

APPROVED 10/18/2007

**ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
ACADEMIC SENATE
OCTOBER 4, 2007: 12:05-1:50 P.M.
SCHMITT INTERFAITH CENTER/SKALNY**

Absent: E. Boyd, E. Feeney Bushnell, W. Destler, W. Koontz, C. McKenzie, W. Osterman, S. Perez-Hardy, S.R. Ramkumar, T. Schueler

CALL TO ORDER: Tom Policano, Vice Chair of the Senate called the meeting to order.

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER'S REPORT: Minutes of September 20, 2007 were approved unanimously with modifications.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

Tom reported that he had spoken with Kristen Waterstram-Rich and that her operation was successful. In two weeks she will have her second round of chemotherapy. Flowers have been sent to her from the Senate with caring thoughts.

IP: In light of Dr. Destler's speeches, a task force of five people (Carl Lundgren, Bill Johnson, Cheri McKee, Lyn Kelly and Varda Main) is working on a first draft of an Intellectual Property Policy.

Contingent Faculty: A forum on the AAUP web site has been set up to gather information and opinions concerning Contingent Faculty on campus. (<http://ritaaup.org/forum/viewtopic.php?id=30>). AAUP is also offering resources to help establish a Contingent Faculty Organization and to conduct a confidential survey. Meetings have been scheduled with HR. Tom asked that others please encourage contingent faculty to participate. T. Policano responded to a question about the identity of contingent faculty by responding that they include adjuncts, lecturers and those faculty not on tenure track.

Proposed AY2009-2010 Calendar: The proposed calendar for AY 2009-2010 which has been approved by SG and Staff Council will come before the Senate for approval at the next Senate meeting on October 18th. This calendar has a late start of 9/7/09 after Labor Day, an early end commencement on 5/22-5/23 (Sat and Sunday) and there will be one week breaks between the quarters.

Provost Search: Paul Rosenberg, chair of the Provost Search Committee, is continuing to work with the committee on the candidate selection process.

Commencement Speaker: Tom reported that the online dialogue has been a terrific source of names for commencement speakers. Thus far 50 faculty have made recommendations and four faculty (Heidi Miller, Jean Douthwright, Hamad Ghazle and Patricia Poteat) have offered to be on the committee to review and prioritize names suggested speakers. Provost McKenzie said he and Kit Mayberry will review these names and President Destler will make the final decision.

Parking Appeals Board: The Parking Office (Paula Benway) has requested the names of two faculty to serve this year on the newly resurrected board. If interested in serving please contact the Academic Senate Office. Bo Yuan from IT has volunteered to fill one of these slots. This board will adjudicate parking appeals on campus.

AAUP Faculty Social: This will take place at McGregor's today and all are invited to attend.

Transitioning into Retirement: A meeting will be held tomorrow with Patty Spinelli (HR), Barry Culhane, co-chairs of the LRPC (Mike Parthum and Sean Rommell) and the Executive

Committee of the Senate to discuss this issue. Any recommendations or ideas should be submitted to the Senate Executive Committee or to Viv in the Senate Office.

REPORTS:

BRICK CITY UPDATE: [The PowerPoint of this update can be accessed on the Senate DML site.] Michelle Seger, chair of Brick City and Associate Director for Special Events and Conferences, reported on Brick City which begins today, October 4th. Brick City Weekend is an opportunity to celebrate university spirit and traditions with events that are set up to foster interpersonal connections and an affinity to RIT. A committee of 30 people has worked closely with Alumni Relations in planning this huge event, which is similar to a parents' weekend. The partnership team is comprised of many departments across campus and strongly supported by others. It is a celebration that gathers students, parents, alumni, faculty, staff and friends of the university. Many return to campus (5000 or so) creating a great opportunity for people to re-connect with RIT. Registered attendees as of 10/04/2007 were 3855 which includes parents, alumni, faculty/staff, students, guests, trustees, RITirees and children ages 5-18. This year marks the 10th anniversary of this event and commemorative bricks will be distributed to all.

Michelle presented charts showing the total participation growth of the event and a growth recap for 2003-2007. The number of alumni attending Brick City has risen over the years and the number of students participating is on the rise as well. With more colleges getting involved (i.e. CAST is celebrating this year their 35th anniversary) much more participation is anticipated. As well, the Gordon Field House allows for larger events to take place during this event and to have bigger entertainment come in. With the Affinity Program, international alumni's are encouraged to attend Brick City this year. With the new programming there are 15-16 new events planned this weekend.

Michelle reviewed all the weekend events from having Comedian Howie Mandel here on campus to a presentation by Steve Wozniak, Horton speaker to the Brick City BBQ catered by Dinosaur BBQ. There will also be the Brick City Fall Festival, Guess Who's Coming Home to Dinner, Faculty & Staff Alumni Appreciation Lunch and the President's Alumni Ball.

Q: Is one of the reasons we have this event to improve alumni relations giving?

A: We want them to return to campus and re-connect first and foremost and in the long run they are willing to give.

Q: Have you tracked over the 10 years, any increase in giving?

A: Michelle said since she does not work for alumni relations she does not really know the answer and would have to find out from that department the information requested. The Provost commented that this event is phenomenally successful as the rate of giving went from 10% to well over 50%.

Q: Does RIT get any percentage of the ticket sales?

A: RIT does not. The college receptions and some of the workshops are supported by the University. The Provost said we do get some money but we don't get enough to cover our cost.

Tom thanked Michelle for her tremendous presentation today.

MIDDLE STATES REPORT: [The PowerPoint is available on the Senate DML site.] Kit Mayberry, Vice President of Academic Affairs presented the Middle States Commission follow up report after their visit here to RIT this past spring. She explained that Middle States is the regional arms of the accrediting organization and that accreditation is totally voluntary. Middle States reaffirms accreditation every 10 years through peer review of institutional self-study demonstrating compliance with MSC's accreditation standards (14 Standards of Excellence). They perform a 5-year, mid point check up through review of the *Periodic Review Report*, which

provides “institutional progress and planning information to the Commission.” The review team will then make suggestions and recommendations to the Institute “addressing issues relative to an institution’s continuing compliance with accreditation standards.” The range of actions by the Commission includes: Reaffirmation of accreditation; Reaffirmation with follow-up (progress letters, monitoring reports, supplemental information reports, visits); Warning; Show Cause.

The summary of reviewers’ recommendations was read.

On June 28, 2007, the MSCHE acted to “reaffirm accreditation and to request a progress letter, due by April 1, 2009, documenting implementation of an organized, sustained process to assess the achievement of institutional, program-level, and general education student learning outcomes. The Periodic Review Report is due June 1, 2012.

Statistics were shared that 59% of all institutions reaccredited this year has some kind of follow-up and the number one reason is assessment. A follow up letter is the mildest form of follow-up.

RETENTION EFFORTS IN COE [The PowerPoint *Is It Scalable? – Achieving World Class Retention* and a published article by Ed Hensel *On the Path to World Class Retention* is available on the DML site.]

Ed Hensel reported on the success COE has had with retention efforts made in his department. He presented what his department and the college of engineering have been doing to set a flavor and show what may be achievable and what has been successful. He presented historical data based on factual data to lend credibility to the message he was sharing today. During the 1990’s first year retention of ME’s at RIT hovered around 82% while first year retention within the ME program was around 67%. The questions to anticipate are: Are the resources required to achieve world class retention sustainable? How much of your success is due to preferential treatment in class size, scheduling, class times, instructors, etc. How can we do this with all the other things we must accomplish? What about the ever-increasing expectations placed on faculty and staff? Answers to these and other questions are essential in order to achieve a campus-wide positive impact on student retention and graduation rate.

Professor Hensel presented a historical perspective showing that in ME students are involved with their department from the start in that the department studies student profiles prior to their arrival on campus. A series of charts were presented to illustrate how students enter the ME program, the growth in applications and admissions to the ME department over the past decade, the various options that they may pursue, and various summary slides about student performance on standardized tests. Rather than being exhaustive, the charts were used to illustrate the types of information that the ME department uses to develop an effective and individually customized first-year program of study.

Several slides were presented that summarized changes made to the first year program in ME during recent years. In 2001 students were assigned to a faculty advisor to keep for their entire time at RIT. In 2002 block scheduling was set up for all incoming first year ME students. In 2003 LC’s (Learning Communities) were initiated with small groups of ME students and they participated in the Early Alert System. In 2004 the LC program extended to all incoming ME students. During AY 2005-06, several initiatives were studied, and observations were made about which things worked well, and did not work as well. Certain activities, such as supplemental instructors, have proven to be much more cost effective than providing general tutoring services. He said that the ME Learning Communities are very degree centric and they foster team building with peers and the development of study groups. They are scheduled with 8 a.m. classes on at least two days per week and up to four days per week, in an effort to take advantage of available classroom seats and manage resource utilization on the campus. He suggested that LCs should be built around the natural class size for scheduling and department constraints, but the class size decision should be looked at strategically for the institute. Next, Professor Hensel reviewed the

AY2006-07 initiatives and plans for AY 2007-08. The recent focus in the department has been on 1st and 2nd year retention rates, and with success there, the department is now prepared to make significant advances in graduation rate, as the student pipeline moves through the program.

Professor Hensel continued by describing the four needs that should be satisfied in order to improve Retention. They are: (1) Foster and facilitate good Student-Advisor relationships; (2) aggressive intervention must be provided for at-risk students in a pro-active and not reactive mode; (3) scheduling logistics are a critical element of establishing bonds and ties between student peers in an LC; and (4) LCs must be developed in a sustainable manner. He noted that developing strong programs for one year retention is only the beginning and then you must move on to the second year retention and then focus on the graduation rate. It is critical to be patient, persevere, be compassionate and be realistic!

Professor Hensel concluded by saying that it would be wonderful to see a seamless flow of information and data from the admissions process into the academic units upon student matriculation, and the necessity for developing a campus-wide optimal schedule. He provided a generic recipe that may be used as a starting point to develop a comprehensive retention plan at the department level. Ed emphasized that if he could only change one thing it would be that **“we must optimize scheduling in a sensible and strategic way across the campus.”** Everyone strives for local optima and we are far from the global optimum. Improving scheduling costs little and will benefit all.

Ed Hensel acknowledge that the retention initiatives and results outlined in his presentation are a direct result of tremendous efforts by a wide variety of people and expressed his thanks to all the students, staff and faculty for their dedication, hard work and focus on success. Special acknowledgements went to the RIT Learning Community Programs and the support provided by the colleges of Liberal Arts, Science and Engineering. The work of the ME department was supported in part by a grant from NY State under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act, and by the Robert L. Snyder Student Advisor fund in Mechanical Engineering.

Discussion ensued.

Tom said that the most significant thing said about this whole process is that it takes a lot of work. He commented that RIT is very fortunate to have a faculty member take this so far and is totally jealous of the students in his department and how welcomed they feel here at RIT through the work done in ME to bring retention to a higher place. These are the most formidable years for students and input into their lives is so important.

Q: Abi Aghayere said no one taught him about student advising when he came to RIT and asked if there will be training for new faculty in this area.

A: Ed responded that yes, there are college advisor handbooks and there is training. New hires in M.E. do not have advisees their first year. All the ME faculty are on a 5-year rotation for advising. The summer prior there is advising training and even guest speakers are brought in. A luncheon is planned as well with last year's advisors attending.

Q: What is the graduation rate for ME?

A: Five to six years ago it was in the mid 60's% and now we are on the upward trend. In another year they will measure the graduation rate again. Recently, we have been focused on building a strong foundation at the beginning of the program.

Q: Eli Saber commented that this has been a wonderful presentation and asked what other schools are doing in this area of retention and has there been any benchmarking?

A: For the first year retention data and our one year performance, we are on par with the best ME programs in the country. He said the reason we are losing first year students is usually due to

situations beyond our control (family crisis, etc.). He did say we still lag behind the national performance on graduation rates.

Q: A comment was made on the SAT curve (Eli Saber), and on the data being presented for multiple years rather than one year. He also said you have 1400 applicants and only 135 openings?

A: Ed said he does not have the data for the applicant pool, but only for the admitted students who pay a deposit. He confirmed that there were approximately 1400 first year and transfer applications for admission in fall 2007, with approximately 135 direct admit seats, several dozen engineering exploration seats, and about 20-30 transfer seats.

Kit Mayberry said RIT has 1100 new students in Learning Communities and our model at RIT is degree program centric. She said LC's have been a very successful model that works and by keeping it program centric is a key as students seem to get more engaged and integrate well. She also commended the FYE program that is a wonderful help with LC's. She said ME has put their own stamp on LC's, which is wonderful.

Q: Are there any templates for advisors?

A: ME has developed an SQL database for incoming students, and we physically go to the Admissions Office to get data from the admissions packages. Training programs are available for faculty advisors.

Harvey Palmer, dean of COE, said LC's have to be discipline specific and not a grouping of like majors. Being discipline specific allows a strong focus on block scheduling. He said you could group them in multiple courses but that is the challenge across majors.

Kit Mayberry said in almost all of the departments LC's only consist of a subset of courses the students take. For most students it is 65% of their courses, so they are experientially mixed majors.

The Provost commended Ed and the ME department for their work and said it was wonderful Ed could present this today. It is exportable and scalable. He said the real dimension to what ME is doing is the degree of human commitment as usually only the best students are targeted, but here we see all students are targeted as ME has engaged every faculty person to deal with every single student in this major, which is tremendous!

Q: Sohail Dianat congratulated Ed on his success and asked how ME picks up or selects supplemental instructors (SI's).

A: Supplemental instructors are usually selected from the dual degree BS/Masters program, or from among those students who have done well in the earlier courses.

Q: Do you use those SI positions as Co-Op assignments?

A: No

Tom thanked Ed for his comprehensive presentation which benefits all of RIT.

ADJOURNMENT: 1:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Feeney Bushnell, Communications Officer
Vivian Gifford, Staff Assistant

10/05/2007

