RIT holds ‘virtual’ college fair for female applicants in high-tech fields

Like many high school seniors, deciding where to go college is weighing on the mind of Gretchen Smith. Smith, a standout student at Nazareth Academy, is a member of the school’s FIRST Robotics Team and part of the Academic Scholarship in Computing, Engineering and New Technology program. RIT wants Smith to be among its incoming freshman class of female engineering students. Accepted applicants must decide by May 1.

In an effort to reach the current female applicants specifically interested in the university’s undergraduate programs in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines, RIT’s Division of Enrollment Management and Career Services hosted a “virtual” college fair on Feb. 26.

High school sophomores and juniors who've made inquires about these programs were also invited to participate in the online chat.

Individual chatrooms were set up for the Kate Gleason College of Engineering, the Kate Gleason College of Computing and Information Sciences, College of Applied Science and Technology and College of Science. The Offices of Admissions and Financial Aid, College of Liberal Arts and the College of Science were also part of the event.

The high-school students could ‘chat’ with female faculty and students from the various STEM majors as well as admissions and financial aid staff members. Young women logged on from all over the world including India, Texas, Vermont, Colorado and Maryland.

“I thought the virtual chat was really helpful,” says Smith. “None of the other schools I've applied to have had anything like it so it is a very unique tool. It was nice to chat with administrators because they had all of the answers to my questions, but talking to the students was even better because they are the ones living the college life.”

The high-school students asked a variety of questions to current RIT students ranging from: “Do you like the quarter system? How diverse is the campus? What made you choose RIT? What is the co-op program like?”

When you first got to campus, how did you get involved with people?”

One prospective student wrote: “RIT is about six hours away from me, but I plan to visit soon. I'm just trying to do what I can over the Internet before making that kind of trip.”

Marian Nicoletti, RIT senior associate director of undergraduate admissions, says this inaugural online chat was a success. “We wanted to do something special to let these young women talk one-on-one with current female RIT students in the STEM majors.”

The high school’s 2009 Chat Fest, which culminated in a presentation to the students at Nazareth Academy, is expected to have a significant impact on Smith's decision, and potentially that of other high school girls who attend schools similar to hers.

Imagine RIT exhibit proposals pour in

The second annual Imagine RIT: Innovation and Creativity Festival is less than two months away, and this year’s festival looks to be even larger than the inaugural effort.

The Imagine RIT Program Committee expects over 400 exhibits in this year’s festival, which takes place Saturday, May 2. While some of last year’s entries will return for an encore performance, the RIT community has again demonstrated its commitment to innovation and creativity with hundreds of new examples of groundbreaking research, interactive exhibits, unique demonstrations, world-class artistry and live performances.

“The innovation and creativity that exists on this campus continues to amaze me,” says Imagine RIT Chairman Barry Culhane. “The RIT community certainly rose to the challenge of building on the success of last year’s festival. Visitors are going to walk away tremendously impressed by what our students, faculty and staff do on a daily basis.”

A unique element of this year’s festival was born when RIT President Bill Destler challenged the campus to build an energy-efficient vehicle that could outperform his electronic bicycle. Fourteen entrants have risen to the challenge and will compete against Destler at 9 a.m. on May 2, an hour before Imagine RIT officially gets under way. The winner will be announced during the festivals opening ceremony and all 14 entries will be exhibited in the WOW! Center (Gordon Field House and Activities Center) throughout the day.

The festival is free and open to the public, rain or shine. ■

John Fulkerson | jfulkerson@rit.edu

Web extra: Vote for your favorite Imagine RIT poster design by visiting www.rit.edu/imaginerit/posters. Voting ends at 5 p.m., Friday, March 20. The winning poster will be announced during a news conference in April.

Each issue of News & Events features a project to be showcased at Imagine RIT: Innovation and Creativity Festival on May 2.

This week’s spotlight: Human-Powered Bike Blender Presenter: RIT Cycling Club Brief Description: As your pedal this bike they provide power to a mounted blender that makes them a smoothie as they ride.

How is the exhibit creative and/or innovative: This zero-emissions vehicle provides both exercise and a nutritious, energizing snack.

Exhibit experience for visitors: Visitors load their favorite smoothie recipe in the blender and pedal until their smoothie is fully blended. For more information on the Imagine RIT: Innovation and Creativity Festival, visit www.rit.edu/imaginerit. ■
Faculty, staff artwork will be revealed off at Gallery r anniversary benefit

Art patrons: You may be the proud owner of a ceramic vase, hand-dyed scarf, digital print, metal sculpture hand-designed jewely, a pair of black ceramic high-heeled shoes or a photograph of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

All ticket holders who attend the 10th annual Gallery r benefit will leave with a beautiful work of art donated by RIT friends, students, alumni and faculty—signature pieces that may be worth more than the $150 benefit ticket price. The gala auction event with emcee Norma Holland, WHAM-TV news anchor, will be held at Bausch & Lomb headquarters on Thursday, March 26. A reception with live music, light hors d'oeuvres, desserts and cash bar will be held from 5:30 to 7 p.m., with an art drawing in the atrium from 7 to 9 p.m. RIT staff member Peggy Tillervil contributed two photographs to the Gallery r patron ticket drawings. “The photos were taken when I was in Moscow for the Muskie Foundation in January 2008,” explains Tillervil. “We have a large clientele of graduate business programs at RIT’s E. Philip Saunders College of Business, so the opportunity to be in Red Square one night when it was snowing, windy and very cold. This was the best selection that is incredibly uncommon and made for a great photo opportunity to capture two key landmarks, St. Basil’s Cathedral and the Kremlin, without the crowds impeding the view.”

Now to the benefit this year are original works of art by nationally recognized artists who will be available to the highest bidder during the live auction—including a Rochester landscape painting by Scott Small, a litho print by the late Rochester-celebrated artist Ramon Santiago in collaboration with Frame 1-Up, and a sport bronze bowl by the late renowned metal-smith Ronald Pearson, which was donated by a private collector in Rochester. Gallery r is in an auspicious start with more than 1,500 visitors when it opened its doors during the Park Avenue Festival 10 years ago. Since then, it has built a reputation for showcasing 12 innovative exhibitions a year, providing educational opportunities, and fostered collaborations with the public, other arts institutions and community groups. “The Park Avenue district is an exciting place to be,” says Soderrick. Gallery r is a director and director of extended studies at RIT. “This is the perfect relationship between the university, the arts, community and business partners.”

Our community-wide gala helps create awareness of RIT student and faculty art and faculty art while bringing together family and friends. I love to see patrons who eventually carefully bagging a glass or bronze sculpture, wearing a beautiful necklace or bracelet, and admiring their newly acquired painting or print. The look on their facesUSB. “Before we can use sustainability to transform our society we need to develop a better understanding of what it means and why it is important,” Selinger adds. “In this way, our course will help our students—many of whom are interested in sustainability—better answer the pressing questions for themselves and ultimately contribute to the broader debate in their professions.”

On top of his teaching efforts, Selinger is also co-directing a conference on sustainable ethics, which will be held at RIT on May 1. The event is being organized with Wade Robison, the Ezra A. Hale Chair of Applied Ethics, and Ryne Raffaelle, the academic director of the Golisano Institute for Sustainability, and will feature leading experts in environmental ethics, the philosophy of technology and sustainable development. It is being directed by Jeremy Harfew, Dean Robert Ulman, Nabil Nasr, director of the Golisano Institute for Sustainability, and Beth Cooper, vice president for student affairs and the Ezra A. Hale Chair in Applied Philosophy, and the Melton Foundation. Selinger hopes to develop the conference, which is free and open to the public, as an annual academic symposium. For information, visit www.rit.edu/eth/ethics/Sustainability.html.

Not only are ethical considerations central to how we define sustainability, but also understanding of sustainability ethics also will help us develop the discipline of sustainability in such a way as to keep attention on the entitlements that all members of society deserve.”

Of great assistance is the food and beverage responsibilities and senior year, they have the opportunity to participate on the executive planning team or act as co-chair for the event.” This year’s co-chairs are fourth-year RIT students Ashley Hale and Michael Dulac. They have been working since early in the fall quarter to build this year’s staff. Their cuisine selections from shrimp with mayonnaise to pan-seared duck and wild mushrooms show how even the most exotic foods can be healthy.

Many alumni are involved in the event or return like Bonis to attend the dinner this year. The students will take charge of the event planning, trained staff and faculty in which to work as or wait staff is a good way to gain hands-on experience in their field of interest, he added.

Tickets are $100 person and can be ordered online at www.rit.edu/ cast/ritz. Donors can also purchase a commemorative plate in recognition of the event for $250. Proceeds go toward the School of Hospitality and Service Management for scholarships, equipment and conference travel.

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Eastman musicians offer next Performing Arts concert

The Eastman School Symphony Orchestra is slated to perform at RIT on Monday, March 27 as part of the Performing Arts Spring Season. The concert, which consists of nearly 60 players, will feature a Mozart piano concerto that will be performed by the winner of the Eastman School of Music’s annual concerto competition. The concert begins at 8 p.m. in the Student Alumni Union’s Iniet Auditorium. Tickets are $5 for students, $8 for faculty, staff and alumni and $12 for the general public. They can be purchased at the Student Alumni Union Candy Counter or at the Gordon Field House and Activities Center box office.

Professor listed in Marquis’ ‘Who’s Who’

Hamed Ghazie, associate professor and director of the diagnostic medical sonography program in the College of Science, has been selected to be included in the 2009 edition of Who’s Who in America, published by Marquis. Whio Who is a biographical reference that publishes the profiles of the highest achievers and contributors in a variety of fields including politics, business, education and medicine. Selected individuals are nominated and their credentials reviewed by a committee. Ghazie says that the process took about two months before his selection was confirmed. “It’s greatly appreciated," says Ghazie. “It’s nice to be in Who's Who, and know that somebody thinks of you that way." It makes you think to yourself, "Perhaps I am making a difference." Ghazie is president of the Rochester Ultrasound Society and a former Eisenhart teaching award winner. He has a bachelor’s degree in ultrasound from RIT and has been on the faculty for 14 years. He also has a master’s in health professions from University of Rochester and completed his doctorate in higher education in 2008 from UR. Marquis Who has been around since 1899 and is used mostly in libraries as a research tool enabling users to look up biographical profiles. Visit www.marquiswhoswho.com for additional information.
Gatley named head of student innovation, undergraduate research

The College of Science has named Ian Gatley director of the new Center for Student Innovation and Undergraduate Research Support, effective April 1. Gatley will remain director until June 30.

Jeremy Haefner, RIT provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, will appoint an interim dean for the College of Science and begin a national search for the permanent dean, with the goal of filling the position by July 2010.

“Ian brings a creative and innovative set of skills, experiences and passions to this new appointment,” says Haefner. “In his previous roles, first as director of the Chester F. Carlson Center for Imaging Science and as dean of the College of Science, he fostered an environment of tremendous growth and expansion. Research and scholarship in science significantly grew during the time of his appointments and the college saw a rise in a number of strategic programs, culminating in the Ph.D. in astrophysical science and technology.”

In his new role, Gatley will oversee a center designed as a workshop, a think tank of sorts, for teams of students to pursue problem-solving ideas representing social or commercial innovation.

Scheduled to open this spring, the center’s 10,000 square-foot, circular, glass-enclosed space will dramatically distinguish it from other buildings on campus. This glass wheel will be the “hub and other buildings on campus. This circular, glass-enclosed space will be the center’s 10,000 square-foot, circular, glass-enclosed space will be the ‘hub and [out of Gatley’s relationship with the Rochester Museum and Science Center and the need to find affordable projection technologies for the planetarium. Related RIT-based projects have included a five-camera video of the 2007 commencement ceremony featuring former President Bill Clinton and an immersive open-house experience for prospective students who convert an auditorium into a wide-screen theater.

“Gatley’s team has assigned the intellectual property from this work to RIT in order to create opportunities for students,” Haefner says. “The university has filed for three patents for inventions that include wearable and mobile video capture and multi-screen displays.”

Haefner points also to the success of the Undergraduate Research Symposium as another example of Gatley’s emphasis on discovery. The annual symposium has grown steadily over the past three years. Last summer, 93 students presented their projects, double the number from three years ago.

“I am very confident that Ian will vigorously pursue his passion for helping students achieve the learning outcomes we expect from the Center for Student Innovation and from Undergraduate Research Support,” Haefner adds.

Researchers share findings at IT Collaboratory symposium

Researchers share findings at IT Collaboratory symposium

The development of quantum-limited imaging devices that could have major implications for biomedical imaging, chemistry, physics and mathematics. More than 260 applicants have expressed interest in enrolling in the program for fall 2009.

The College of Engineering is recognized nationally for its contributions to medical, electronic, environmental, and advanced materials. Engineers also develop chemical-based equipment for drug delivery, semiconduc-

RIT adds chemical engineering bachelor’s degree curriculum

Contemporary topics incorporated into program

Chemical engineering, the newest undergraduate degree program in the Kate Gleason College of Engineering portfolio, was formally approved by the New York State Department of Education last fall. Since that time, more than 260 applicants have expressed interest in enrolling in the program for fall 2009.

The degree program builds upon a foundation of chemistry, physics and mathematics. Traditional applications include the development and manufacture of chemicals such as fuels, synthetic fibers, pharmaceuticals and advanced materials. Engineers also develop chemical-based equipment for drug delivery, semiconductor processing, bio-medical and environmental applications.

“High performance materials are needed across all industry sectors including aerospace, automotive, bio-medical, electronic, environmental, space and military applications,” says Steven Weinstein, head of the new chemical engineering department.

“In addition to its obvious chemistry underpinnings, chemical engineering is often intertwined with biology and biomedical engineering,” says Weinstein. “There is particular interest in harnessing the chemical machinery inside a cell, developing and manufacturing ‘markers’ for detecting cancer cells, developing biodegradable scaffolds for culturing cells for medical implants, and, of course, mapping and manipulating the human genome.”

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Sometimes hearing the news isn’t easy. A doctor reveals you have breast cancer, or a teacher says your child is uncontrollable in the classroom. Two RIT families have those faces you’ll see on the posters around campus for RIT’s 2009 United Way Campaign—have decided to share their personal and poignant experiences. Both have benefited tremendously from contributions of two United Way of Greater Rochester donor designated agencies: The Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester and Hope Hall School.

"As someone who does constant research," explains the RIT archivist, "I wanted to know everything about my disease to make up my mind about surgery and treatment." Simmons founded the Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester, a donor-designated agency of United Way, to be an excellent source for information. She saw the coalition’s brochure during her mammogram office visit—and the organization was also recommended by her physician, as well as a friend who had used its services.

"I'm not alone," Simmons says. "I've had a Peer Advocate Lending Support Pal.

"It’s been a rough year but I know I’m not alone," Simmons says. "I’ve gotten so much support from my husband and family, Breast Cancer Coalition professionals, and RIT friends who constantly affirmed, ‘We’re behind you, we’re with you, we love you.’"

For another RIT family, concern involved their son, diagnosed with Tourette Syndrome, who was experiencing frustration and failure in a traditional educational setting.

It became noticeable at day one—Gian just didn’t fit in with the rest of his classmates. Born two months premature, he had a normal IQ but failure and rejection—he didn’t have behaviors and his head would hang down, with constant feelings of failure and rejection—he didn’t have one friend.

Advocating a change for their son, Becki and her husband, David, felt "blessed and relieved" when Gian was accepted into third grade at Hope Hall School in Gates, a donor-designated agency of United Way.

Sister Diana Dolce, principal and founder of Hope Hall, which was established in 1994, applies a holistic approach to education. The mission of the school is to provide an opportunity for "at-risk" or educationally stranded children to become successful lifelong learners.

"Every student in grades three to nine at Hope Hall learns differently, lessons are broken down into smaller pieces so they can keep up with the pace," says Dolce. "Their generosity of supporters of United Way of Greater Rochester, Hope Hall is able to stretch its shoestring budget and give students' questions. It was also a way to educate our invites about the numerous community, social and operating budget and give students opportunities RIT has in place for women interested in high-tech careers.”

In a survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, nearly 832,000 bachelor’s degrees were awarded to women in the United States in 2006, but only 11 percent of those degrees were in the science, technology, engineering and math disciplines. In contrast, men earned 23 percent of B.S. degrees in those programs.

RIT has implemented various strategies university-wide to recruit more women into the STEM disciplines. RIT’s Kate Gleason College of Engineering has an extensive outreach program and its enrollment numbers for women reflect its success. In 2007, the freshman engineering class for women was 13 percent. In 2008, that number jumped to a record-breaking 19 percent. RIT has created an entrepreneurship course for women and open to the public.

Web extra: R News covered the inaugural online chat for women interested in the STEM disciplines. To watch the story, visit www.youtube.com/ RITUniversityNews. To learn more about RIT’s global initiatives to recruit more women into high-tech fields, visit www.rit.edu/ news/?v=46656.

'Virtual' college fair

The importance of making and crafting things to American society and culture will be the topic of an upcoming presentation, The Happy Mutant’s Guide to Pocket Creation, by new media journalists and authors Mark Frauenfelder and Carla Sinclair. 8 p.m. Thursday, March 26, in Webb Auditorium.

The pair will also host a craft workshop, along with RIT’s Make Club, at 9 a.m. Friday, March 27, in the Carlson Auditorium. Both events, sponsored by the Caroline Werner Gannett Project, are free and open to the public.

Frauenfelder is co-founder of the blog Boing Boing and of Make magazine. Sinclair is the editor of Craft Magazine and frequent contributor to Wired. The husband- and wife team is well known for commentary on American crafts, design and new media.