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ACADEMICS

Date added: 1/28/2004

Q: Why was the withdrawal date moved from the end of the eighth week to the sixth week several years ago? The administration claims to be so concerned about increasing the retention rate here at RIT. Moving the withdrawal date back seems very contradictory to this goal. Some professors do not give out any grades until just before or right after the withdrawal date. Thus, many students do not have enough time or information about their standing to make a good decision about whether to stay in a class. Can you comment on this?

A: This is an excellent and timely question. Yes, we are very concerned by current retention and graduation rates. The withdrawal rate issue has also been raised by others recently and the Retention Committee believes that the current withdrawal policy warrants a new review. As a first step in this review, the Deans will be discussing this issue in the next few weeks. Thanks for raising this issue again.

Date added: 1/30/2004

Q: Why doesn't RIT get certain holidays off, such as Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday, or have reading days before finals, like almost all other schools?

A: The New York State Education Department requires that classes meet a certain number of days annually. Our current RIT schedule meets exactly that minimum number of days as required by the state. We are also a very diverse university with

students celebrating many different holidays. Given the state requirements, our calendar, our diverse population and the fact that RIT is a non-denominational university, we have very little flexibility to offer additional holidays.

Regarding reading days - we usually do not schedule a formal reading day when there is a weekend before exams begin.

Date added: 2/02/2004

Q: From my understanding, RIT is one of the top 10 in USA and 2nd best engineering program in Eastern USA. If this is so, I am assuming that the facilities, especially professors would give all of their heart to educate the students but NOT all of them. There are professors who cannot teach well and do not give efforts to do better for students' benefits and future. Who is paying the tuitions? RIT Students. Who is paying the professors? RIT Students. Who help RIT to be so successful? RIT Students.

My question is, why can't RIT get rid of Tenure? Omitting Tenure would be the best move to benefit the students' education, even though, the facilities disagree with it but hey, it is all about improving RIT.

A: Your question on tenure comes up frequently in higher education.

At RIT, every faculty member undergoes an annual performance review. If the faculty member receives a rating of "needs improvement" or "unsatisfactory," the faculty member is expected to develop a plan of action with the department chair to improve the faculty member's performance. The faculty member also receives no pay raise for the following year if they are not performing satisfactorily.

The dean has money through the FEAD program (Faculty Evaluation and Development) to assist the faculty member needing to improve performance; this money can be used for hiring a consultant to work with the faculty member, to pay for the faculty member's expenses in attending conferences or workshops which will help alleviate deficiencies, having a reduced teaching load to work on curriculum development, enrolling in courses on teaching methods in the education department of a nearby university, and so forth. If after two years, the faculty member continues to receive "needs improvement" evaluations, the faculty member will be given the choice of resigning (or retiring) from RIT or else facing "Dismissal for Cause" procedures.

In the past eight years, approximately 25 tenured faculty members have left RIT due to poor performance.

Date added: 2/12/2004

Q: President Simone,

Could you convince ITS to add a "Test Eligibility" option to SIS? There is nothing more frustrating than finding out, on registration day, that you are not eligible to register for a course. If the course requires department approval or is NTID only, then there should be a mechanism to test for that beforehand.

A: Another timely question. I turned to the folks in the Registrar's Office and Information & Technology Services (ITS) on this one. Here is what I learned:

There currently are systems and documents in place to address some of the concerns you mentioned in your question. Certainly RIT's Course Catalog is a valuable source of information relative to course content and prerequisite requirements. Additionally, if you use the 'Open/Closed Courses' features of SIS, you may obtain course description, prerequisite and special considerations information there as well. The recommendation of the Registrar's Office is that you review these information sources as part of your preparation for registration and not necessarily attempt to do this as you are actually registering for classes.

At the same time and as you may be aware, RIT has recently formed a Registration Committee that is currently evaluating nearly all facets of our registration procedures and systems in an effort to make the entire process simpler and more convenient for the students and improve the overall efficiency of the process at an Institute level. In addition to myriad focus groups and task forces that do include student representatives, communications such as yours are definitely taken into consideration for inclusion in any procedural or systematic changes.

Thank you for your question. If you would like to pursue any of the aforementioned items in greater detail, please do not hesitate to contact the Registrar's office directly: 475-2821. And we look forward to providing you with significantly enhanced registration processes in the near future.

Date added: 3/03/2004

Q: As a first year student in the Software Engineering Department, I am concerned with the proposed changes in regard to student retention. Over a year I ago, I was looking through the promotional material of many different universities; I was choosing which schools to apply to. In the end, I chose RIT over several other options because

of several key elements of an RIT SE degree.

First, I highly value the co-op experience. Although I have not been on co-op myself, I have discussed its value with a variety of people, including students, faculty, and professionals in the software field. It makes a lot of sense to me that reducing the amount of co-op blocks a student goes through, effectively makes an RIT graduate less attractive in the job market. It is the hands on experience that RIT offers which has also attracted the brightest students. Could you please clarify how reducing the amount of required co-op blocks will serve to improve retention? How will it improve the integrity of an RIT degree?

Secondly, I know that a Software Engineering degree from RIT is not just any degree! Being that the SE program at RIT is the model that many other universities have followed for similar programs, it would seem to me that RIT should do everything in its power to keep it as strong as possible. Some would say that the SE program is often imitated, but never duplicated. This leads to me the proposed plan to reduce pre-requisite structures in RIT degrees. After discussing this issue with other students and faculty members, I have come to the conclusion that allowing students to take courses in any which order does not make sense for an engineering degree.

RIT is clearly not a liberal arts school; it is a technically oriented university, and the rules are not the same. To paraphrase one of my sources, it probably doesn't matter if you take Shakespeare before Ibsen in a liberal arts program, but it does matter that you take Discrete Mathematics (1016-265, 366) before Formal Methods (4010-420) for a Software Engineering student. As I see it, most engineering disciplines proceed in a linear fashion, with each course building upon previous ones. I believe taking down pre-requisite structures would fundamentally change an RIT SE degree, not to mention many others, in a negative way. Doing so, as I see it, would lessen the value of an RIT degree. How does this help student recruitment and retention at RIT? Perhaps you can clarify why the proposed changes will help improve RIT, being that it is fundamentally a technical university.

Thank you for considering my thoughts! Furthermore, thank you and the retention committee for looking into ways to improve RIT. I think it is a great thing when people stop to evaluate the current situation and find ways to make it better. As a student, I feel it is my responsibility to voice my concerns on these issues, if we are to actually improve anything. The last thing we need is a disconnection between what the administration thinks is best, and what the students feel should be done. Thank you for your time. Take care.

A: Thank you for another timely question. Let me first say that I am absolutely committed to cooperative education and would never consider eliminating it from our program requirements.

As it turns out, I spent 18 years teaching at the two oldest and two largest co-op universities in the U.S. before coming to RIT. That said, there are students who might

prefer fewer than 4 or 5 required co-ops -- perhaps they are planning on graduate school, in which case on-the-job experience is a less critical form of preparation; perhaps the market takes a nose dive and co-op placements are hard to find. What I am urging is flexibility in place of rigidity. Any student who wishes can take 4, 5, or even 6 co-ops, but we ought to consider options for students to do fewer as well.

Regarding curriculum, you may not be aware of the curricular revolution that is taking place elsewhere in undergraduate engineering education. Engineering schools are making substantial changes to the way they sequence course. This does not mean, as you suggest, that students can take courses in any order they please, but simply that there is greater integration between the foundation courses and the engineering courses. I look forward to our engineering programs following suit in the near future.

It is heartening to see students like yourself take such an interest not only in today's RIT, but in the RIT of the future. I appreciate and thank you very much for your thoughtful and insightful comments.

Date added: 3/03/2004

Q: While RIT has excellent facilities and resources on campus, it seems that some of the special programs are limited only to certain fields of study. I speak specifically on the Center for Integrated Manufacturing Studies. The center seems to gear itself towards those in engineering programs for the most part, while often stressing the importance of "sustainable design." As a student of Industrial Design, the importance of designing meaningful products, which are aesthetically pleasing at the same time, is of the highest importance in our field of study. We find ourselves often "left out" of the action as we are enrolled in the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences and have only recently (this year) been recognized as playing an equally important role as engineers in the field of new product development. How can we better achieve the sharing of skills between those trained in a technological field and we who are trained in the applied arts? RIT sponsors a new product development forum and receives funds from the national government to research such fields, but does the institute plan on integrating further collaboration on such projects?

A: Thanks for the question. This is a topic that our Retention Committee is reviewing. As part of our retention efforts, we are making an across-the-board effort to build more flexibility into degree program curricula so that student can have open electives to take courses in other colleges. The major restraint, in addition to the tight student schedules within their own majors, is one of facilities and resources; if a current program fully utilizes a lab for that program, it is difficult to arrange for non-majors to get access to the lab, and expensive to acquire additional facilities (both space and equipment) for an additional lab for non-majors.

But we hope in the near future to have much more availability for exactly what you are requesting.

Date added: 5/18/2004

Q: How does RIT select its commencement speaker? Thanks.

A: Thanks for the timely question. As you may know, we are very excited to have Xerox Chairman and CEO Anne Mulcahy this year.

Each year, I ask for suggestions from the various governance groups on campus. Ultimately, I make the final selection.

We have been very fortunate in recent years to attract such speakers as former President George Bush, CIA Director George Tenet, USA Today Publisher Tom Curley and Senator Chuck Schumer.

Meanwhile, there is a formal policy for awarding honorary degrees. This starts with a review by a faculty committee. To learn more about this process and the guidelines for an honorary degree, visit this Website:

<http://www.rit.edu/~620www/Manual/sectionD/D14.html>

Date added: 6/16/2004

Q: Why do the colleges act autonomist? It seems to me that there should be more overlap in courses. For instance, Students in the MIS program should be able to take Information Technology courses and Computer science courses, Engineering with Information technology or Computer Science. It seems that if I want to go take a course that is offered in another college that fits my program I cannot do it. Why is this?

A: You have a very timely question.

First, by fall of 2005, every undergraduate academic program will have more free electives -- meaning courses that can be taken from any college or program. We are instituting this for exactly the reason you suggest. There certainly is a host of interesting subjects represented at RIT and students should be allowed to explore more of them.

One of the reasons students sometimes can't take classes outside of their major has to

do with available space in the class. Some courses are filled up by majors, who get first shot at them. Our new demand-responsive registration system could help us anticipate where there is a need for additional sections in time for us to be able to create another one.

We appreciate your feedback on this.

ALUMNI

Date added: 2/25/2004

Q: This is not really a question but a suggestion. As a way to raise money for the university, what about having a "Walk of Fame" similar to the one at Frontier Field. Alumni, students, student organizations, parents, faculty, staff, etc. could purchase a brick. Perhaps the sidewalk could be in the area of the new field house. As an Alumni and Staff member, I would be very interested in something like this as a way to raise money.

A: Great idea and we are already on it!

We have just started a "Buy a Brick" campaign. As we prepare to celebrate our 175th anniversary, we are inviting folks to leave a mark on campus. Bricks are 4X8" and engraved with your message, up to 15 characters per line, 3 lines total.

Each brick is \$175 and includes a commemorative mini brick for you to keep.

Proceeds from brick sales will support the Alumni Legacy Scholarship at RIT. The first group of bricks ordered will be laid in time for Brick City Festival and Alumni Weekend, Oct. 21-24.

To order your brick or for more information, call toll-free at 1-866-RIT-ALUM.

ATHLETICS

Date added: 3/03/2004

Q: President Simone,

I was wondering if there are any plans to expand/renovate the lacrosse/soccer stadium or the ice arena in the near future. Perhaps seating in either. I have no reason to

believe there are, but I was just curious. Also, I was wondering if there are plans to implement a football team into RIT's athletics program. I think that a football team would bring even more school spirit and would help RIT feel more like a college in the fall (a problem some students feel that RIT has). I know it is expensive, but I think that it would help RIT in the long run. I hope you have a good day, and I thank you for your time President Simone.

A: We have a lot going on in athletics, with our 24 men's and women's varsity sports, intramurals and wellness programs. The new Gordon Field House is scheduled to open May 7. And just this week (March 1), the lights were turned on for the new turf field. I turned to Lou Spiotti, director, Center for Human Performance, to respond to your specific questions. Here is his response:

We just recently (last summer) expanded the stadium where soccer, lacrosse, and track and field are played. New, expanded and improved seating was added. A press box was constructed along with a new sound system. A few years ago, we built a new track and rebuilt the grass surface with what can be termed "prescription turf" It is the best of the best. The master plan for this area includes additional seating for visitors across the field and a support building for storage, restrooms and concessions. The whole project thus far has cost about \$1.5 million.

Next, there has been no talk of expanding the ice arena. In fact, it may not be possible without major demolition. However, we have done quite a bit of work on the facility. Since original construction we enclosed the south end, built a press/guest box, constructed team rooms, replaced the ice maker in the building, installed new boards and glass, new flooring, new scoreboard, new sound system, acoustically treated the entire building, constructed a concessions stand and renovated the lower lobby.

As for football, Student Government and the VP for Student Affairs and I have been working on collecting data surveying the campus, and structuring some discussions on the topic. It has been a frequently asked question, particularly last Fall. In response, we are working together to arrive at the best information utilizing an inclusive process for discussion and input so as to arrive at a balanced decision that represents the best interests of the university. The Trustees have taken an interest in this topic and will want to be included in the loop.

Thanks for your interesting question.

Date added: 5/06/2004

Q: President Simone,

I was having a discussion with my coworkers today about the whole idea of RIT

going D 1 in hockey and I thought you might like a student athlete's opinion. I think it would be a wonderful thing for RIT to do. Especially with such the career oriented programs at RIT it is extremely important that students also get to experience the joys of being young. We need more community at this school and I think that a better athletic program would be the best place to start. My sister went to Lehigh University which is also a big engineering school and has a similar mentality but one large difference between the two is that they have a good sports program. I read what you said in your white paper on intercollegiate athletics and I agree that ideally we don't want to bring corruption into RIT but speaking realistically what isn't corrupt in our society. RIT is known as a nerd school and if you want it to be more diverse as you keep saying than we need to change that reputation and the best way to do that is with a strong athletic program. You have said repeatedly you want RIT students and alumni to become invested in the future of the institution by building community within the school, so if not with sports what else do you propose?

A: If we go to D-1, given that the rest of our program is at the D-3 level, NCAA rules will not allow us to give athletic scholarships. There are a handful of D 3 schools who have a D-1 hockey program who do give scholarships, but do so under a grandfather clause, since they have been doing it for a significant number of years before the NCAA rule was put in place.

We compete as hard as we can now in Division 3 and usually are ranked in the top 10. Except for this year, we often get to the final 4. However, we have not won the D-3 championship for many years. To go to Division 1 in hockey without scholarships would, I believe, mean that we would lose most of our games and we would lose them by large scores. That would be an embarrassment and certainly would not help school spirit.

I do not believe that athletics is the only way to raise school spirit. The amount of funds required to move one sport to Division 1 standing, independent of the record we might have, could be used to make our other D 3 sports stronger or maybe to introduce additional sports. There are non-athletic activities that we could introduce to enhance school spirit with these funds.

I think you are right to identify a lack of school spirit on the part of some students. We are looking at many ways to change that, athletics - of one sort or another - being one of the strategies.

The major point I want to make is that if you move to D-1 and lose a lot of games, spirit will not increase. It could be embarrassing. You have to be realistic about the possibility of winning at the D-1 level. I have spent almost 40 years at D-1 schools. I helped recruit and knew many of the athletes. I have been in their locker rooms and at the pep talks before and at the games. I have been on the bench when we have played teams like Michigan State and Notre Dame. It is not easy to be successful at Division 1. In my judgment, it could well require more than it's worth. I think RIT's reputation and contributions to student success could be served better in other ways.

Having said all this, I am still willing to look at concrete proposals that address the school spirit issue, with or without athletics.

Cordially yours,

Albert J. Simone

Date added: 5/26/2004

Q: Dr. Simone:

In response to a question I asked earlier about RIT having a pep band, why did our football team and our marching and pep bands just dissolve? I hope in the near future we can bring back the marching band and pep bands and even a varsity football team back to RIT.

A: First, you should know that the administration and the Board of Trustees are currently reviewing the possibilities of a football team at RIT. We are examining all of our athletic options, such as reviewing potential conferences and more. Student Government has been instrumental in this process.

When the team disbanded in the mid-1970s, it had consistent losing records and little fan support. I am told that only a few hundred fans regularly attended home games. The team posted a 6-28 record in their last 4 seasons. President Paul Miller and the Board of Trustees at the time felt the program was becoming too costly and that RIT didn't have the tools to facilitate a dynamic team.

I encourage you to read a white paper I have recently written titled: "Intercollegiate Athletics: Shifting the spotlight from Division I to Division III." It can be found on my Website, www.rit.edu/president, under papers and speeches.

As I have state previously on this site, if we go to D-1, given that the rest of our program is at the D-3 level, NCAA rules will not allow us to give athletic scholarships. There are a handful of D-3 schools who have a D-1 hockey program who do give scholarships, but do so under a grandfather clause, since they have been doing it for a significant number of years before the NCAA rule was put in place.

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Date added: 6/29/2004

Q: Before I ask my question, I'd just like to make two points. Firstly, it was mentioned that Hobart lacrosse is not "fairing" well at the Division 1 level. This, however, is not true because Hobart lacrosse is doing quite well at the Division 1 level, and in fact this year are in the NCAA tournament (of 16 teams). Secondly, one point I think you, or anyone, should think about when considering a move to Division 1 athletics is that in hockey, there is a substantial Division II level of play (and in fact the D2 schools compete in D3 leagues during the year), and there is only one organizational level to D1. This has, in the past, made the jump for many D3 hockey teams to the D1 level much more realistic than for any other sports in the NCAA (but not necessarily more easy). These are just some points that would have to be considered when discussing the issue of moving anything to the Division 1 level.

What happened to RIT's pep/marching band? I know we had one from a previous question on the page, but what happened to it and why didn't it continue to play at other sporting events such as hockey and basketball. It would be amazing if we had one for those athletic games. Thank you for your time and have a great day.

A: First, you are right about Hobart's success in lacrosse. It did take them some time to adjust to Division I and they are certainly not the dominant powerhouse that they were when they ruled Division III.

Indeed, we are currently looking at our conference and other aspects of intercollegiate play.

In terms of the pep/marching band: The bands phased out as students graduated. If students are interested in creating new bands, please contact Mike D'Arcangelo in the Center for Campus Life at 475-2224, or Lou Spiotti in the Center for Human Performance at 475-2615.

CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION

Date added: 2/06/2004

Q: What are some of the proposed uses for RIT's current swimming pool facility, once the new pool opens in the Field House?

A: We held 4 focus groups this winter and obtained hundreds of ideas from students, faculty and staff for this space. We are presently investigating/considering short-term and long-term ideas, but nothing has been decided. Plans are presently being considered, but any major renovation will be contingent on our fund-raising once a long term plan is approved.

Meanwhile, the new Gordon Field House and Activities Center is on schedule to open in May. It will have a competition pool and a recreation pool.

Date added: 3/05/2004

Q: President Simone,

I read a while back that there were plans to build a Biotechnology building. I was wondering if there were still plans to build this, and if so, when would construction start? Thank you for your time Dr. Simone. Have a good day.

A: You are referring to our Center for Biotechnology Education and Training (CBET).

RIT is receiving \$8 million from New York state in support of CBET. The state funding will allow RIT to begin the design process for a 46,000-square-foot facility to house CBET.

We are currently designing the building. If all goes well in these early planning phases, we should begin construction in 2005. The facility will be built just west of the Chester F. Carlson Center for Imaging Science.

CBET will train professionals in the biotech industry and educate the community about biotech issues in the news, such as bioterrorism and its environmental effects. For students, CBET will be a national model for comprehensive academic and career training programs in biotechnology. The center will increase New York state's competitive position in attracting biotechnology and biomanufacturing companies.

RIT has been offering the bachelor's degree in biotechnology since 1983. This new Center will take RIT to the next level as an educational leader in this rapidly growing field.

Date added: 5/03/2004

Q: I was wondering if there were any plans in place to beautify the residential side of campus? After walking around the campus this weekend I noticed a whole different aura between the residential and academic sides of campus. It's kind of an embarrassment to walk along the quarter-mile with its cracked and poorly maintained asphalt. Also, I noticed there were new light fixtures put in on part of the academic side. Are there plans in place to put those lights throughout the campus? One other burning question I have had for awhile has to deal with the whole Coke/ Pepsi thing. Is there a specific reason that Coke and Pepsi cannot be offered here?

A: During the past five years, RIT has invested \$220 million in capital projects. This includes new and improved academic buildings, student residential areas (such as the Greek housing on the west side of campus), recreation space and more.

Other improvements are either planned or under study. The Quarter Mile will be improved from the bridge to the SLC-Health Center canopy this construction season. NTID's plans for a Student Development Center also include a major renovation of the Ellingson-Shumway Quad. We expect within the year that we will have at least a conceptual plan for renovations to the Residence Hall Quads in general, but the actual implementation would await funding.

Of course, all of this requires careful budgeting. The progress we have made in campus improvements the past five years is phenomenal.

Regarding your Pepsi-Coke question: We entered into a 10-year contract with Pepsi in 1999. The contract gives Pepsi exclusive rights to market their many beverages on campus. This revenue generated by RIT is put back into our general fund, which supports many university projects.

Date added: 5/10/2004

Q: I was browsing Facilities Management Service's Construction page, <http://finweb.rit.edu/fms/construction.html>. I noticed that the page says that the proposed CBET building should have started construction in late 2003, and the MicroE extension in 2003. Is the institute still planning to build these buildings? And if so, what is the reason for the delay? Is New York State following through on its end to help fund the construction?

A: First and foremost, New York State is following through on its funding commitments. We don't anticipate any problems in this regard.

The delays have been due to refining the design of the facilities to ensure that they meet the requirements of the programs. This has been a time consuming process.

Here is the latest schedule:

-- CBET (Center for Biotechnology Education and Training): We are looking to break ground in the spring of 2005.

-- The STAR Center/IT Collaboratory: Tentatively, we hope to break ground this fall.

-- We also plan to expand facilities at the Kate Gleason College of Engineering, thanks to a \$6 million gift from the Gleason Foundation. That work is slated to start in Spring of 2005.

As you can see, we are juggling a lot of major projects.

CAMPUS SAFETY

None.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Date added: 4/06/2004

Q: Hey Al, I'm curious as to why as a Gay student, the Gay and Lesbian clubs and organizations get poor funding, and little respect from the college community. Revealing my sexuality was a challenge in itself and thanks to these groups I am

more confident in myself. So why do these clubs not have the support that other clubs and organizations have?

A: Thank you for writing and expressing your concern regarding funding of student organizations that are focused on gay life and issues. There are currently two such organizations recognized by RIT Student Government (Deafglo and the RIT Gay Alliance, or RITGA). One group is dedicated to the deaf community and the second group has a more mainstreamed population. Both can be allocated funding according to the same guidelines and procedures that apply to all other recognized clubs and organizations.

The amounts allocated are based upon three factors: (1) an annual budget centered upon basic operating needs; (2) the amount requested by each group within these parameters; (3) additional co-sponsorship funds for special programs that are requested by the organization through the SG Finance Committee. There is also an expectation for organizations to fundraise at least 10 percent of the total budget submitted. Based upon our records, Deafglo and RITGA have not been denied funding in any significant amount, more or less than any other club, and have actually received most of the funding that they have requested. They have also received significant funding for special events when requested.

I would like to address your additional concerns regarding the level of respect you perceive is granted to the gay and lesbian students on campus. RIT continues to strive for openness and to embrace all underrepresented populations. Particularly, faculty and staff are aware of RIT's Affirmative Action Policy which is committed to an environment that encourages, promotes and protects free inquiry and free expression regardless of age, race, gender or sexual orientation.

Additionally, in 1998 RIT adopted a domestic partnership policy for employees that meets industry standards in its efforts to attract diverse populations to the campus. From a student perspective, RIT Student Government has adopted a special Community Senator who holds a seat on the SG Senate with voting privileges. S/he is voted on by members of the student organizations and represents their issues in a respectful and educational process which is, in turn, a part of the RIT governance system. Finally, should any student encounter incidents of concern, RIT has methods of protecting student' rights through the Student Code of Conduct which includes a strict policy of harassment and anti-discrimination. Please refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook. In that publication, you will find both the Student Code of Conduct and the RIT Policy Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination.

In closing, I appreciate your willingness to write in such a self-affirming manner. It takes courage and fortitude to openly write to a college president with challenging questions, especially when questioning issues of respect.

Date added: 5/17/2004

Q: Why do we not use the local police to patrol our campus? To me this would make more sense than having campus safety and the Monroe county sheriff. This would make the rules easier to enforce correct? By doing so, students are more likely to follow parking and traffic laws and regulations because it can have a direct impact on them not just being a fine. Also, for situations like Colonypoloza, they will be better trained and prepared to handle a situation of that sort than how the situation escalated with the presence of unprepared Campus Safety officers.

A: In essence, Campus Safety is similar to having a town or village agency. Several towns in Monroe County have their own agencies and are also supported by the Monroe County Sheriff's Office.

We consider Campus Safety a public safety service agency and therefore, provide more services than one might find from a police agency. For instance, I know of no agency providing escort, lock-out, jump start, etc., let alone providing transportation to class when their vehicles won't start. Also, no agency will "check the welfare" of a student who has failed to communicate with parents when they contact us looking for us to ensure their son/daughter is safe and call them. Furthermore, our Campus Safety officers are trained to communicate with deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

In addition, the Sheriff's Office, like other agencies, does not have the staffing to provide the services to RIT. This would become a very large expense to local taxpayers.

We view RIT as a learning community and have the appropriate support services to leverage before students develop more serious problems. For instance, alcohol abuse and a party with underage drinking will certainly result in arrests elsewhere. We will move the person forward through our judicial process, which provides sanctions aimed at assisting the student to learn from the situation, as well as provide appropriate substance abuse assessments and counseling. Our systems moves swiftly and the student is not encumbered with legal fees, court time (which is considerably slower and not concerned with exam schedules, etc.) In the Colony incident, it is not unusual for public safety agencies to enjoy a mutual aid response/support from other agencies in times of crises. This is not something new to emergency service providers in Monroe County.

The bottom line: Campus Safety provides a unique service to the RIT community.

Date added: 6/12/2004

Q: I'm a recently graduated alumnus. However, I wonder if there is anything RIT is doing to try to develop better interaction with the Rochester community as a whole. Since I'm working for a Rochester based company, they once invited me to a focus group to try to figure out why lot of Rochester graduates from the various college move out of Rochester. I can understand the economy in Rochester is not doing well. At the least, I notice that people in RIT are fairly clueless about what is going on in Rochester!

Two fronts I could suggest some improvement. First, when there are Rochester wide events, provide transportation for students. Second, it would be nice if dorm students were not as tied up to the debit plan. This kind of teaches the dorm students to stay on campus.

Third, I was once an officer on a RIT based club, and sometimes it really annoys me that the dance floor or mini gym requires SLC access for people coming outside of RIT. Remember, those people are not using the weight room. There are other areas where student affairs could make it a bit easier for clubs to interact with the Rochester community.

A: Thanks for your suggested improvements. I will make sure I pass these along to the appropriate people.

I always like to say that the "R" in RIT means something special. Of course, that means RIT and Rochester have a bond dating back 175 years.

Let me comment on some of your suggestions.

RIT does provide transportation to area movie theaters, the mall and grocery shopping. Most of this is right down the street in the town of Henrietta. Transportation is also provided to downtown Rochester for special events. For example, students recently were transported to see the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra in Eastman Theatre. Student Government also sponsors trips throughout the area.

We also have many clubs and organizations that connect with Rochester. For example, we have the Student Volunteer Center. This campus-based community service clearinghouse helps students; faculty and staff make a difference in their communities.

On your second point regarding the debit plan, I will pass that suggestion along. On your third point, this comes down to scheduling and security. While we want to promote interaction with the greater Rochester community, we must do so in a controlled environment.

FINANCES

Date added: 3/25/2004

Q: Let me begin by saying that the Strategic Planning Process is a fantastic idea. The whole team has a great responsibility, and I feel that for RIT to secure its position as a top-notch educational institution, it is necessary to evaluate our current position and realize that there is still much to be done. Seeing how we compare with world-class institutions such as Harvard University and MIT is a good sign that the new Strategic Planning Process is in the right direction towards making RIT great.

My question is: Why can't RIT accept payment (by payment, I mean payment of our big bill every quarter) with American Express cards? I think both Visa and Mastercard are accepted, so why isn't Amex? Thanks!

A: I turned to the Bursar's Office to help me on this question. Here is their response: The expense to RIT for accepting American Express is significantly more than Visa or MasterCard. Their discount rate simply is not competitive with the other credit cards. RIT routinely (every couple of years) reviews the credit card payment options we offer. As a part of this review, we consider the requests for AMEX acceptance that we receive from students and parents and the discount rates that each credit card vendor charges RIT. We've historically received very few requests for our acceptance of AMEX. The last time RIT proactively contacted American Express to ask for a quote on their rate and revisit the potential to accept their cards was this past October (2003). That process reflected that the discount rate continues to be significantly higher than the rates charged by both Visa and MasterCard.

I hope this helps. Also, thanks for your note on Strategic Planning. To learn more, visit my site at www.rit.edu/president.

Date added: 3/25/2004

Q: Al, in regards to the 4.9 percent tuition raise, where can we find information on the research that "identify many cost saving opportunities", and what set of statistics comparing which "peer institutions" did you use to determine that "costs at RIT will still remain lower"?

A: Thanks for your question. RIT maintains a list of 15 comparable schools, which is updated annually. This list is the published rate for tuition and fees so RIT knows exactly where it stands. National trends are followed through published reports from the Chronicle of Higher Education and the College Board.

The Budget Office at RIT maintains records of cost savings activities. Of course, we also face the reality of increased costs in health care, natural resources, advanced technology and skilled personnel.

Date added: 4/05/2004

Q: To the point, who is in control of the budget on campus and why are they spending hundreds of thousands of dollars a sculpture while we are raising tuition again next year to compensate for others bad choices in allotting money where it is actually needed to better our education.

A: RIT prides itself on its expertise in both the arts and sciences. It is equally committed to enhancing the aesthetic value of the campus through new landscaping, green spaces, and campus artwork.

Having said that, "The Sentinel" by Albert Paley was added to the campus through the generosity of the artist and numerous new friends to RIT. These gifts were made specifically to assist RIT in adding this special sculpture to the campus and would not otherwise have been made. You can be assured that funds were not directed away from our students' academic offerings in order to make this campus addition possible.

Again, the sculpture was made possible by gifts from donors who had not given to RIT in the past.

Date added: 4/06/2004

Q: Hello,

You previously answered the question "Why doesn't Java Wally's accept money from our debit accounts?" ..In the answer you mentioned the tax exemption and so forth which makes it perfectly understandable why Java Wally's can't accept debit under the current system. Which brings me to my question, could the school either offer "gift cards" for Java Wally's, or change the way the debit plan works? The first option is probably the simplest to implement. A student could theoretically go into sols, the corner store, the candy counter, or basically anywhere on campus and buy a "Java Wally's card" which has a specified dollar amounts. This would make it a product (similar to a phone card), and I believe then able to be sold at RIT establishments. If this is not possible, then the other idea is changing the way debit works. This could be done, but adding a sub-account to your debit account for Java Wally's only. What I mean by this is that a student would sign off a certain dollar amount from their debit

(that would factor in taxes) and then they would use that account amount only at Java Wally's.

Please let me know if either of these are possible... the gift card idea would probably be easiest for both RIT and Java's, and I think would fit along with the rules of New York.

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your time,

A: The idea of selling Java Wally's gift cards is a novel approach to the restrictions placed on the debit program by the NYS Department of Taxation.

However, ultimately the university must determine whether the risks of such an action overshadow the benefits. In this case, should the Department of Taxation determine that RIT was simply trying to circumvent the regulations by selling gift cards using debit funds and were to revoke the sales tax exemption of the program, the detriment to current and future students would be extremely costly. Likewise, designating a portion of debit money to a sub-account does not alter the fact that Java Wally's is not part of the tax exempt organization (RIT) as required.

As mentioned previously, students, faculty and staff do have the ability to pay for products at Java Wally's, other campus venues and now at selected off campus vendors using their campus card flex funds. Funds can be easily added to the flex account through payroll deduction or the on-line deposit process using a credit card on Food Service's website.

Date added: 4/17/2004

Q: Dr. Simone:

The price of laundry at RIT is at an all time high. Neighboring colleges such as Case Western Reserve University (75 cents for wash and dry), University of Rochester (2.00 for wash, free drying), Penn State, and many others have laundry costs that are much lower. A study was done by RHA last year showing that the average cost of laundry from the many colleges they surveyed was less than a dollar. Cornell which is at a \$1.50 and RIT at a \$1.25 in the survey were among the ones with the highest. I have talked to many administrators in housing about this issue as well. I found out that RIT signed a 8 year contract with the laundry service contractor. In regards to this matter, I have a few questions about why this contract was signed. Why does our laundry cost so high for inadequate service this company provides? Note: At least once or twice a month one of the dryers was either broken or did not dry clothes fully) And why was an 8 year contract signed without student input? Furthermore, would it ever be possible to offer students the option of unlimited washing and drying

for next fall? I encourage you to look into these issues since the current directors in charge of housing have wished to not figure out a way to improve the laundry service that is offered at RIT.

A: Thanks for the question. RHA's report outlined approximately 30 other schools, but provided no reference to the local market. As recently as December 2003, we checked the local market to compare prices and found the following:

* Clean-o-Rama, 345 Jefferson Road is \$1.25 to wash and average of \$1.25 to dry.

*Henrietta Coin Laundry, 2083 E. Henrietta Rd. is \$1.75 to wash and \$1.25 to dry.

* Mt. Hope Cleaners, 1665 Mt. Hope, is \$1.25 to wash and \$1.50 to dry.

We believe we have a fair price range. There are many variables to consider for laundry service. And other universities have different rent structures.

Our long-term deal has locked us into a price range that we believe is a solid and fair deal.

We have studied the "free" option, but this would lead to higher rent. Also, it would potentially create long lines as people from off campus might turn to use these machines.

Again, there are many variables that we weigh when we make these decisions. I suggest you make an appointment with Howard Ward, director of Housing Operations, 475-6011, if you would like more information.

FOOD

Date added: 2/11/2004

Q: Dear President Simone,

Many of my friends and I agree that we feel like the Meal Option Plans are working in favor of the institution and exploiting Freshman students' money. When I first came to RIT and as a lover of food, I naturally picked 20-meal option plan. But then when I finally realized in the middle of the quarter that I don't use 20-meals at Gracie's and instead prefer other places on and off-campus, I couldn't change it. Why do we have to wait till the beginning of the quarter to change our meal option plan? Is there any reason why we cannot change our plans during the rest of the quarter? It's often easy to forget to change plans in the very beginning of the quarter. I'm a Freshman coming toward spring and I still haven't changed my plans!! I've calculated

that I'm losing \$260 per month. I've heard this has been an ongoing issue for a long time. Why can't we change our plans during the rest of the quarter???

A: For this question, I turned to Jim Bingham, RIT's Director of Food Service. Here is his response:

The Food Service Department offers four meal plans to first year students, the 20 meal plan, 14 plus, 12 plus, and 10 plus. The plus plans include a varying amount of debit money that can be used in all food service facilities and vending machines on campus.

During the Fall Quarter, all students have the first two weeks of the quarter to change their meal plan choice. For the Winter and Spring Quarters they have only the first week. This is allowed because we know that new students may wish to change their meal plan once they have found out their academic schedule and the limitations that it may cause to their meal schedule.

The Food Service Department also has to ensure that the billings for meal plan charges are submitted to the Bursar's Office by a specific time each quarter so that student billing is accurate. This is why we ask that all meal plan changes be made early in the academic quarter.

To address your question more directly, the Food Service Department does make meal plan changes for students throughout the quarter. In these cases, a student, like yourself may have a schedule change, may have a work related issue, a dietary concern, or may just want to change his or her meal plan to conserve on meal and snack break cost.

All you have to do is to contact the main Food Service Office at 475-2228 and ask Charleen McMahon. Charleen is our Access System Administrator for the meal plan program. She has agreed to look at your account and assist you with any options for the remainder of this Winter Quarter and to get you on the plan of your choice for the Spring Quarter.

Date added: 2/11/2004

Q: Al, why is the on-campus food cost so high?

I would think that RIT's bulk buying power, being an educational institution, and food sales to a steady customer base would lower prices. Instead, prices for some manufactured foods to be **higher** than import prices for foreign countries. Most students realize that RIT needs to cover a large operating expense, but does the food price for both served hot foods and packaged foods have to be as high as it is?

A: I've asked Jim Bingham, director of Food Services, to look into this. Here is his response:

RIT Food Service Department does have good food buying power and has made contract commitments to purchase very effectively. Our purchased food expense for the complete department is approximately 32 percent of our income. This compares very well to other colleges and universities that are similar in size to that of RIT.

RIT Food Service is an auxiliary operation on the RIT campus. This means that it has to cover all of its expenses as well as produce a surplus to help offset other Institute expenses. 68 percent of what Food Service's charges goes to cover the cost of labor, benefits, water, lights, fuel, and 54 other expense components that make up their operating budget.

The Food Service Department tries to keep the food prices of their cash operations and stores competitive with similar operations in the Rochester community. When they find major differences, they are encouraged to lower the price. The store prices should be compared to convenience store prices. Often, the food Services store prices are compared to Wegmans' prices. This is an unfair price comparison due to the large purchasing power of the Wegmans chain of stores.

I hope this has answered your question. If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact Jim Bingham, Director of Food Service at jcbfsa@rit.edu

Date added: 2/11/2004

Q: Why doesn't Java Wally's accept money from our debit accounts? Ben & Jerry's does, as well as all other food service locations on campus.

A: I am going to let Jim Fisher, Assistant Vice President for Finance & Administration answer this one. Here is his response:

Java Wally's is not able to accept money from student debit accounts because they are an external vendor not operated by the university.

Under guidelines from New York State, RIT is able to offer the food debit program to our students in which purchases made are exempt from sales tax, thereby saving 8.25 percent per purchase. As a requirement of the program however, New York State Department of Taxation mandates that the purchase must be made from an establishment operated by the exempt organization (RIT).

All of the other Food Service operations on campus, including Ben & Jerry's, are

operated by the university and are therefore qualified to participate in the program.

Students, faculty and staff do have the ability to pay for their purchases at Java Wally's with flex money that can be added to their ID card in several methods. These funds are used in an identical fashion as the debit funds except that they do not qualify for the sales tax exemption. In addition to being able to use flex funds at Java Wally's they may also be used at Campus Connections, on-campus supply areas, vending machines and now at selected off campus vendors.

Date added: 3/24/2004

Q: Al,

Why can 1st year students not enroll in the all-debit meal plan? I find that by only attending Gracie's once or twice a week is causing me to lose a lot of money. I find I'd rather eat some food that has not made me quite sick twice to date (i.e. Crossroads, or cook my own food).

A: Hello. Jim Bingham, director of Food Service at RIT, is going to directly respond to you on this below. Also, be sure to look at other questions and answers related to "food" on this site.

Here is Jim's response:

Thank you for your question. As a 1st year student living in the residence halls, you are required to be on one of RIT's 4 traditional meal plans. These plans include the 20 Meal Plan, Any 14 Plus Plan, Any 12 Plus Plan, and the Any 10 Plus Plan. These plans are designed to allow a 1st year student to choose the plan that fits his or her needs.

A traditional plan is required for two main reasons. First, it allows RIT to manage all its dining room and production space in such a way to be able to accommodate the feeding demands of all residential students, commuting students, and faculty and staff. We would like to allow freshmen students with the All Debit Plan, but realize that we would not be able to provide service for all residential students who would choose to eat lunch on the academic side of campus where we provide a large amount of our service to commuting students, faculty and staff.

The second reason is that of providing a positive environment in Grace Watson Dining Hall that will allow all freshmen students the opportunity to share the Resident Hall living and dining experience during their first year. Student Affairs Division, as well as other administrators on campus agrees that this is a part of the 1st year student experience and that this is a meaningful and positive part of the

residential living experience. It allows for socialization with other students who share this common experience.

If you are having problems with the quality or the selection of the food at Grace Watson, please feel free to discuss your concerns with the Manager, Ms. Janet Olivieri. She can be reached at 475-2049 and I know that she would be willing to assist you in any way she can.

Please let me know if I can be of any further help to you.

Thank you.

James C. Bingham
Director of Food Service
Rochester Institute of Technology
39 Lomb Memorial Drive
Rochester, New York, 14623
Phone: 585-475-2285
Fax: 585-475-5200
Email: jcbfsa@rit.edu

Date added: 6/18/2004

Q: Dr. Simone:

At the end of each academic year, student debit accounts are closed. Where does all of the money go that is left on the accounts? I'm guessing that is used for improvements to RIT.

Also, why can't the debit accounts be like flex accounts, in which the balance rolls over from year-to-year? Thanks!

A: Each quarter, the revenue produced from the billing of the university's meal plans is recorded in the proper revenue accounts. At the end of the fiscal year these funds, along with all other revenue of the institute, result in a surplus to the university.

These funds are then used to support the University's Capital Budget, which allows for new construction, current campus facilities maintenance, and technology upgrades. Without the benefit and prudent management of these funds, the University would have to resort to other means of covering these expenses such as higher tuition and fees, etc.

In addition, the debit portion of the meal plan cannot be carried over to the next fiscal

year or from quarter to quarter due to accounting regulations, which require revenue to be recognized in the period in which it is earned.

Debit is a way of offering our students additional dining flexibility within our meal plans, however the total revenue for a meal plan is earned each quarter whether or not students avail themselves of the opportunity to eat all meals. This is the case whether a student has a 20 meal per week meal plan and eats only 18 times or whether they choose a plan that has a debit option and they do not expend all of the debit money.

There is also a Straight Debit program, which is voluntary money added to a student's debit account above and beyond what is granted as part of one of the meal plans. Straight debit follows the same rules as the debit meal plan in that purchases are exempt from NYS sales tax and the funds cannot be carried over year to year. This is due to state regulations for these kinds of programs.

In contrast, Flex funds are able to be carried over from period to period because these monies are voluntarily deposited into a separate account by the student for use at a number of retail facilities both on-campus and off-campus. Purchases made with flex are subject to New York State sales tax, whereas food purchases made using debit are exempt from this tax.

HOUSING

Date added: 3/22/2004

Q: How come the residence halls don't have swipe card access for building entrances and rooms?

A: RIT recently decided to use exterior door keys instead of card access due to cost. The net result is the same - the doors are locked.

All residence hall students are issued a key which accesses their respective hall and individual room.

Cost will most likely exceed \$100k to install card swipes at several main exterior door locations. So there are no immediate plans to install card readers in the residence halls.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Date added: 3/25/2004

Q: President Simone,

The IMAP mail server is ridiculously slow. I realize ITS is moving us over to Exchange, but they should be doing something to assist the current IMAP users while they migrate the Institute over to the new system. I should be able to check my e-mail during business hours, while the load on the server is higher.

A: Your concern is very valid. As you know, we are working on this, but it will require some patience.

I checked with ITS on this, and here is their response:

Since we implemented the new Directory Service and Microsoft Exchange mail system, we have been migrating users off the old system. Currently we have about 45 percent faculty and staff converted.

We ran a student pilot with the new e-mail system in early February. We sent out communications to students that we were looking for 300 students to participate in the pilot for one month. We actually received about 450 students wanting to participate. The pilot went very well and these users remained on the new e-mail system after the pilot was complete.

We used a web based program that students can easily go to and convert themselves to Exchange. That is open today and they can get to the link via the ITS webpage. Starting on March 22, we are going to be doing mass student conversions starting with 500 students at a time. If that goes well we will keep increasing the student count in order to complete the student migration more quickly.

So, to the question: ITS has focused all our resources and dollars in building and creating a new and better environment for e-mail and web mail. Unfortunately, the same resources that are building this new environment also are still supporting the old system. It comes down to where we feel the appropriate resources need to be spending their time.

Date added: 3/25/2004

Q: I was wondering if RIT could implement some sort of laptop rental program or give students laptops as man other colleges and universities do?

A: You can loan laptops from Wallace Library. Visit:
<http://wally.rit.edu/info/computing.html>

There are 40 machines - about 10 can get checked out of the library for a couple of days and the rest are for 2 hours in the library. All have Microsoft Office, Internet Explorer and e-mail applications.

Meanwhile, a very high percentage of RIT students (probably close to 90% now) come to RIT with some type of computer that they already own. So there is probably only 10 to 15 percent who would be interested in a rental or loaner program.

RIT programs are so diverse that it would be difficult to come up with a laptop configuration to stock that would be suitable for all programs. Each College publishes guidelines and minimum configurations to guide parents and students.

RIT does not charge a technology fee. Many universities who have laptop programs cover the administrative cost of those programs through such a fee.

Date added: 3/25/2004

Q: I live in Building 28, and will for a couple more years. We currently have 10mbps Ethernet, while most other buildings have 100mbps. When is ITS/Resnet going to stop ignoring our building's network deficiency? I came here excited about a school that features excellent technology campus-wide. I understand we already have more such advancements than most schools, however I feel such old equipment as that in my building is an unreasonable set-back. I often find a need to run CAT5 cables to other rooms to assist in backing up files and waiting on important downloads while students in other buildings complete them in a fraction of the time it takes me to do so.

Especially being a fraternity building that will house people such as myself for several years, rather than just one, 10mbps Ethernet can be very frustrating at times.

Hopefully 100mbps can be installed very soon; this handicap is unnecessary. I was told merely a week upon arriving here that our building would even receive this upgrade within the first month or so of school, however others have informed me that Resnet has no immediate intentions of making the change. Please make this happen.

A: I have to rely on the expertise of ITS on this one. Here is the response they sent me: ITS has a "network evergreen" plan. Basically the plan is in place to help fund replacement and renewal, as well as new growth on campus for the data network. The plan also includes cascading of equipment specifically to residential halls and

apartments.

One of the foundations of the plan is to NOT refresh the residential halls and apartments with any NEW network equipment, rather cascade and reuse equipment as we refresh the academic side of the network. So in essence, as we upgrade critical pieces on the academic side we will target residential areas like building 28.

ITS feels the residential areas and apartments have more than adequate bandwidth to each room. The real issue is the fact that peer-to-peer applications that students use regularly are causing most of the slowness problems.

Date added: 4/06/2004

Q: Congratulations on the RIT web site overhaul! The new homepage looks wonderful and is very functional. I am curious though about the efforts to unify the look-and-feel of Institute web publications.

During his time here, Dower Chin (the previous webmaster) spent a lot of time attempting to make it easy for RIT departments to emulate the look and functionality of the main RIT site through a series of templates and headers designed to eventually be used institute-wide. Now, given the already disparate appearances of college/department sites already and use and even those recently overhauled (such as it.rit.edu), it seems that this drive to unify RIT's online image has ended.

Are there still plans to unify the web interface among RIT's colleges and departments in order to create a more cohesive online presence?

A: Thanks for your comments regarding the new RIT web site design. Staff in University Publications are currently working on several template headers that will be made available to web developers on campus. These headers will allow departments who wish to "tie in" to the new design to do so.

Please note, there is not a mandate for departments to create a matching look. Too much consistency (especially among the academic areas) would not help reflect the diversity and uniqueness of programs available at RIT. Departments updating their sites should, however, follow the guidelines set forth in the RIT Web Standards document. You may access a copy of that document at http://www.rit.edu/~962www/graphic_standards.html.

Thanks again for your input.

Date added: 4/22/2004

Q: Dear Al,

I was browsing the internet, and found this article:

<http://www.intel.com/products/mobiletechnology/unwiredcolleges.htm>

Why is RIT in 98th place? Maybe we're not at 100 or lower, but the fact that liberal arts schools, like Geneseo, place higher than us, is pretty sad. This would explain why I have found it tough to get a good Wi-Fi signal in some buildings where I should be able to get one easily and quickly.

A: Thanks for bringing this to our attention.

We are not clear on where they obtained the data. To our knowledge, no one at RIT was directly interviewed. We also don't know the definition of "hotspots".

The philosophy that RIT used when first providing wireless access was to focus on the social areas around campus.... areas where students congregate between classes to socialize and study together. This was in part due to the fact that several new social areas were being constructed or renovated at the time. So, rather than hard wire those areas, wireless connectivity was provided.

We are now focusing our attention on other areas on campus. ITS has been relying on the Colleges and Divisions to identify locations where wireless connectivity would be beneficial. For example, the Registrar's Office has identified classrooms that would benefit from wireless availability.

We recommend that you identify potential wireless areas (or areas where the signal is not sufficient) and pass that information along to our Chief Information Officer, Diane Barbour. She can be reached at 475-2233 or dhbcio@rit.edu

She will use the information as input to the wireless plan as we roll out new areas.

Date added: 4/30/2004

Q: Dear Dr. Simone,

In relation to the question about wireless internet access, why have the dorms never been wired (unwired?) for this? It would be really nice to use my laptop around my floor, especially since as I understand it, operating our own wireless hubs is forbidden

by ResNet, leaving us no alternative. The access points in rooms such as 1250, A055, and Sol Activity do not reach residents of the dorms. This would be a really nice addition.

A: I will pass your note along to Chief Information Officer Diane Barbour.

As stated previously, the philosophy that RIT used when first providing wireless access was to focus on the social areas around campus.... areas where students congregate between classes to socialize and study together. We are now focusing our attention on other areas on campus. ITS has been relying on the Colleges and Divisions to identify locations where wireless connectivity would be beneficial.

I will pass your information along to Diane Barbour. She can also be reached at 475-2233 or dhbcio@rit.edu

She will use the information as input to the wireless plan as we roll out new areas.

Date added: 6/08/2004

Q: Al, Everyone on campus knows that our student ID numbers are actually our social security numbers. Our "ID numbers" are required when taking exams and dealing with the bursar/registrar, among other things, and many students are concerned with the alarming increase of identity theft cases in our nation.

I keep hearing that the school "is working on it" but I think that most of the students would prefer to hear what the efforts and changes that the school is making to fix this problem actually are. President Simone, can you tell us what the school's progress is so far on switching from using our social security numbers? Also, when can we expect the full change to take place?

A: I turned to Chief Information Officer Diane Barbour to help answer this question. Here is what I found out:

RIT understands the issues of the growing rate of identity theft in this country. Identity theft is accomplished in many ways and SSN (Social Security Number) is one of the items thieves may try to compromise.

Over the past year RIT, has taken several steps toward eliminating the SSN as an Identifier on campus. Information & Technology Services (ITS), in partnership with the Registrar, is leading a campus-wide task force that will ultimately replace the SSN as the student identifier. As you can imagine, the task of modifying all of the campus computer systems is a very large and complex assignment.

Recognizing the effort and time required to make these changes, RIT has been making process changes in the interim to further reduce the exposure of students SSN. For example, a large number of Institute forms have been updated to remove SSN. Computer screens that include SSN have been masked to only show the last four digits of the number. RIT computer accounts were changed a year and a half ago, to use a random 4-digit number in place of the SSN.

One of the major tasks in replacing SSN is the re-issue of RIT Identity cards. A replacement card system is being evaluated now as part of the planning for implementation of a new identifier. An implementation plan is being developed over the summer. This will be presented to Administrative Council in the fall. Following that, an implementation schedule will be established and communicated to the RIT community.

Questions about the task force or suggestions for interim steps can be directed to Dave Hostetter 475-5685 (dwhits@rit.edu).

NTID ISSUES

None.

PARKING / TRANSPORTATION

None.

RIT FACILITIES

Date added: 1/29/2004

Q: Many departments and organizations on campus work to promote healthy living. Yet, in the dorms something as simple as soap is not provided for student use. Soap may not seem to be a crucial element to healthy living, but it is a very effective way to prevent the spread of diseases, especially during the flu season. In areas such as the dorms, with the sharing of a bathroom among many, the spreading of such illnesses is more likely. So this is one of many things I have come to wonder in my four years of being a student (3 of which were lived in the dorms), why RIT does not install soap dispensers in the dorms to promote something as simple as hand washing?

A: The key word here is vandalism. When the residential halls were first constructed, they did have soap dispensers. But unfortunately, they were continuously vandalized. There is also the cost of constant maintenance and cleanup.

We do provide soap dispensers in the public, first-floor bathrooms in the residential halls. Most people prefer their own personal hygiene products anyway in the living areas. Again, this really boils down to vandalism.

Howard Ward, director of housing operations, would provide soap to you if this is an affordability issue. He can be reached at 475-6011 or hxwbsr@rit.edu

Date added: 2/09/2004

Q: Why must RIT always plow at 2am out side my window? Do students not deserve a little respect and a few hours of sleep with out that noisy beeping that is loader than my alarm clock. And why doesn't RIT plow or salt between 9 pm and 10 pm when everyone is awake and trying to make it down the quarter mile though the snow and ice after classes?

A: I checked with our folks in Facilities Management Services (FMS). Here is what they had to say:

FMS is sorry you were disturbed from your sleep by snow removal equipment. We wish the process for removing snow would be more of an exact science, but each snowfall is different depending upon when it starts, how much snow the storm delivers, the wind velocity and direction, and the temperature.

We realize students in the residence halls need to get their rest to perform well in the classroom, and for that reason we try our best to avoid plowing immediately adjacent to the halls late at night and in the early morning whenever possible. (In the event of an overnight snow, however, we must start plowing no later than 4:00 AM in order to cover the campus by 8:00 AM.) There has been a couple of times this winter that snow removal activity was necessary near the halls (primarily in adjacent parking lots)to remove slushy snow before it froze into an ocean of uneven ice.

In reference to the snow removal along the Quarter Mile, again factors such as the persistence of snow fall, temperature and student traffic can make it very difficult to keep this walkway clear of snow. The Quarter Mile, as you know, is heavily traveled making it extremely difficult to plow and salt for a large portion of the class day without risking injury to pedestrians. Although traffic does decrease after 6:00PM, traffic can still be significant through the end of night classes at 10:00 PM, as you pointed out.

January presented 19 straight days with measurable snow with temperatures routinely in the single numbers and below 0 degrees, making it a significant challenge for our snow removal staff. Although we are staffed 24 hours a day, night and early morning shifts are staffed much more lightly than in the daytime.

FMS is committed to keeping the campus in the best condition possible both summer and winter. In the future, if you have concerns about snow or ice conditions, don't hesitate to call the FMS Operations Center at 5-6771 during the normal work day or Campus Safety at 5-2856 after 5:00 PM and on weekends.

Date added: 2/12/2004

Q: As it stands, the SAU is a mix-and-match of student and academic/institute-related offices. Is there any plan in the works that would convert the building back to a fully student-oriented facility in the near future?

A: To be honest, we believe that all the offices/space in the SAU is student oriented.

Could there be more space for student clubs and organizations? We are looking at this now. When the new Gordon Field House and Activities Center opens in May, the pool in the SAU will open up more space.

We held 4 focus groups this winter and obtained hundreds of ideas from students, faculty and staff for this space. We are presently investigating/considering short-term and long-term ideas, but nothing has been decided.

What kind of student space would you like to see? Please let us know and we will consider your idea.

Date added: 5/13/2004

Q: Dr. Simone:

Why does RIT have such a huge problem with drainage? When it rains at RIT, it floods on the side walks and other areas. And after the rain, huge puddles of rain remain on the walkways. I never see any drains on the quarter mile or near the residence halls. What actions has RIT taken to ensure that rain drain off is handled so that large puddles do not remain after it has rained?

A: Interesting question. I had to seek input from Facilities Management Services on this.

Although most of our buildings - the walkways between buildings, and our roads and parking lots - are somewhat elevated, a portion of RIT's campus is situated in what is known as the 100-year flood plain, which is lowland.

Actually there are many drains around buildings, in parking lots etc., but since storm water management is primarily dependent on gravity, and we are predominantly low, we sometimes do get puddles. Each time an area of campus is renovated, we attempt to address any known problems. For example, when the Infinity Quad was renovated 10 additional drains were installed. This summer when D lot is enlarged additional drains will be added.

If a particular problem area exists, please do notify the FMS staff at fms@rit.edu.

RIT HISTORY

Date added: 4/17/2004

Q: I was browsing the site for the 175th anniversary, <http://www.rit.edu/175>. It was fascinating to see pictures of the campus during its construction. It is not often that we imagine the buildings we walk into everyday as steel frames waiting to be enclosed with insulation and brick. I noticed a building behind the college of engineering in one of the pictures of the model. Any idea of what that building was supposed to be, and why it was never built?

A: I am glad you found the 175th Anniversary Web site at www.rit.edu/175.

We have done a bit of digging and found a document that shows the building as a proposed Health Science building.

Our library has a document (a notebook actually) that outlines the history of the design of the campus. You might enjoy looking it over.

For more information, contact:

Becky Simmons
RIT Archivist
Wallace Library
475-2557

Date added: 5/24/2004

Q: Dr. Simone:

A question I have is did RIT ever have a marching band or pep band? And, do we even have a school fight song?

A: Yes, RIT had a marching band and pep band, dating back to the 1930s. The pep band was active up until the mid-1980s.

RIT's "Alma Mater" is often sung throughout the year, such as during new student convocation and graduation ceremonies.

In 1986, we had a competition for a new "spirit song." Here are some of the lyrics:

"Our spirit shows
Everyone knows
We're from RIT

Endure we will
Reach higher still
On to victory

Tigers, Tigers, raise your mighty roar.
Stronger, faster, higher watch us soar."

This song has not been used recently, but I will pass this along to our folks in athletics and student affairs to see what they think.

RIT MYTHS

Date added: 2/02/2004

Q: What's on the 8th floor of the Eastman building?

A: There is indeed an 8th floor comprised of a small file storage area and mechanical space. The 8th floor has a top exit of emergency stairs and elevator equipment, too.

Date added: 2/09/2004

Q: Is there, or has there ever been, a "quarter-mile tunnel" that connected all or part of the residential side of campus to any other part of campus along the quarter-mile?

A: Unfortunately, much to the chagrin of everyone who walks the Quarter Mile on a cold and snowy winter day, there is not now, nor has there ever been, a tunnel under the walkway. The tunnel myth has persisted since the Henrietta campus opened in 1968.

Fact: The actual length of the Quarter Mile from the Sundial to the Infinity Quad is a little greater than one-third of a mile.

Other enduring myths:

- The architectural designed was originally conceived for a southern climate but was pulled off the shelf and used for RIT.

Fact: The campus was designed by five nationally-recognized architectural firms from New York City, Boston, Chicago, Cambridge, MA. and Hamden, CT. working as a team. Their efforts won a number of architectural awards.

Why the choice of brick for construction? RIT's masonry construction endures Rochester's weather and requires, relatively, low maintenance.

Date added: 2/10/2004

Q: Hi AI! Why doesn't the 8th floor of the Eastman Building have windows? And also, why are there keycard scanners to access parts of the other floors? Thanks!

A: The 8th floor is primarily for mechanical and storage space. Such areas in most buildings don't have windows.

On the second question, card access is employed in many locations on campus -- including parts of Eastman -- because of ease of use especially when many people work evenings and weekends.

STUDENT LIFE

None.

TOP QUESTIONS

Date added: 2/10/2004

Q: Is RIT planning or open to any type of expansion towards international education, in particular, Asia or India, where it's possible for foreign students to access RIT research oriented databases, in collaboration with good educational institutions in native countries, which could be made commercially viable?

A: Another timely question, as we are discussing this topic in our Strategic Planning.

We expect RIT to continue to be aggressive in global dimensions especially given the proposed vision that has been articulated in the Strategic Planning process. That being said, it is important to note that the international enrollment in Rochester has increased from slightly over 600 at the time of the last strategic plan, to in excess of 1,300 now. India has been a major focus over the past 10 years and is far and above any other foreign country, the one with the greatest number of students enrolled at RIT, both undergraduate and graduate.

China is a top five performer overall with most of the Chinese students enrolled in RIT's graduate programs.

Needless to say, any strategy developed for furthering the presence of international students on this campus or considering increased presence elsewhere must consider very carefully India and China. Whether or not those future plans will lead to a significant presence of RIT programs being delivered in those countries has not been decided.

In Strategic Planning, the Global Dimensions Task Force is looking at its charge in three sub-committees. One sub-committee is addressing the presence of international students on the campus; the second is addressing the criteria used to determine where we will increase our presence abroad; and the third is addressing the globalization of the experience for students on this campus through programs such as: study abroad, student and faculty exchange, curriculum, etc.

If you have recommendations or insights you would like to share, we would welcome it and ensure that the input is forwarded to Wiley McKinzie and Manny Contomanolis, co-chairs of the Global Dimensions Task Force. Feel free to e-mail this site with any feedback.

Date added: 2/25/2004

Q: Another suggestion -- how about an "Art Walk" similar to the one sponsored by the artists in the Rochester area. Art students, alumni, faculty could design benches, lamp posts, other things that could be displayed around the campus.

A: Another great idea. I will pass your suggestion along. We also have a few things already in place.

For example, students in the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences have designed and built some of the benches you see on campus. More are coming.

And for the 175th anniversary, the Cary Graphic Arts Press is publishing a book about art on campus. The book will essentially be a tour guide showcasing our art on campus.

I like to talk about the blend of technology and art at RIT. It is what makes this campus special.

I will pass your idea along.

Date added: 3/03/2004

Q: Al, I'll be blunt. Why does RIT ignore its students while all the while asking questions about low student morale and retention?

Many times, both here and through other lines of communication, students have answered RIT's toughest questions on how to make RIT a better place. Soap in the dorm bathrooms, lower food prices, cancellations of classes on days of *extreme* weather, etc. I won't repeat the long list here, just look at previous questions to the Ask President Simone website.

RIT has justified its actions by one way or another.

THE STUDENTS HAVE SPOKEN. Justifying your actions doesn't SOLVE them, no matter how "reasonable" these justifications are! I've heard faculty and administration wonder just why RIT students in particular don't want to participate in activities unless there is a clear-cut personal gain or profit.

With RIT's policy supported attitude of charging a hefty cost for everything on campus from classes to food while providing minimal amenities such as soap, it is truly a wonder why students aren't just outright apathetic.

It's the "small things" that make something truly great. Small things can attract more students to RIT and it is the small things that can turn bright students to other schools.

RIT is an excellent school, in the sense of providing a means to an end of getting a job. When will RIT realize that the experience sometimes is more important than the end?

A: Thanks for your direct memo of February 17. I appreciate your candor.

A long answer to your question is to ask you to review my "Category-of-One University" paper which you can find at the following link:
http://www.rit.edu/~020www/docs/Category_of_One.pdf.

In general, it deals directly with the theme and tenor of your memo. As you can see, I agree with your main thesis fully.

Having said that, what do we do about the specifics? For example, what about soap in the bathrooms, lower food prices, and so on? These questions have appeared on the Website and we have answered them by explaining/justifying what we do. We haven't changed anything - and that is your point.

I am going to follow up with Vice President Jim Watters on your memo and we will use your insightful comments to fashion a breakthrough.

Again, thanks for your input.

Cordially yours,

Albert J. Simone
President

Date added: 3/17/2004

Q: What do you think of the new RIT homepage?

A: I think it is fabulous, thanks for asking.

One of our most important goals was to improve site navigation. The new home page offers more to the public and site "usability" has improved. I also believe the site enhances our image as a career oriented university.

We also must recognize that the RIT Web site must continue changing to reflect the latest Web technology and the exciting changes that take place here every day. So site

improvement is a never-ending process for RIT.

I hope you like the site. Feel free to send feedback directly to our Web folks. There is a feedback link at the bottom of the site.

Date added: 5/24/2004

Q: I attended the forum, and was not very impressed with the professionalism of the Sheriff of Monroe County, Patrick O'Flynn. I have spoken with many of my RIT friends, many of whom deplore the actions of the few students who engaged in criminal conduct, and the consensus is that the sheriff was very one-sided. When students expressed their grievances, especially when wrongdoing on part of the deputies was alleged, the sheriff seemed to respond very dismissively (e.g. he would often talk down to the forum participants, or dismissively laugh at the comments they made.) I would expect any alleged mistreatment of a member of our community to be considered with the utmost seriousness. While it is understandable that the sheriff, for legal reasons, could not immediately confirm any of the allegations, his lack of sensitivity at the podium is inconsistent with the level of seriousness the RIT community expects from those who are in charge of handling incidents like this.

On a second note, I do not see anything wrong with 300 students congregating outside to socialize. This type of community-spirit should be channeled and promoted in a healthy way; however, it seems as though the institute wishes to stifle it. While I do not condone the mistreatment of campus safety or the sheriff deputies, it seems plausible that the rest of the students who were there were unfairly characterized as being unruly. The student who was responsible for throwing the beer bottle at the campus safety officer should have been arrested on spot. It seems a bit drastic to break up the crowd just because a few students are misbehaving. After all, many Colony residents are legally allowed to drink. It seems as though many students did not disperse because they did not feel as though they were doing anything wrong.

Many students work hard each week from Monday to Friday. Therefore, it seems natural for them to want socialize *every* weekend. This incident should serve as a reminder that the administration has some serious work to do in improving the social environment here. What makes a community really great is its people coming together, not necessarily the construction of one 100,000 square foot building after another. In many ways, I feel like I am at McUniversity (pardon the pun). Most new things this institution offers seems so commercialized and inorganic (e.g. the crossroads). An exception to this would be Java Wally's, which should be considered a model for future businesses built here on campus, including the proposed College Town. What does RIT have in store for improving the culture and social environment here at RIT? What changes can RIT make so that they can ensure that when 300 students want to socialize on a Saturday evening, there is an outlet for them?

A: Thank you for your recent letter regarding Colony Manor and Sheriff O'Flynn's visit to RIT. I believe we had a useful dialogue, lasting nearly three hours.

To reiterate what I have said publicly, we are immensely thankful that no one was seriously hurt. The safety and well being of our student body is of the utmost concern.

Some RIT students have described excessive behavior on the part of some of the deputies. Sheriff O'Flynn has agreed to look into this. Mary-Beth Cooper, vice president of student affairs, will take reports from students and submit them to the Sheriff's Office. I believe the Sheriff acted very professionally at the forum and was gracious to stay as long as he did. I trust that he will continue to review the facts of this case.

We are still conducting our own internal investigation and reviewing the facts. Due process is key. Nevertheless, I do know that our Campus Safety officers feared for their safety. Students had ample opportunity to disperse as this incident went on for more than two hours. At some point in the night, I would have expected students to make a clear assessment of the situation and leave a scene that was obviously escalating with police presence. Certainly, appropriate student behavior could have prevented the situation from escalating to the point that it did. Thus, I stand firm that the crowd's behavior dictated the response from the Sheriff's Office.

I am dismayed that you have such ill feelings about social life at RIT. In my tenure at RIT, we have tried to address this by vastly improving campus facilities. RIT has more than 130 clubs and we are about to open the Gordon Field House and Activities Center. But as you suggest, we still must continue to examine the appropriate student social outlets on campus. We are now examining ways to improve late-night student programming.

Experience over more than ten years has led us to the policy of no large groups gathering in public places on campus with alcohol present, unless it is an RIT sanctioned event in which RIT controls the alcohol. Students should and are allowed to gather as they wish for non-sanctioned alcohol-free events. If "school spirit" is viewed by some students as underage drinking and alcohol intoxication, those students will have to learn new behavior.

I do believe that students should work hard and play hard. But you have to play by the rules. I want all RIT students to look back at their days here, after graduation, as some of the best experiences of their lives. As I stated in my original memo to the student body: RIT has so much to be proud of and we have the momentum to be one of the nation's great universities. Our students are leading the way in this effort.

Thanks for your note and have a great summer.

Respectfully yours,
Albert J. Simone

Date added: 6/29/2004

Q: With the recent talks of elevating athletics to Division 1 in mind, I thought I'd comment. I am a current member of a varsity team here and I feel that the issue of D3 vs. D1 athletics isn't the problem. I do think that it'd be an extraordinary experience to have Division 1 athletics here but I also don't think that is necessary (nor do I think that RIT's problems are caused by a lack of D1 athletics). I think that the school would support athletics at any level.

RIT's an amazing school and I am proud to be a student here. However, I don't necessarily feel as much pride as I think I should. There is a lack of school pride here, and I know you know this. However, on a recent visit to the Pennsylvania State University I saw the differences between RIT and a school like PSU. I know that we're very different universities, but it put things into perspective. Most noticeably I noticed their football program and their school spirit. For example, their spring "Blue-White" intra-squad scrimmage attracted 60,000 spectators and got their school spirit going (the weekend I visited). It showed me we lack something here in the fall to bring the school together.

When students arrive here as freshman, they have orientation and are thrown directly into their rigorous schedules. There are no substantial school gatherings in the fall and therefore many students don't feel any sense of community. By the winter when hockey and basketball are competing there is a good population of students that have either left to go to another school or have migrated to their rooms for the winter. It seems the fall quarter instills into many that RIT is a good academically, but isn't a college in the sense of community in many student's minds. Unfortunately some feel that going to RIT is a sacrifice: they are gaining a great education, but ignoring the college experience that RIT in many ways lacks. I don't wish to tear down the fans of hockey, or any RIT sport, because they're diehard and I'm thankful for their enthusiasm, but I feel that the enthusiasm we do have isn't representative of the school's size.

If we had football there would at least be an option for students to join together and cheer for a team in the fall. We don't have a marching band, and I don't even know if we have an Alma-Ata (I'm assuming we do, but I've never heard it). If we had something to join the RIT community together in the fall, then the students would look forward to the winter quarter, and later on. Of course this isn't limited to making a football team, but, like it or not, a football team is something that people identify with college in the fall. This would help RIT students feel they belong to something

more than just a good school. A marching band, or pep band, the singing of the RIT Alma-Ata at events and the new field house would further help.

I love being a student here and feel better everyday looking at improving campus. I hope other students speak up because this is one of the most key issues concerning retention, and I don't wish to limit suggestions just to instituting a football team. Something needs to be done however in the fall (whatever it may be) to bring RIT together as a school. People aren't leaving RIT because it's a bad school; they're leaving because they are not having fun and feel that there is a general lack of community here. We are going in the right direction though. Hopefully you take these thoughts into consideration. Have a good day.

A: Thanks for your comments and suggestions.

This subject is near and dear to me. Under the leadership of Mary-Beth Cooper, Vice President of Student Affairs, we are reviewing ways to improve spirit-building activities.

For example, we will examine the possibilities of holding social activities later at night. After all, that's when many students are active.

You are absolutely correct that sports aren't the only answer. It has to be a combination of things. In terms of sports, however, I might add that we are currently looking at our conferences and other aspects of intercollegiate play.

We are also examining the concept of "learning communities." Here, relationships are created in the classroom, which we believe will help retention.

Meanwhile, we hope to make good use of the new Gordon Field House and Activities Center, which opens later this summer.

We are also making progress on "College Town," an area in the northeast quadrant of campus that we plan to develop with a mix of retail, entertainment and housing.

These are just a few of the things we are working on to improve spirit on the RIT campus. We have plenty of work to do.

Please continue to share ideas and suggestions with me and other leaders on campus.