

RIT/NTID's Robert Davila To Retire This Year

April 11, 2003

After seven years of dedicated service highlighted by countless accomplishments benefiting students, Dr. Robert R. Davila, the first RIT vice president for NTID, is retiring June 30, Dr. Albert J. Simone has announced.

Many of NTID's accomplishments over the past several years are directly attributable to Bob's insight, energy, network, and the respect he commands nationally and internationally from leaders in all facets of academia, government and business's, Simone said.

Davila, 70, has served as the first deaf CEO of NTID since 1996. Davila successfully led NTID's first private fund raising campaign, securing \$11.5 million to bolster scholarship funds, enhance technology, further research and development efforts, and support special programs.

He played a critical role in securing a milestone in the history of NTID and deaf culture--the Dyer Arts Center's the world's largest art gallery devoted to exhibiting significant works by deaf artists, located in the heart of NTID's main academic building.

Davila helped double NTID's endowment, providing scholarship funding to a greater number of current students and generations of future students. He increased the college's number of minority students and employees, enriching the campus environment and providing important role models for a diverse population of students.

Davila also implemented the college's strategic plan, including decentralizing its administrative structure; he increased the number of secured grants and contracts; helped make NTID a more integral part of RIT; and nurtured NTID's master of science degree program in secondary education (MSSE).

Davila's efforts on behalf of deaf and hard-of-hearing students have extended around the world. He secured funding through the George Soros Foundation for a model program supporting deaf students in Eastern Europe, as well as support from The Nippon Foundation in Japan to create the Postsecondary Education Network International, housed at NTID, to help other countries develop programs for deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

Davila's plan for retirement mirrors his career to continue his unwavering commitment to disability advocacy. He has been appointed by President George W. Bush to serve on the National Council on Disability, a 15-member group that advises the president and Congress on matters affecting the education, rehabilitation, employment, and independent status of the country's 52 million people with disabilities. Davila also is the first person invited to sit in the Jerry C. Lee Chair of Studies in Technology and the Adult Learner at National University in California.

Dr. Simone said a national search has begun for Davila's successor.

In my judgment, it will not be possible to find the equal of Bob Davila in all of his brilliant dimensions," Simone said. "But we shall find someone who is very good and who will know how to build upon the tremendous foundation that Bob has constructed.

" Bob will be greatly missed, but he has made an impact at NTID that will be felt long after his retirement," he added.

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 and support services to the 1,100 deaf and hard-of-hearing students from around the world who study, live and socialize with 14,000 hearing students on RIT's Rochester, N.Y., campus.

Web address: <http://www.rit.edu/NTID>.