

NTID ANNOUNCES MAJOR CHANGES

February 11, 2005

The National Technical Institute for the Deaf, a college of Rochester Institute of Technology, has announced a new plan that reflects bold and significant changes with its academic programs, access services and outreach efforts to more closely align with deaf and hard-of-hearing students' needs.

"We will build on our excellent track record of assisting qualified students to graduate from the other colleges of RIT at rates comparable to or better than their hearing peers," said Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, RIT vice president and CEO/Dean of NTID. "We will add more transfer programs similar to '2 + 2' or '2 + 3' programs in broad areas that match RIT offerings to prepare students for careers in business, computer technology, engineering, science, imaging, and many other fields."

NTID will also develop formal referral programs for students who want to come to NTID but who aren't yet academically ready. Throughout the next few years, NTID will work closely with selected community colleges to develop college-readiness programs that emphasize reading and writing, math, career awareness and interpersonal growth.

Effective immediately, access services have been expanded to meet the changing needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing students enrolled in one of the other seven colleges of RIT.

Students who know sign language and can benefit from sign language transliteration, notetaking, and/or assistive listening systems as access accommodations can request them. For those students taking courses in the other RIT colleges who do not benefit from sign language transliteration services, an alternative accommodation will be provided and will be based on an individual assessment of student need and on consideration of that need in relationship to the educational context. For most of these students, a text-based transliteration service, such as C-Print, will be provided.

To address these changing and growing needs, NTID will significantly expand C-print resources, as well as add more interpreters.

"In order to accomplish this goal, we will be significantly increasing access services, human resources, investing in new technology and conducting research on the effectiveness of various access services," Hurwitz said. "We recognize that each student is an individual with unique needs. As hearing aid technology continues to improve, in addition to the increasing use of cochlear implants, students are using their hearing more than they ever have in the past, which changes their needs for support."

Last, but not the least, NTID will develop a formal educational outreach consortium to share its expertise with others to improve deaf and hard-of-hearing people's education and career development.

This consortium will be established initially to strengthen skill levels among students in grades 7-11, especially underrepresented and female students. Eventually, the consortium will serve all deaf and hard-of-hearing students and professionals, and those who work with them.

"Educators and employers around the world have looked to NTID as a model for technical education programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing students," said Hurwitz. "The knowledge we've acquired from our years of extensive research and experience is unprecedented, and it's our pleasure to share this information more widely."

These changes are the result of more than a year's work of processing countless ideas, thoughts, and concerns from faculty, staff, students, alumni and members of NTID's National Advisory Group. After thorough review and analysis, those initial thoughts resulted in the Strategic Vision 2010, which now serves as the blueprint for NTID's future.

The first and largest technological college in the world for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, NTID, one of eight colleges within RIT, offers educational programs and access services to the 1,100 students from around the world who study, live and socialize with more than 14,000 hearing students on RIT's Rochester, NY campus. Web address: www.rit.edu/NTID.