

NTID students testify before Senate committee

February 1, 1998

Three deaf students studying at RIT through NTID testified yesterday before the U.S. Senate's Labor and Human Resources Committee in support of RIT's educational access and options for deaf students. Matt Hamill, a third-year electromechanical technology student from Loveland, Ohio; Katherine Hoheusle, a third-year imaging science student from Bethel, New York; and Meghan Rainone, a fifth-year criminal justice student from Marlton, New Jersey, all presented their positive educational experiences to Senators Jim Jeffords (D-VT), committee chairman, and Tom Harkin (D-IA).

After the students testified and answered questions for nearly an hour, Senator Jeffords half jokingly remarked that the committee should dispense with the remainder of the morning's testimony and simply report out the bill. The students' testimony served to reinforce support for the Education of the Deaf Act, the legislative authorization for NTID, which is up for reauthorization this year. Dr. Robert Davila, RIT's vice president for NTID, also testified before the committee.

Hamill, who transferred to RIT from Purdue University, where he had a full wrestling scholarship, is the 1997 NCAA Division III wrestling champion in the 167-pound weight class and now wrestles at the 198-pound level, a strong candidate for the title this year. Hoheusle, who was accepted to eight colleges including Dartmouth, began her college career at RIT as a physics major and switched to imaging science this year; she is very involved in a variety of campus activities and was on NTID's 1996 College Bowl championship team. Rainone, who will graduate from RIT in May and enter law school this fall, is the current Miss Deaf America and has been traveling throughout the United States, speaking to young students about the value of positive self esteem and education.