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Jul15

[Bob](#)

## [RIT goes west](#)

If you want to become one of the nation's leading innovation universities, you may as well travel to the heart of innovation to learn more: [Silicon Valley](#).

That was the idea behind RIT's recent visit to the West Coast. An RIT delegation of nearly 60 strong met with 22 companies in three days of visits, July 9 to 11. The majority of the visits were in the Silicon Valley region, between San Francisco and San Jose. Teams of trustees and RIT leadership also met with firms in Seattle and Los Angeles. Discussions centered on innovation, [corporate research and development](#), [sustainability](#) and collaborative models.

"This has been an exciting adventure for RIT," said Michael P. Morley, chairman of the Board of Trustees. "We are hoping this will lead to great opportunities for RIT students in the co-op program, as well as in the workforce after they graduate. We are enhancing and establishing relationships on the West Coast. A lot of these companies do not know the scope and breadth of RIT."

Indeed, not many folks on the West Coast had heard of RIT. Hey, we don't have a football team that plays in the Rose Bowl. And let's not forget our visit was based in Palo Alto, home to [Stanford University](#) where Silicon Valley got its start with some students named [Hewlett and Packard](#) who started a company in a garage several years ago.

It was evident from our visits that many West Coast companies knew very little about RIT, other than we were some tech school from the East. Yes, we have alumni and co-ops working on the West Coast. But what differentiates us from MIT, Carnegie Mellon or RPI?

A meeting and tour of [Adobe](#) led to a discussion about RIT's relatively new Ph.D. program in [color science](#). Upon return to Rochester, university leaders will coordinate further discussions on ways RIT expertise can help Adobe solve problems in the area of color management. It is these types of connections that [RIT President Bill Destler](#) hopes to capitalize on from the West Coast trip.

"I know of no other university doing this. We have some extraordinary opportunities in front of us," said RIT President Bill Destler, who also added that several companies expressed interest in learning more about the university's new corporate research and development program, where RIT will give relinquish intellectual property rights.

The RIT delegation was exposed to new technology throughout the trip. At [Cisco](#), for example, a demonstration was given on "TelePresence." The technology allows business leaders to meet "virtually" through video and surround sound, anywhere in the world. Cisco is also currently working with the Oakland A's baseball team, which is planning a new stadium. Here, fans will have the potential to order hot dogs and beer from their cell phones and have it delivered to their seats. Fans will also be able to watch replays on their cell phones.

The trip also included an [alumni](#) reception with the San Francisco and San Jose chapters. Nearly 300 alumni and friends of RIT attended at the event, held at the [Computer History Museum](#) in Mountain View, Calif. Here, Destler implored the alumni to stay in touch with the university and spread the word of its growth in stature.

"Your university has come a long way in rapid time," Destler told the alumni. "You should be proud of the trajectory we are on. We need your help in telling the RIT story to your family, friends and co-workers."

RIT met with the following companies and organizations: Adobe, Amazon, Apple, Aruba Networks, Avery Dennison, Boeing, Cisco, Citrix, Electronic Arts, Flextronics, Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Linked In, Micron, Microsoft, Oracle, Salesforce.com, Serious Materials, Stanford University, SONY Imageworks and VISX.

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### 1. [Justin Thorp](#) Jul17

Sounds like an awesome trip! Next time instead of doing one big post-trip blog post, you should do day-by-day reports. It would have been fun to keep up with the trip via text and photos.

 Name (required)

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