities we've identified are education, innovative ecological restoration and sustainability. We're trying to make this a standout facility within RIT, our region, and also within the higher ed landscape. More broadly, we think we've got a great opportunity to turn this into something really special that stands out.

I'll break it up into two different categories: outdoors and indoors. So, outdoors we have the Tate Preserve, 177 acres of property. Included in that is Redmond Lake, which is man-made and one mile of Irondequoit Creek, which is a fantastic waterway. We also have a lot of woods, some slopes, some more forested areas and open fields. So, really a bunch of different landscapes within this property which are very exciting.

Indoors, we have the Leenhouts Lodge. This is our 4,500 square foot meeting and event center. We're looking for a capacity of up to 200. We're in the code process with the town of Penfield to amend our conditional use permit. We're in an R1 residential zoning area, so we're looking to use this property in ways that are not always in keeping with what the code says is allowed currently. We also have an application in with the town to give us a little bit more flexibility in how we can use the space. We're hoping to conclude this process in April.

The lodge was built as a single family event hangout spot, so we need to make a few changes to make it more usable for large groups. We will be renovating the kitchen a little bit to better support catering. Also, to be in compliance with code, we have to have the required number of exits and bathrooms and they have to meet the ADA accessibility law. We also need to make improvements to meet fire safety and ventilation regulations and to make sure the road is wide enough for emergency vehicles. We're also working on the exterior grounds to make it a really usable space for the RIT community. One of the projects getting underway is a garden.

We have faculty research currently underway and we're looking to expand.

- Plastics research conducted by the College of Science
- Drones and Unmanned Aircraft Systems – potential to advance agricultural drone research
- Upcoming Projects include
 - Atmospheric sampling
 - Aquatic plant/animal inventory
 - Capstone projects
 - Citizen scientist training program
 - Bird and wildlife studies
 - Ecology
 - Soil improvement
 - Invasive species management
 - Bank and slope stabilization
 - Access
 - Walking tours
 - Education
 - Student, faculty, visitors

Q: Enid Cardinal at one point in time, brought in a company that was interested in setting up some research centers related to sustainable farming and help local farmers as well. Now that we are investing some funds to do some of that it in this location is there a way to invite that company back and see if they would be interested in collaborating in setting up some of those research labs?

A: Yes, I think I would definitely look to explore and get more information from Enid.

Dr. Munson commented: I think the Tate Preserve is going to be suitable for a lot of educational activities and smaller scale kinds of research. A bigger scale sort of semi production facility or something I think will end up in the south end of our current campus. So, I don't think all of our agriculturally related research is going to end up at the Tate Preserve.

Q: First I just like say that this whole thing is fantastic. It just seems like one of the fun things about being at RIT these days is just when you think you know all the really cool fantastic things up pops something you'd never heard of before that is also really fantastic. So thank you for all the work you're doing you have been doing and will be doing on this. My question is on behalf of the Hospitality department, I know people who do Eco tourism and what they do

is they go to some place and they give money for the privilege of spending a week working there, making it more ecologically sound. I'm wondering if there's any sort of possibility of eco-tourism here? I know there are faculty who'd be interested. As a follow up question, you mentioned walking tours and I'm wondering if there's any possibility of the RIT Community being able to use the property for any other recreational purposes, beyond the walking?

Dr. Watters commented: We have an operating committee that oversees the operation of this, and right now we are focused on the facility and faculty research and those things which are geared toward the mission of the institution. In addition, because of the fact that this place can be dangerous, we cannot have unscheduled individuals walking around the property. Within about five or six feet of the shoreline, the quarry drops off very, very fast and very, very, very deeply. Secondly, as we're building out the faculty research, we want to make sure that their efforts are not disturbed, so again we don't want unscheduled people to have access to things that might be set up there.

Dr. Munson: I'll second what Jim said. Part of the purpose of this presentation is to get people excited, but another is to explain that this really is not just a nature preserve where people are going to be able to come and go freely. Things are going to have to be scheduled, they're going to have to be supervision. I share Jim's concerned with a very steep bank at the edge of this lake we're going to have to start slowly I think, in terms of who gets to have a project, how much can we take on it at the site. But I do hope, people are energized by what you're hearing.

Q: Assuming there is a research project that is not involved with the public, but something else, like a possible add on to the plastics project - Dave could people email you directly to find out how to get involved more with the research that's going on there there's possibly some new research project?

A: So research requests should goes through up through the deans and then the DNS can contact me and we'll work that way. Then certainly, back to your eco-tourism question, that's something that I can address with the Operating Committee.

Q: Will the raised beds be open like the Community garden on campus?

A: No, that's not the model that we're starting with at the preserve.

New Business

- None

Attendance March 31, 2021

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

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

Interpreters: Catherine Kiwitt and Jeneca Saeva