Two candidates to become RIT’s ninth president met with the university community this past week. The Board of Trustees expects to name a new president in March.

The finalists for the position are William Destler, who is currently senior vice president, academic affairs, and provost at the University of Maryland—College Park, and James Watters, RIT’s senior vice president for finance and administration and RIT treasurer.

Each candidate met with students, faculty, staff, and trustees in individual forums on campus. The Presidential Search Committee considered a large, diverse number of individuals for the position, narrowing the candidate pool and interviewng prospects, says Donald Boyce, trustee and chair of the committee.

“We are very impressed with the caliber of the candidates the members of the Search Committee selected to bring to campus,” says Boyce. “Each of them possesses the vision, drive, experience, personal presence and integrity that would make him an outstanding president at RIT.”

Destler earned his bachelor’s degree at Stevens Institute of Technology and his Ph.D. at Cornell University. He joined the faculty at University of Maryland—College Park, where he became a professor of electrical engineering. He later became dean of engineering, interim vice president of university advancement, vice president for research, and dean of their College of Engineering.

Watters received his bachelor’s degree and his Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh. At the University of Pittsburgh, Watters held positions where he was responsible for budgets, safety, real estate management, planning, debt issuance, student housing and other financial and administrative areas. Watters joined RIT in 1994 as director of university budgets. He has served as senior vice president for finance and administration and treasurer since 1997. He has taught courses as an adjunct instructor at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, as well as in RIT’s College of Applied Science and Technology and the E. Philip Saunders College of Business. He has served in a number of community service posts in the Rochester area and has been involved in such endeavors as university diversity champion, executive producer of the RIT SportsZone television program and officer of RIT-related entities.

A questionnaire is now available on the Web at www.rit.edu/presidentialsearch to receive feedback from the RIT community. Boyce says the Search Committee will consider the feedback and then give its recommendations to the Board of Trustees, which will make the final decision as to who will succeed Albert Simone as the next president of RIT.

RIT’s building on its expertise to become a world leader in education and research that will transform waste and pollution-producing global enterprises into efficient, clean and near zero waste operations. This is the vision of the newly created Sustainability Institute that will be led by Nabil Nahar, assistant provost and director of the Center for Integrated Manufacturing Studies, and a world-renowned expert in the field of sustainability and environmental issues.

The Sustainability Institute will undertake comprehensive, interdisciplinary research and technology transfer that build upon a set of RIT’s strongest academic programs and the internationally respected research of CIMS. A major element of the new Sustainability Institute will be comprehensive interdisciplinary Ph.D. and master’s of science programs in sustainable production. Graduates and related research will be defined and delivered by collaborating faculty and staff across RIT, along with new tenure-track and research faculty. In 2006, RIT was awarded a $465,000 grant from the Henry Luce Foundation for the development of the Ph.D. program, which will be one of the first of its kind in the world.

The Sustainability Institute will ultimately be located in a state-of-the-art “green” building housed on the RIT campus. The new facility will include laboratory and classroom space to support academic work as well as applied research efforts. Funding development and design for the new facility are now in the planning stages.

The ultimate goal of the Sustainability Institute will be to produce our next generation of engineers, scientists and policy makers with groundbreaking research expertise.

For more information, visit Sustainability Institute, page 4.

Amethyst "Amy" Rule knows how to mastermind her own business. One of her first ventures as a little girl in Boise, Idaho, was selling homemade fudge and her old and used toys to neighborhood kids. She even sold her favorite yellow boat for 10 cents, "then suffered from a bout of seller’s remorse." Long past simple buying and selling, the management major in the E. Philip Saunders College of Business has spent the past four years putting her keen business and artistic skills to work in the classroom as well as fundraising, event planning and community outreach.

"My parents moved to Oregon during my junior year of high school and I had a wonderful art teacher who just loved RIT," Rule recalls. "So I applied for early decision because I knew it would be the kind of university where I could feel connected and make lots of friends."

Besides building lasting friendships, most of Rule’s RIT experience has centered on involvement and accolades—from serving as an RIT resident advisor, Saunders College of Business student senator and Lowenthal Community Service Group member, to induction into the RIT Honors Program, Beta Gamma Sigma (National Honor Society in Business Management), and Davis Scholarship Award winner for “student leaders who significantly contribute to campus life.”

Last October, she was also one of three recipients (from western, central and southern tier areas of New York state) awarded the prestigious Turnaround Management Association Upstate New York Chapter Scholarship. “Amy is really a ‘go to’ person when the need exists for creative ideas, for event planning, and for follow-up through during and after an event," says Jerry Curnutt, assistant dean in the Saunders College of Business.

Proof of her talents was evident last spring when Rule helped organize an Easter egg hunt community service activity on RIT’s Kodak Quad. "We scraped together 1,000 eggs in the bushes and more than 125 kids came to find them," Rule says.

www.rit.edu/events2007
Program needs satisfy for creative outlet

Telecom donation
Allworx, a small business voice over internet protocol company, has donated more than $20,000 of equipment to the telecommunications engineering technology program in the College of Applied Science and Technology. The donation includes multiple Allworx systems and corresponding phones.

Golisano dean’s lecture
Paul Maglio, senior manager of Service Systems Research at the IBM Almaden Research Center, will be the featured guest in the next Golisano College Dean’s Lecture Series talk. Maglio will present “Steps Toward Service Science” at 1 p.m. Feb. 23 in the Golisano College auditorium. The lecture will be followed by a reception. Maglio believes innovation in the service sector is not approached as systematically as innovation in agriculture and manufacturing. He will discuss how IBM and others have proposed developing a service science, and aims to provide theory and practice.

Entrepreneurship talk
The 2007 Rochester Entrepreneurship Conference, sponsored by RIT, University of Rochester, High Tech Rochester and Greater Rochester Enterprise, will be held 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. March 9 at the Simon Graduate School of Business, UR River Campus.

The conference will focus on “Improving Your Company’s Value: A Process Perspective,” with keynote speakers B. Thomas Golisano, Paychex founder and benefactor of RIT’s B. Thomas Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences; and Norman Segal, University of California at Santa Barbara.

A schedule and registration information are available at www.rit.edu/2007entconf.asp.

News briefs

Musical performances
The RIT Concert Band and Jazz Ensembles will present a winter concert at 7 p.m. Feb. 23 in the Alliance Auditorium in the Student Union. In addition, student recitals will be held at 1 p.m. Feb. 22 and 2 p.m. March 3 in the SU Music Room. For more information, contact David Ed Schell at 442-6087.

A schedule and registration information are available at www.rit.edu/2007entconf.asp.

News brief

First-year students march across campus during the traditional Tiger Walk.

A Sue Weisker | photographer

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News brief

Business students explore start-up life

A group of individuals gathered recently to discuss RIT’s first-year college. The conversation was sparked by the publication of a white paper, The State of the First-Year Class at Rochester Institute of Technology, which was authored by the instructors of the First-Year Enrichment program. The 20-page paper contained data obtained from RIT’s 2005–2006 first-year class.

“We did a lot of research to look at the experiences of the first-year class, and we wanted to be able to share that with the rest of the institution,” says First-Year Enrichment director Lattie Goodwin.

“We thought that this information could be very helpful to anyone who is working with first-year students.”

After the document was published, the First-Year Enrichment distributed an e-mail message inviting the RIT community to a roundtable discussion. Goodwin says she was pleasantly surprised by the turnout.

“We really got a nice representa- tion from a number of different groups on campus—a number we couldn’t have anticipated,” Goodwin says. “It’s great that so many people were interested in the discussion. We so rarely get to have discussions like this on campus.”

The discussion broke into four groups. The most popular group focused on socialization and civil engagement.

Goodwin says that the first-year students reported feeling that a much greater emphasis was placed on academics as opposed to civil engagement.

Creativity at RIT comes in many flavors, from the sharply apparent to the subtly distinctive, for instance, Signatures magazine, an annual collection of student art and literature, or the concrete canyon, a perennial project in the College of Applied Science and Technology that challenges students to wrestle with an oxymoron and win.

The desire to explore and nurture the creative climate at RIT instituted a small group of professors from across campus to form the Creativity and Invention Working Group last spring. The idea for the initiative grew indirectly from a creative writing class Anne Coon taught last winter and the frustration her students voiced about the lack of creative opportunities at RIT.

Coon knew other professors were doing exciting things on campus and quietly set about starting a dialogue, talking to colleagues interested in the broader context of creativity and research linking it to critical thinking and leadership skills.

“We started with the questions: What is creativity at RIT? What is invention at RIT? And what could it become?” says Coon, professor of English and College of Liberal Arts senior associate dean.

The Creativity and Invention Working Group seeks answers to those questions through interdisciplinary collaboration. RIT is an ideal place, Coon says, to take advantage of a “convergence of technology, arts, science and humanities. We have potential here that other universities just don’t have.”

Glimpses of that potential can be seen in the Unlikely Partners project, an activity of the Creativity and Invention group suggested by Jeff Wagner, assistant professor of economics.

This series of single lectures offered within existing classes pairs professors from different disciplines together to explore a topic from an unexpected perspective.

The first talk in the series featured Coon and Margaret Bailey, associate professor of mechanical engineering in the Kate Gleason College of Engineering, in a talk about “Electricity and the Language of Poetry” for Coon’s modern poetry class. The individual lectures and class discussion explored the impact electricity has had on people’s lives and how poetry has captured everything from the awe of the first street lamp to the devastating effects of coal mining on the environment.

Wagner and Jon Schull, associate professor of information technology, offered the second ‘Unlikely Partners talk—’The Technology and Economics of Digital Goods and Digital Rights Management’—from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Feb. 22, in the B. Thomas Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences, room 2400.

Additional talks are being planned for the spring quarter:

“One of the most exciting outcomes of the Working Group is collaboration between and among faculty from very different disciplines,” says Katherine Mayberry, RIT vice president for academic affairs. “Creativity is really at the heart of all intellectual pursuits and academic disciplines and thus becomes the common vocabulary for engineers and poets, computer scientists and artists. The efforts of this group will yield intriguing and as yet unforeseen results that will benefit the entire community.”

On May 11, the Creativity and Invention Working Group will host a symposium, “Creativity: Technology to Innovation” to coincide with the Digital Arts Computation at RIT. “We felt this was an example of the convergence of art and technology that serves as an inspiration,” Coon says.

The symposium will include per- formances, exhibits, digital poetry, faculty workshops and panels on the creative process. The College of Liberal Arts and Lynn Wild, assistant provost for teaching and learning services at RIT, are sponsoring the event.

For information about the group, e-mail accg@rit.edu.

A Sue Weisker | photographer

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News brief

Prof shares new-found law expertise with class

A. Sue Weisker | photographer

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News brief

The countdown to Commencement

Graduating students are getting an early start at planning for this year’s celebration. RIT held its first-ever Commencement Fair on Feb. 13, exactly 100 days prior to the culmination of the academic year. Organizers hope the event prevents many students from overlooking an annual celebration that often comes with finalizing commencement details. Participants included representatives from all eight RIT colleges and various other campus services. Also, the Greater Rochester Visitors Bureau was on hand to suggest lodging and entertainment options for students hosting family and friends from out of town.
No one is penalized for starting after the challenge has begun. So, don’t delay, sign up today by contacting your team leader. Team leaders can be found at http://finwm.rit.edu/human Resource benefits@.tut.

For those who don’t know about the Eat Well Live Well Challenge, it is a food challenge that RIT employees and students among 16 different teams, each one representing one of RIT’s colleges/divi
tions, select a leader—often a RIT associate professor. This year, the focus was on healthy living. RIT’s Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) was also part of the challenge, indicating the need for improving education and training to better fit our profession in today’s world. For more, call the RIT Department of Emergency Services.

The Sustainability Forum is the first national and international forum held at the Center for Integrated Manufacturing Studies, which focuses on sustainable manufacturing and remanufacturing. Tianjin University, a key partner in the Sustainability Forum, has a rich history in sustainable research and practice. RIT has a long-standing relationship with Tianjin University, and this year’s forum was an opportunity to share knowledge with the scientists and engineers at both universities.

The Sustainability Forum featured several keynote addresses by prominent figures in sustainability. One of the most notable was Dr. Song Zhengsheng, President of Tianjin University. Dr. Zhengsheng discussed the importance of sustainability in Chinese culture and the need for RIT and Tianjin University to work together to promote sustainable practices.

China’s economic focus in sustainability

The development of sustainable business processes and technologies that promote resource efficiency, pro
cutivity and environmental quality is a primary step in protecting our global economy and environment. Where
tone this message hit home stronger than in the world’s fastest growing economy, China.

China not only has the world’s largest population of over one billion people but its massive economy is now beginning to match Western-sized proportions in terms of industrial production and consump
tion. With this growth, China’s economy has become a significant partner in the global economy and is expected to play an increasing role on the international stage.

In the early 1990s Black’s full-time career in New York City, he was chief art director of Mademoiselle. He was chief art director of House & Garden, which changed its name to House
designing, and became the first magazine devoted to what he called “content design” in the U.S., devoted to what he calls “content design” in the U.S.

The Sustainability Forum is the first in a series of discussions sponsored by the institute on sustainable research topics. Visit sustainability.rit.edu.
The ultimate goal of the Sustainability Institute will be to produce our next generation of engineers, scientists, and policy makers with groundbreaking research experience in sustainable technologies and systems.

Sustainability Institute

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Sponsored research

NTID professor researches visual learning

Peter Hauser, of the research and technology development department at NTID, received a five-year, $842,947 grant from the National Science Foundation to study how visual and gestural language facilitate learning. The project will be led by deaf scientists.

Peter Hauser

The project is to conduct scientific studies to help understand how humans learn through the visual modality. More than 20 schools in the U.S. will assist with transforming the science to teaching strategies in order to improve the language and literacy development of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.

Much of the research for the project will be led by deaf scientists. Deaf scholars also will participate as researchers and teachers through fellowships and assistantships. Hauser will work with deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing undergraduate students from NTID and three of RIT’s other colleges to develop ASL, cognitive and academic development tests for deaf children and adults, analyze the psychometric properties of these tests, and create video publish- ing techniques to disseminate the center’s research results and technical reports in ASL. This work will help researchers and educational diagnosticians appropriately evaluate deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.

Hauser’s team will coordinate brain and language studies on visual learning and visual language conducted at Georgetown University, San Diego State University and the University of California-Davis. These studies will show how the brain develops different neural networks to help deaf individuals navigate through the world when relying on vision more than hearing. In collaboration with other center projects, they will explore how to best teach deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals based on the unique strengths these individuals naturally develop by placing a greater reliance on vision.

Hauser’s grant is part of a larger NSF Science of Learning Center on Visual Language and Visual Learning award recently given to Gallaudet University.