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ACADEMICS

Date added: 1/16/2005

Q: Dear Dr. Simone:

Since students can now see what courses will be offered in quarters about a year ahead (I am very thankful for this by the way), is there any way we can know our exam schedule earlier? This fall I didn't know when I could fly home at my earliest convenience until the fourth or fifth week into the quarter. My flight ticket home? More than \$1,100, an amount some people told me I could have used to go to Australia! I realize I could have scheduled my flight out on Nov. 21, when the break officially begins, but at the same time, it gets lonely staying at school those extra exam-less days, and students want to get home to see family. I think by letting us know earlier, students can save money and will feel that RIT is doing everything they can to encourage students to be with family, which I think will also encourage student retention.

A: This is a very timely question. Several significant reforms are being undertaken within the Registrar's Office, including having final exam schedules posted before the beginning of the quarter.

There are, however, some more pressing needs to be undertaken first, so it may be a couple more quarters before this occurs.

Students can, of course, ask the professor at the beginning of the quarter what activity for that course will occur during the eleventh week. But if it is to be an exam, you won't know the day or time until the exam schedule is produced. We will continue to look into your suggestion. Thanks for bringing this up.

Date added: 2/02/2005

Q: Hello President Simone,

I don't know if this question has been asked already but I'm curious. Are students still required to take a liberal arts concentration or minor now that there are concentrations and minors available in other colleges? For instance as a New Media major I'd like to minor in Marketing in the College of Business. Why can't that be my required concentration/minor altogether? Students will still be able to take upper-level classes outside of their major and be satisfied with the results. I personally am not interested in minoring or concentrating in any of the available liberal arts categories. Thanks for your time.

A: The new Liberal Arts curriculum with 36 required credits includes a three course (12 credit) Concentration in Liberal Arts. If the student wishes to use eight other General Education credits (two courses) in Liberal Arts, then the concentration can become a minor.

In addition to the Liberal Arts concentration, the student should easily be able to take a minor in the College of Business as well under the provisions of the new distribution requirements that will go into effect for all degree programs next Fall.

I hope this helps and make sure you address this with your advisor.

Date added: 2/16/2005

Q: I am a graduate student at RIT and have finally come to terms that I need to use the library facilities.

To keep my question short, why doesn't RIT have a larger library? In my area of research, RIT has very little resources beyond ILL. I am not putting down ILL, it works great and almost always gets what I need. What does bother me is that books that I need are often found at schools much smaller than RIT and really don't have a reason to even own the book. Is the policy here at RIT that we are just going to take advantage of the ILL system and save money on actually paying for the books and use that money instead for paying for the rental of the books?

It seems to me, that if the school wants to be in a 'category of one'. Then, we should also have a library that is beyond comparison to small public schools.

A: Last year, we spent \$274,475 on monographs for the library. With these dollars we were able to purchase 8,087 new books. Achieving this required aggressive negotiations with vendors for discounts, particularly considering that the average cost of books ranges from \$44.50 (Liberal Arts) to \$165.23 (Packaging Science).

Over the past decade, our book budget has been supplemented with the influx of temporary dollars granted to purchase library materials for some newly approved RIT programs. In order to provide other books that RIT students require, we have been relying on improving our ILL services, through which we were able to borrow 2,295 books last year.

Additionally, we are partnering with other schools as founding members of the Connect New York (CNY) consortia. Connect NY gives us access to four million titles from the combined catalog of schools such as Colgate, RPI, Union and Vassar.

These books can be received here within 48 hours. It is also fair to note, that user preference has shifted over the years from the exclusive use of books and print serials to the inclusion of more costly electronic resources.

The size of the current library building and the research depth of our collection is attributable to the fact that we are primarily an undergraduate library rather than a research library. However, growth in the scope of our book, serial or database collections is tied to our allocated budget. As RIT is changing, we are working to create new help services that will better assist graduate students and faculty, as well as improving on the services we currently offer to undergraduates. Financial limitations are a real obstacle, but the library staff puts a sustained effort into looking for ways to effectively manage any restrictions.

Date added: 2/17/2005

Q: What is RIT's policy regarding students missing class due to a religious holiday that falls within an academic term (Good Friday, Yom Kippur)? Is it up to each professor, or is there an Institute-wide policy?

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 holidays.

The Institute-wide policy states: "It is the student's responsibility to make individual arrangements in advance of missing class due to personal obligations such as religious holidays, job interviews, athletic contests, etc..., in order that he/she may meet his/her obligations without penalty for missing class."

Date added: 2/23/2005

Q: Hi, I am a 4th year CS student here at RIT. I have some questions regarding the strategic plans...

1: yes we are increasing the enrollment and student body in size. I dont see why that is important...many great and famous university stay small so they keep the the students " qualified " instead of " quantified ", many doesn't mean better, quality is what it counts. So I don't see any point in the growing plan.

2: Is RIT gonna be happy with just "more selective "on the applicants? What about most selective"??

3: RIT currently has few to none PhD offered. More PhD means higher intellectual standing to most people. And that also means more research would be done. more research may produce some break-thru research, which will make RIT's name more well known in the world, why aren't we doing that?

3: While being career focused is a good thing, but if we focus more on academic programs, and researches, that's also going to help students finding great careers, I'm sure students from MIT or Harvard find awesome jobs even though those school isn't " career focused ", making the school " career focused " just sounds like making this university into a job training school, that doesn't sound very deep.

4: usually big schools are division 1 schools, why are we not? I've heard people from SG and GU saying that the school thinks recruiting athletes is going to lower the school's admission standard...if that's the case, is all division 1 school bad schools? Georgia Tech is division 1 and their engineering is ranked top 10 in the US. Where is RIT?? We're not even ranked nationally; we're only compared to the regional schools such as SUNY in lots of sources. Duke is d1, U of North Carolina is d1, Stanford obviously is GREAT and they're d1, what we need is a plan, not excuses. Plus, making the school go d1 will help make the school more well known, therefore more perspective student may then apply, it is a positive thing. Hockey going d1 is a great start; hopefully the rest of the sports will do so as well.

5: If we focus on trying to get the school ranked higher nationally, I believe that will help the school's image much better. and for that we need a lot more PhD programs which implies higher intellectual standing.

above are my suggestions and questions, please look into them I wish RIT the best because I am part of it, and hopefully my voice will be heard, thank you so much.

A: Thanks for your interest in RIT's new Strategic Plan 2005-2015. Others may view the plan at www.rit.edu/president.

You asked a 5-part question, so let's address one at a time:

1) Quality does count and academically RIT's student body today is the strongest in history. We adopted a growth plan in 2001 that calls for enrollment to cap around 17,000 by the end of the decade. Today, we have more than 15,300 full- and part-time undergraduate and graduate students. Enrolled students come from all 50 states and more than 90 countries. We have increased enrollment about 25 percent since 1994. This year's freshmen class had a combined SAT score of 1220, a record high, while the national average was 1026. Enrollment has grown for 10 consecutive years, and the quality of our students has improved each year. RIT has also become more diverse.

2) I think it is simply semantics in this question. RIT continues to be a very selective university, as stated above. In some programs, such as film and animation, the mean SAT score is well above 1300.

3) RIT currently offers two Ph. D. programs: Imaging Science and Microsystems. Both are considered to be the first of their kinds in the nation. We are now in the process of creating a third Ph.D. program in computing and information sciences in the Golisano College. Research and scholarship are important ingredients to student success at RIT. Please review my white paper "Teaching, Scholarship and Service at RIT: Expectations and Enablers" It can be found on my Website, www.rit.edu/president.

4) RIT is not MIT or Harvard, nor do we want to be. The focus of the Strategic Plan is that we become a "Category of One University." This creates a distinctive category and RIT will strive to become the leader in this class. Five strategic dimensions are integrated throughout the plan: career focus, student success, scholarship, global society and community. The plan lists 19 attributes that are key to RIT's success. Among these are cooperative education, entrepreneurship, global orientation, diversity and service to society. The new mission statement says RIT will provide technology-based educational programs for personal and professional development. Teaching, learning, scholarship, leadership development and student success are central enterprises, while RIT rigorously pursues new and emerging career areas. RIT believes in "experiential learning" where students can apply their knowledge to real-world issues. Finally, keep in mind that at many of the large research universities, teacher assistants working on graduate degrees, not professors, teach the undergraduates. RIT students have an opportunity to work side-by-side with professors, including on research projects.

5) I still have many concerns about what is happening in Division I sports in the NCAA. Moving the hockey team to the Atlantic Hockey Association is primarily about academics. The schools in Atlantic Hockey share our philosophies and values.

We pride ourselves on having student-athletes who put academics first, and so do the schools in Atlantic Hockey. The top priority for our athletic program is the academic success of our students. We have 24 sports at RIT involving nearly 500 student-athletes. They have a combined grade point average of 3.17, slightly higher than the overall student body. This is why I felt comfortable moving to Division I in this sport. If we can find the right league, we may do the same for women's hockey.

Date added: 2/23/2005

Q: FYE would be a great class if it was one day long.

For the love of God and all that is holy, please make it so.

A: The original purpose, intent, and rationale for establishing FYE - factors which remain today - are the following:

-- We want to do everything possible for students who are admitted to RIT to succeed.

-- Success means they graduate from RIT.

-- If they graduate, we want them to feel good about the experience.

- Students cannot succeed - i.e., graduate and feel good about it - if they withdraw from RIT because of academic, personal, financial, or other reasons that are within our control to affect.
 - Student retention as a significant issue came to the forefront after our introduction of FYE as an attempt to identify students who needed help to prevent them from hurting themselves.
 - The course content for FYE offers information, strategies, and perspectives which help students prepare for success at RIT both within and outside of the classroom that are aside from specific content in particular disciplines.
 - For example, time management and study habits are critical for success.
 - Discussions of healthy lifestyles are important. We have only to read the newspaper every day to hear about children, young adults, and senior adults who do not eat properly, exercise adequately, and otherwise neglect their personal welfare.
 - For many students, the transition from home to their first time away from home, particularly in a culture which may be dramatically different from that in which they grew up, can be traumatic. They need help with this transition and FYE provides this.
 - Perhaps the most important element of all is the following. Research - replicated and validated over many years - establishes the fact that the single most important factor in a student's success (in grade school, high school, or college) is the formation of a significant relationship with an adult. In the case of college students, this means a faculty or staff member. While any staff or faculty member at RIT can serve in this role, we should not leave it to chance. FYE makes sure that there is at least one relationship for every student as he/she begins their freshman year.
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Date added: 3/01/2005

Q: Dear President Simone,

What do you think should be the policy regarding students who need to fly long distances to go home for the breaks, and final exam dates? I am concerned that some professors are very strict when sticking to exam dates. As you know, flights during weekends are often more expensive than flights on a Thursday, for example. Some professors are very conscious about this, but some are very, very strict.

Hopefully, we can come up with a general set of guidelines for both students and faculty to follow.

A: The exam schedule is extremely complex, and we ask professors not to change dates of scheduled exams, which only creates conflicts within the schedule.

We are working on moving up the time frame for students to know when their exams are being held, but they should not make reservations until after they know their exam schedule.

The price differentials between "Thursday" flights and "Saturday" flights are beyond our control and we can't really arrange the exam schedule around those considerations.

Date added: 3/08/2005

Q: How is RIT improving faculty teaching performance and what requirements are RIT faculty required to complete in order to ensure that RIT is meeting the teaching needs of its students?

A: All faculty are required to conduct student evaluations at the end of the quarter in their classes; the results of these evaluations are reviewed by department chairs as well as by tenure committees and promotion committees.

For untenured faculty members, department chairs or senior faculty members occasionally sit in on their classes to observe the teaching effectiveness of the instructor. For lower division classes required for large numbers of students (e.g. Literature or Calculus), the grade distributions for faculty are reviewed to see if there are large numbers of D grades, F grades, or Ws assigned by that faculty member; if so, closer scrutiny is given to that faculty member's teaching outcomes.

Finally, the Assistant Provost for Teaching and Learning conducts a variety of different types of workshops for faculty throughout the year and during the summer; many of these are sponsored by the Institute Effective Teaching Committee.

Date added: 3/29/2005

Q: I entered RIT with the prospect of attending a technologically advanced school. However, my major, Interior Design, lacks the technology I see in many engineering buildings. Currently on my floor we have around ten computers that don't even have a Pentium 4 processor. We also share these few computers with Industrial Design majors. My only other option for AutoCAD is in the basement, three floors down, where a small lab contains somewhat newer computers. This lab doesn't have the

large plotter that is available on my floor. My question is why are certain departments over looked when it comes to computers compared to the rest of the school?

A: For this question, I turned to Joan Stone, dean of the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences. Here is her response:

The situation on the 4th floor reflects the department's choice to locate the plotter in close proximity to the Interior Design studio space as opposed to in the main Windows XP lab on the A-level of the building.

The computers on the 4th floor in the Interior Design space are cascaded and were not intended to be a substitute for the main lab on the A-level. Because the 4th floor computers are cascaded, they are not particularly speedy. With a total count of approximately 725 in the CIAS computer cascade, it is simply not possible to have the latest CPUs in every area.

The Interior Design plotter was located in the main lab for several years both for convenience and to permit closer monitoring and better support. Faculty members decided the Interior Design program needs would be better served with the plotter on the 4th floor.

Date added: 4/05/2005

Q: President Simone-

I just wanted to thank you, as a freshman student at RIT, for helping make the Lincoln Conference hosted this past weekend a reality. As an Imaging Science student who is also interested in politics and the public application of technology, it was very enjoyable and exciting to have the experience of listening to so many scholars from across the country. With the ongoing transition of the Liberal Arts requirements at RIT its refreshing to see that the university is not in fact, as some have claimed, abandoning liberal arts but instead embracing and recognizing their importance. I was both excited and proud to see that a technical school such as RIT was putting forth the effort and funds to provide such a conference for their students and I would also like to thank you personally for your role and your dedication to ensuring the students at RIT receive a well rounded and comprehensive education. Thank you for recognizing the value of and supporting conferences such The Statesmanship of Lincoln here at RIT.

A: Thanks for your note.

Most of the kudos belong to Professor Joseph Fornieri, political science, who organized this event.

Date added: 4/06/2005

Q: Why on Earth is the career fair scheduled during week 5 (midterms) this quarter? I'm sure there are a number of students that can't go to it because of tests this week. Don't you think this is poor planning on the part of the institute?

A: Obviously there is no perfect week for planning this program. No matter what, some issue or another arises. This is peak recruiting time for employers and so it's primarily with their interests in mind that we arrange the timing of these activities.

Also many faculty are aware and supportive of this initiative and do try to be flexible with their students. The reality is that the impact is minimal since the majority of students can spare a short time to visit the fair and of course have access to the employers through the Office of Cooperative Education and Career Services Website at <http://www.rit.edu/~964www/> even if they can't make it for other reasons.

Date added: 4/06/2005

Q: When will the finals schedule be posted? Also, why does it take so long to post the finals schedule? A lot of other schools have the finals schedule already made when you register for classes?

A: The final exam scheduling process is extremely complex. With the current policy, instructors notify their college scheduling officer to include their course in the final examination schedule by the end of the add/drop period if they are giving a final exam. Upon gathering the information, the Registrar's Office develops the final examination schedule no later than two weeks after the end of the add/drop period, and makes it available to the entire RIT community after it is reviewed by the colleges.

However, we are planning to consider other models for scheduling final exams that may include having the final exam known at the time a student registers for a course. These alternate scheduling models will be explored during the 2005-2006 academic year.

Date added: 4/08/2005

Q: President Simone,

With an extensive collection of library databases already at our disposal to use, why do some professors feel it necessary to use other websites and databases? Also, on some of these websites, in order to get accurate information off of them, I need to pay for them. I thought that is why I paid RIT tuition. Thirdly, is it too much to ask of a professor to give me a document that works so I do not have to waste my valuable time entering it in the computer by hand if it is already available to them in a spreadsheet format? My time is just as valuable as anyone else's.

A: On some of your questions, I suggest having a direct conversation with your professors.

Regarding the library specifically, here is what I can tell you:

Before making a purchase from a website, please contact your college library liaison or the librarians at the reference desk. They just might have the needed content in their subscription databases (though it may not be readily apparent) also and they would be glad to ferret it out. If not in our databases, the library may be able to obtain the needed materials through our interlibrary loan service <http://ill.rit.edu>

Not everything can be necessarily obtained through interlibrary loan (such as proprietary reports, data sets, etc) but one may be surprised as to what we can obtain at no additional cost to the student.

Date added: 4/15/2005

Q: Dear President Simone,

How are students chosen for the Outstanding Undergraduate Scholar award?

A: Minimum requirements are that scholars must have completed 125 quarter credit hours of work, including any acceptable transfer credit. Transfer students being considered for the award should also have completed at least 125 quarter credit hours of study, of which not less than 45 hours should be in RIT courses; scholars must also have an Institute GPA of 3.85 for all work completed at the Institute; transfer students meeting the quarter credit hour requirement must also have a cumulative GPA of 3.85 for all college work attempted, regardless of whether or not transfer credit was granted by RIT. For previous college work not graded on a four point scale, a judgment should be made as to whether the cumulative average for all college work is equivalent to 3.85.

Students who meet the minimum criteria are identified by the Registrar's Office and their names are sent to the colleges. Each college appoints a committee to review the lists and they have the responsibility for naming the scholars from their colleges. In addition to the criteria outlined above, they also consider activities such as creative work, employment, service on student committees, civic activities and independent research projects. The number of scholars named from a college cannot exceed one percent of the college's full-time equivalent enrollment of that college in preceding fall quarter.

The policy that governs that selection of Outstanding Undergraduate Scholars can be found in the Institute Policies and Procedures Manual, Policy D5.0, section G.

Date added: 4/27/2005

Q: I know that you are probably very tired of hearing about the finals schedule, but since this is the first time that I've had two finals scheduled at exactly the same time, I did start to think about the problem. In answering the questions previously posed, you said that the finals scheduling process is very complex. What I don't understand, is why can't the final time period just take place at the same time that the class takes place? For instance, I have a class Tuesday and Thursday at 10 AM. It makes perfect sense to me that the final could take place on Tuesday at 10 AM of finals week, and everybody should have no problem attending. For night classes I've had, this is the way it works. If it makes sense for night classes, why do we have to even go through the trouble of creating a schedule? I now have two finals Monday morning at 8 am, and then one more on Friday. As you can imagine, this creates an incredible amount of wasted time. Thank you for your consideration.

A: We have brought this up with the deans several times. The problem is that we still have classes that meet multiple times a week for one hour each session during the day time schedule (we don't have this at night, where all class sessions are at least two hours). Faculty are very resistant to breaking up a final exam into one hour units where the student can't go back and look at responses on the first half of the exam when finished with the entire exam.

I will share your concerns with the provost for further consideration.

Date added: 4/27/2005

Q: I realize that our course registration system is not perfect, and that being able to register from our computers rather than standing in line is a very nice

accommodation. However, one problem with the system is that all information is not made available to us during registration. For example, when trying to sign up for a liberal arts class, I was told that "our records indicate you are not eligible to take this course," when in fact I had already signed up for the concentration. Later, when I went to the COLA student services office, the advisor there was able to tell me that I could not register for the course because the 4 concentration spots that were open were already filled even though on SIS it showed there were over 12 openings. If SIS had simply told me that the concentration spots were filled and the rest were reserved for that major, I could have better decided on a class before the time of registration as a backup. Why can't SIS make available the same information to students that it makes available to advisors, such as the number of open concentration spots? I see this becoming even more of a problem considering that there will be more minors available and free electives for students to take at the various colleges.

A: Your comments, observations, and questions are very good ones and are certainly not going unrecognized by the Institute. Without delving into too much 'technical detail', most of the issues and frustration you have with the Student Information System (SIS) and RIT's registration systems are a consequence of the technologies available at the time these systems were developed and of the processing schedules necessary to support the ongoing operations of the Institute as a whole.

With that said, over the past year we have gathered feedback from literally thousands of students on a wide-variety of topics that have included class registration and the Student Information System with many of their comments being similar to yours. In response to this feedback, a concerted effort by Information & Technology Services (ITS), all the colleges, administrative divisions, and the Institute as a whole was initiated this past spring to begin the process of revamping our student systems. While not everything can be accomplished as quickly as we would like, our plans include among a wide array of other initiatives:

1. Completely revamping the look, feel, and functionality of SIS to make it a comprehensive 'one-stop self-serve' site where students go to accomplish the majority of tasks and transactions they need to while at RIT with 24-hour availability.
2. A complete replacement of the current class registration systems with a feature-rich Academic Planning and Registration system inclusive of academic planning and schedule modeling tools to significantly improve your academic planning process while greatly reducing the time, frustration and anxiety associated with quarterly registration. (We certainly intend on fixing the problem you have experienced with knowing how many and which type of spaces are available for a course.)

While this is just a brief answer addressing your comments in particular, RIT is committed to supporting the needs of our students as evidenced by the myriad of initiatives underway to improve student success and satisfaction across the Institute. Thank you for your time and your comments; they are very much appreciated and necessary for us to realize our goals.

Date added: 4/28/2005

Q: Dear Dr. Simone:

With all the changes in the curriculum set to take place, there's one additional thing that I think should be changed. I don't think it's part of the current revisions, but given that Minors and Professional Cores both require 24 credit hours to complete, why not just have Minors (Liberal Arts) and Minors (Non-Liberal Arts)? From a professional standpoint, employers are looking for entry-level workers with Minors. The term, "Professional Core" (the so-called "Minor outside of COLA"), just does not have the same national recognition as "Minor." Minors are more official in the sense that they are supposed to also show up on transcripts. Minors are more marketable in the job world. And RIT is committed to facilitating future employment opportunities for its students, so this change should be logical. In addition, many students I've talked to are wondering about this terminology issue, too. Why can't someone get a Minor in Business Administration, but they can get one in Literary and Cultural Studies, for example? Students will have greater incentive to work harder in their Professional Core classes if the classes are changed to Minor classes, because they will know that employers are more interested in their Minor work. And if students are motivated to work harder in their classes, they are more likely to appreciate what they are learning. They will have a better appreciation for their RIT education.

The only real potential complication I can see with changing the labeling from "Professional Core" to "Minor (Non-Liberal Arts)" is that Minors are supposed to appear on transcripts. Could these Professional Cores turned into Minors be put on the transcripts?

Still doesn't seem like a heavy complication, and the reward for the change may be significant in the eyes of students.

A: This is an interesting proposal. Minors are only 20 credits, and "professional cores" vary in the number of credits from program to program. Several programs don't have "professional cores;" they are most common in COLA degree programs.

Another distinction is that a "professional core" has been determined (or at least a selection has been determined) by the degree program as part of their requirements, while a "minor" is determined strictly by the student's own choice outside of the degree program requirements. The labeling argument, however, makes some sense and we might wish to go with terminology such as "Minors" and "Professional Minors."

We will review this with the provost, the vice president of academic affairs and the deans.

Thanks for your insight.

Date added: 6/09/2005

Q: How will RIT handle the 4th of July holiday this year since it falls on a Monday? Will students and teachers have the day off? Will there be special events?

A: There will be no classes on Monday, July 4th, this summer. Our practice is to schedule classes when July 4th falls on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, but not to schedule when it falls on Monday or Friday.

In terms of special events, at the moment, the College Activities Board is finalizing its summer schedule and anticipating that there will be some activity, probably a local trip in the area.

The event schedule will be finalized soon, and posted on the CAB website at <http://cab.rit.edu> or by calling 475-2509.

Date added: 6/14/2005

Q: I just read your reply to the July 4th question...How come that doesn't apply to Labor Day? School starts on Labor Day this year, as it did last year. Why couldn't we start a day later? I'm just wondering and it would be interesting to know why. Thank you.

A: It is really a matter of scale. During the summer quarter, labs or studios that are missed on July 4th can typically be made up on another day of the week when the lab or studio is otherwise empty. The numbers of students makes the demands on labs and studios so tight during the regular school year that it would be impossible to make up 20% of them on another day.

It is also very important to courses with multiple sections of labs for the same course to have the classes and labs start on Monday (they use Friday afternoon as a reset period for the following week). While a missed Monday in the middle of the quarter during the summer can be rescheduled either the week earlier or the week following as indicated above, it would cause havoc to miss a Monday the very first or week of the quarter.

Many universities have class on Labor Day.

ALUMNI

None.

ATHLETICS

Date added: 2/18/2005

Q: Given your previous stance on RIT athletics competing at the D-1 Level; what caused you and RIT to change your stance on D-1 athletics since the hockey program is on track to move to D-1 in 2006-07?

A: I still have many concerns about what is happening in Division I sports in the NCAA. All you have to do is read the newspaper, and nearly every day you will find another university facing a controversy.

To me, moving the hockey team to the Atlantic Hockey Association is primarily about academics. The schools in Atlantic Hockey share our philosophies and values. They fit our academic profile.

We pride ourselves on having student-athletes who put academics first, and so do the schools in Atlantic Hockey. The top priority for our athletic program is the academic success of our students. The second priority of the athletic program is school spirit. Loyalty and tradition, that's important. The third priority is competitiveness. You like to play and win. But that's priority number three for me.

We have 24 sports at RIT involving nearly 500 student-athletes. They have a combined grade point average of 3.17, slightly higher than the overall student body. They have the same mix of majors as the student body as a whole.

We will not compromise our academic integrity by moving to Atlantic Hockey. This is why I felt comfortable moving to Division I in this sport. If we can find the right league, we may do the same for women's hockey. But we plan to keep our other teams at the Division III level.

CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION

Date added: 2/03/2005

Q: President Simone,

I recently read in the Reporter that there were structural changes being made to some academic buildings (mainly a sky bridge to connect buildings 70 and 17). Can you please give a briefing on any new construction work? I am excited about the changes that are being made to the Institute and would like to know more about your plans.

A: RIT has spent about \$265 million in physical improvements during the past decade.

I would say the Reporter article was pretty comprehensive. For those who missed it, visit: <http://www.reportermag.com>

About the only thing they missed is the new entrance we will be building on Lomb Memorial Drive, near Jefferson Road. This is in conjunction with the state, who is improving Jefferson Road. Work will continue this summer, and should be done by fall.

Facilities Management does keep updates on its Website about construction projects. Check under "Construction Info" at <http://facilities.rit.edu>.

Finally, check out "Campus Construction" under the Frequently Asked Questions area of this Web site for more detail on other projects.

CAMPUS SAFETY

Date added: 1/13/2005

Q: Dr. Simone,

I am taking an online Public Relations class and we have a task of finding a website that doesn't have an online newsroom. After looking through various websites and finding that they have newsrooms I thought about the Campus Safety site. Do you think it would be useful to have an online newsroom for Campus Safety to make students aware of actions being taken (for example, the Crossroads situation)? Wondering what your thoughts are.

Thanks,
Nicole

A: In this particular case, Campus Safety works with University News Services. University News is the official source of news and information for RIT.

The department's Website can be found at www.rit.edu/news.

The key is to have a link from the Campus Safety Website to University News. This does not exist now, but thanks to your note, we will make this happen.

Campus Safety currently has an "Emergency Preparedness" link that is used in times

of crisis. Here, Campus Safety again teams up with University News.

So in a time of crisis, Campus Safety works with University News to disseminate information. This did occur during the Cross Roads shooting. In fact, critical information was posted both at the University News site and on the RIT homepage.

Date added: 3/31/2005

Q: How many real fires are there for every fire alarm?

A: It is about 1 in 13... and they are not all necessarily inside a structure. It could be a car fire, a brush fire, a dumpster fire, etc.

We had a total of 35 fires fiscal year ending June 30, 2004.

Date added: 5/16/2005

Q: Given the ever present danger of thefts from the campus library, one of which recently involved a student losing their entire thesis project, why isn't security being stepped up or additional measures being taken to ensure such problems cease to occur? There's obviously a problem here, and saying students need to be more careful, or putting up more crime watch posters isn't going to help.

How much would it cost to install a few cheap security cameras in high crime areas of the library? Besides deterring theft, they could also provide a level of peace of mind for those who sometimes must venture to desolate areas of the library late at night by themselves to get work done, or check out a book.

Instead of putting up fliers to remind students to watch their belongings, which obviously isn't working, please try something new. If there were additional security measures in place, we could save campus safety and the sheriff a lot of time, and stop making students feel like they have to constantly be looking over their shoulder for a crook.

A: Thank you for taking the time to share your security concerns. According to the Campus Safety Department, one of the most effective ways to stop thefts of unattended property is through crime prevention awareness such as flyers, e-mail, and other marketing tools.

By reducing the opportunity, thefts of this nature decline. It's the property owner's

responsibility to remain with and secure valuables. Naturally, Campus Safety embraces their responsibility to investigate crime, and to inform the community of reported offenses.

It's important to note Wallace Library hires and trains "Wallace Walkers" to walk through the Library to provide the peace of mind you referred to. If you feel uncomfortable walking in some parts of the Library, please ask one of the Circulation Desk employees to provide you an escort. Campus Safety also collaborates with the Library Director on security issues and technology.

In terms of security cameras, many cameras are used campus-wide in parking lots, residential areas, and stores, but we don't advocate installing cameras in the library due to academic freedoms and privacy. We don't want it to feel like "Big Brother" around campus.

If you have other ideas or security related questions, please contact Mr. Chris Denninger, Campus Safety's Associate Director at 475-6620.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Date added: 2/16/2005

Q: Hey Al Simone!

Last Friday (February 11th, 2005) Kiss FM 106.7FM was on campus in the Crossroads handing out some promotional material for themselves and Pepsi. I can understand why they are there on Pepsi's behalf, but why not use RIT's radio station (WITR 89.7FM) instead?! We'd be more than happy to do on the spot promotions for RIT and it's contract partners! We have the capacity and the ability. We showed up to kiss fm's little getup and voiced our concerns at the student government senate meeting that day. Will you consider utilizing us (WITR 89.7FM) more for on-campus promotion events of anything and everything?

A: I checked this out with our Food Service Director Jim Bingham. Here is his response:

Part of the current contract with the Pepsi-Cola Bottling Group is to allow them to perform product samplings and product promotions on the campus from time to time. In the past they have used professional marketing companies that are set up through the parent Pepsi-Cola national organization. On the local level they use local radio stations.

Kiss 106.7 was here on February 8th for a basketball game and they sampled Diet-Mountain Dew and gave away hockey tickets and tee shirts. They also showed

up on Feb 11th at the Crossroads.

RIT has no problem suggesting that they consider using WITR 89.7 FM to do this type of Pepsi sampling and promotion. I am certain that it would entail your marketing coordinator contacting Pepsi-Cola's Marketing staff and seeing if this could be a natural match.

Please contact me at 475-2285 or at jcbfsa@rit.edu and I can get you in touch with the right people at Pepsi to discuss future options.

Thank you,

Jim Bingham
Director of Food Service

Date added: 3/08/2005

Q: Dear Dr. Simone,

Thank you for being so prompt in answering questions. This "Ask the President" forum is a great idea!

This weekend I was zapping through TV channels here (I'm on co-op in Columbia, MD), and I saw that the FIRST Robotics competition was being televised! What a great way to put RIT on the spotlight. Would it be possible to have more televised events? We would definitely gain much more popularity!

A: The FIRST Robotics competition was a tremendous event for RIT. As you note, it brought great publicity to RIT. We plan to host the regional event on an annual basis.

University News Services is responsible for public relations/media relations at RIT. In 2004, University News was responsible for generating nearly 8,500 news placements promoting RIT. This includes local, regional, national and international news via TV, radio, newspapers and the Internet.

To view news releases and recent RIT "In the News" highlights, visit the University News website at: www.rit.edu/news

Date added: 5/02/2005

Q: Last year, RIT's Human Resources announced that all health insurance plans will be offered by Excellus. Last week, a press release came out boasting that Excellus is

pledging \$2 million towards the new CBET facility. How closely are the two events related?

I understand that employees are here for (and because of) the students. I applaud whatever efforts were necessary to secure the \$2 million grant in the name of enhancing the educational abilities and appeal of RIT. Yet in reading this press release, I couldn't escape the feeling that this grant was obtained at my expense (or more accurately, the expense of me being able to retain a health plan I was happy with).

A: Thanks for asking. These issues are independent, separate, and distinct from one another. At the same time, they both make good business sense for RIT and will have a positive impact for the RIT community.

Let's review the facts:

- Health insurance. Starting in January, all medical plans for employees and pre-Medicare retirees were provided by Excellus BlueCross BlueShield under a new exclusive arrangement. Furthermore, prescription drug coverage is now provided under a separate plan called "RIT Rx."

The exclusive arrangement offered by Excellus BlueCross BlueShield is very attractive financially. It allows RIT and its employees and retirees to share in significant savings compared with projected rates if we had stayed with the old model. Had we not made this change, the total additional premium required from RIT, employees and retirees would have been over \$1 million, resulting in much higher increases in employee and retiree contributions.

Prescription drug expenditures are increasing 15 to 20 percent per year, making them the most rapidly rising component of health care costs. RIT Rx will give the university better long-term control over a key component of increasing health care costs.

* CBET facility: Excellus BlueCross BlueShield announced a multiyear grant totaling \$2 million in support of RIT's Center for Bioscience Education and Technology (CBET) as an investment in regional healthcare. Excellus BCBS' gift is an investment in the education, training, and professional development of current and future workers in the biosciences, as well as in bioscience/biomedical research.

The Greater Rochester region has identified bioscience as a strategic economic development opportunity. In order to realize that opportunity, we need a workforce that has the skills industry needs. Thanks to the foresight and persistence of our state delegation members, and the generous investment of Excellus Blue-Cross BlueShield, RIT's CBET will play a key role in meeting this need.

Date added: 5/17/2005

Q: The Campus Connections web site seems to be one of the most outdated, slow, unwieldy, and unsightly pages that RIT has on the web ... are there any intentions to revitalize the site in the upcoming IT upgrades?

A: This is a very timely question.

The Campus Connections web site is supported by a third party vendor, not ITS or FAST. We use this vendor because it ties directly to the retail management system we use in the bookstore. Unfortunately, the site did not grow with technology as it was intended to.

The Finance & Administration Bookstore Task Force as well as the Bookstore Action and Implementation Task Force have identified the bookstore Web site as a major item that needs to be corrected. The task force report on this site reflects many of your views.

Subject to final administrative approval, the bookstore will be migrating to a new site over the summer quarter with the intention of being live by fall 2005. The new Web site addresses the concerns of poor presentation, functionality, and processing time.

FINANCES

Date added: 1/22/2005

Q: With the increase in the minimum wage, how will the school cover the increase of student employment? Many people work in food service or in my case ITS and made less than or will make less than the minimum wage which will be \$7.50 next year. Will there be a direct increase in tuition because of these rising costs? If not, where will the money come from to cover this?

A: First, let's review the status of minimum wage in New York State:

On Jan. 1, it rose from \$5.15 to \$6 for this year. On Jan. 1, 2006 it will rise to \$6.75; on Jan. 1, 2007, it will increase to \$7.15.

Tuition increases are tied to the overall expense of operating the university. Throughout the course of the year, many individuals at the university continually focus on reducing the expense of operating the university. This is accomplished through new approaches to purchasing, improved business processes which are more efficient and less costly, or renegotiation of contracts and financial instruments. We

balance these savings against an array of price increases which face the university.

The minimum wage increase is but one cost factor facing the university as we look at next year's budget. Health care costs, insurance costs, and, most significantly, utility expenses will all present financial challenges to RIT. Yes, tuition will go up, but it is the cumulative effect of all of the financial drivers facing the university.

Date added: 4/07/2005

Q: Dr. Simone,

A couple years ago credit card vendors were banned from soliciting on campus. Often the vendors would provide money back to the student organization that sponsored them. However, now when I purchase something from Campus Connections, a MasterCard application is included. Why is there a double standard for a student organization versus RIT itself?

A: This issue has been raised several times from administrators, faculty and students during the past decade. However, the final decision was based on a resolution from Student Government (2002, I believe). The basis for banning the sales was due to high pressure sales, poor explanations regarding interest rates, cash advances, misperceptions of minimum payment plans, and problems arising to students and their families who inadvertently went into debt.

There is some recent legislation in NY that limits such activity on college campuses that will take effect July 1st. (<http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/menugetf.cgi>)

As for Campus Connections putting the flyers in the bags, it would be our stance that our customer base includes students, faculty, staff, parents and visitors to campus and that we are making them aware of legitimate services and products that they may be interested in. This type of marketing is also passive vs. aggressive. The company from which we buy our bags are the ones that actually stuff the various flyers, etc. and the store receives a significant discount on the cost of the bags for allowing them to include the materials in the bags that are given to customers.

Meanwhile, RIT Professor Robert Manning is a national expert in this area and has done a lot of research in the area of credit card company practices and college students. Currently RIT offers a workshop on credit cards and college students during orientation. There is also sessions of FYE that cover financial literacy that Dr. Manning assisted in developing.

In short, I don't see a double standard here. And I think RIT is on the forefront of teaching financial literacy.

FOOD

Date added: 2/14/2005

Q: President Simone,

I'm sitting at work right now in Building 70, and I'm a little thirsty. I'd take a walk down to the vending machines, but tonight they are not accepting my RIT debit card as payment. I guess I'll just have to run dry for a few more hours.

Or a few more days...this sort of payment problem happens way too much - and not only in this building. I'm very aggravated at the game of roulette I am thrown into each time I want to get a bottle of water or bag of cookies from an RIT vending machine. And I can't always pull out a dollar bill (like tonight), as the machines chose not to accept anything but change.

I pay a lot of money to eat here, and at first, the occasional (i.e. couple times a month for me) outage (maintenance?) of the vending machines was not a problem. But now that I can barely eat or drink anything while away from my room and car during the evening, I'm quite upset. This is a problem, and I know it bothers more students than just myself. I hope you can offer some insight here, and perhaps a solution.

A: I am very sorry about your inconvenience.

I put this question to Jim Bingham, who directs our food service operation, including the vending machines. Here is his response:

Thank you for bringing this problem to our attention. We have checked into the vending machines in Building 70 and found that we have a frozen food machine that is not accepting debit. Our vending company has replaced the card reader in hopes of getting it operational. As of this date, it is still malfunctioning. We will have it replaced if they cannot solve the problem.

As far as the other vending machines, they have been checked out by the Food Service Department and Aramark (Vending supplier) and every machine other than the frozen food machine is functioning properly.

In the past month, we have been off line for maintenance which would affect debit card acceptance in all vending machines. When this happens, we attempt to choose a time that would impact the fewest customers.

It is our goal to minimize disruption of service to all customers and we need your assistance in letting the Food Service Department know of any problems you are

experiencing with the vending machines across the campus.

Please contact Charleen McMahon at 475-6536 or Craig Neal at 475-6533. They oversee the campus vending program and will assist you with any problems you experience in the future. In their absence, please feel free to contact me directly at 475-2285.

Thank you.

Jim Bingham
Director of Food Service

Date added: 3/08/2005

Q: Why can't we use debit over break?

A: The answer is that you can.

The previous quarter residential meal and debit plans end with Saturday dinner of exam week. On the following Monday, the Food Service Department reconciles the previous quarters accounts and then replenishes the students debit accounts with the debit amount on the meal plan that they have chosen for the next quarter. This is a top priority and is completed within that one day so the students can use their debit over the quarter break.

If any student needs their next quarters debit sooner than Monday, they can contact the Food Service office and we will set up their account so that it is activated for their use over the complete break.

As it relates to the use of Tiger Bucks, these funds are available for the student to use all the time throughout the year.

I hope this answers your question. If you have any additional concerns, please contact the main Food Service Office in the SAU Building at 475-2071.

Date added: 4/06/2005

Q: The freshmen meal plans at RIT are pretty bad, and I don't know a single student who is satisfied. If you had to eat at Gracie's 10 times a week you would know what we

mean. How about a plan with 5 meals a week at Gracie's, no meal options, and more debit?

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

Thank you for your comments relating to the freshman meal plan. The Food Service Department is interested in recommendations such as the one you have suggested and we will consider it as we plan our future meal plan choices.

As to your comment pertaining to most students being unhappy with the current meal plans, I would like to share the following information. As of this spring quarter, after all resident students have had an opportunity to change their meal plan or qualify for the All Debit upperclassman plan; the following represents their choice of meal plans:

- 20, 14 Plus, 12 Plus meal plans 30% of all resident hall students
- 10 plus meal plan 20% of all resident hall students
- All Debit 50% of all resident hall students

You can see that 30% of the resident hall students are on the 20, 14 and 12 meal plans by choice.

We also know that many freshmen students want to be allowed on the upperclassman meal plan. As students qualify academically as second year students we allow them to move to the all debit plan if they wish to do so.

We will take your suggestion and review it as we plan for next year. I can not promise you that it will happen; however, I will promise you that I will discuss this as a possible future meal plan choice.

Please contact me if you have any additional comments or suggestions.

Thank you.

Jim Bingham
Director of Food Service
475-2285
jcbfsa@rit.edu

Date added: 4/07/2005

Q: Dr. Simone,

I have heard that the Shumway Dining Commons is being renovated to be used as a conference center. As you probably know, that is the only place on the residential side of campus that upperclassmen on all debit eat. Gracie's is far too expensive and offers horrendous quality food. Will there be another alternative place to eat, or will we all then be forced to eat at Gracie's?

A: The truth is that the Commons will be renovated this summer and will return in the fall as a new restaurant. The new features will include a pizza/pasta area with an oven hearth Wood-Stone pizza oven so you can see the pizzas cooked in front of your eyes, an expanded grill and fry area, and a Quiznos toasted sandwich shop.

The dining area will be changed to create a more informal dining experience.

The Commons and Grind will close on May 2, 2005 and we plan to reopen on August 12th, 2005.

You will be able to use your debit plans and meal options to purchase food in the new and improved Commons.

Thanks for asking!

HOUSING

Date added: 1/05/2005

Q: Dear Dr. Simone:

I have a concern about the dorms being closed on Saturday Jan. 1 and opened on Sunday Jan. 2. As a student who lives on the west coast, I have had problems in the past getting back to school by leaving on Sunday to arrive before Monday, due to weather conditions. For instance, last year I left in the early morning to Portland, OR, to sleep overnight and then fly out Monday from Oregon to New York when weather improved. This year I wanted to make sure I wouldn't miss a day of school. So I flew out Saturday, yet when I arrived here I didn't realize the dorms were closed. I had no place to stay. Fortunately, I had a friend in the apartments who happened to fly in with me, so I stayed with her. However, I am wondering if in the future on winter breaks if the dorms can be opened two days in advance instead of one day? Because by having classes resume a day after the dorms open, students (particularly on the west coast) are put under a lot of pressure to fly out one day and arrive the next day. If weather is bad, the turnout for classes will be bad on these Mondays. If turnout is bad, then naturally our absences may result in poorer performance in class over the quarter. Secondly, since students can now see what courses will be offered in quarters

about a year ahead (I am very thankful for this by the way), is there any way we can know our exam schedule earlier? This fall I didn't know when I could fly home at my earliest convenience until the fourth or fifth week into the quarter. My flight ticket home? More than \$1,100, an amount some people told me I could have used to go to Australia! I realize I could have scheduled my flight out on Nov. 21, when the break officially begins, but at the same time, it gets lonely staying at school those extra exam-less days, and students want to get home to see family. I think by letting us know earlier, students can save money and will feel that RIT is doing everything they can to encourage students to be with family, which I think will also encourage student retention.

A: Thank you for sharing your holiday housing concern with me. Certainly, I can understand and appreciate the dilemma that you were in as an early arrival back to campus. However, for security and safety reason we don't allow students in their residence hall rooms before staff members arrive back from their vacations. To have one student in a rather large residential complex represents a major security and safety risk for the student.

Therefore after looking into your suggestion with the appropriate campus offices, we will not change this policy over the holiday break for next year.

However, if you should find yourself in this situation again, the staff in Residence Life and Housing Operations will work with you to find you an alternate location at the RIT Inn and Conference Center. We often have students arriving early for a host of legitimate reasons and if we have some indication of their need, the Residence Life and Housing staffs have been able to assist them.

If last minute bad weather or any other unforeseeable situation should hamper your return, please don't hesitate to call our campus Safety office and they will put you in touch with the appropriate university official.

I hope that this answers your question and it is good to know that you made it back safely. I hope that you will have a happy and productive new year.

Date added: 1/18/2005

Q: Dear President Simone,

I apologize if I sent this twice; I was not sure if it went through the last time. I am currently a member of the SIHA organization (president of the House of General Science to be exact). Recently, Reslife passed down new admissions standards to SIHA that the leadership felt would constrict our independence in selecting new members as well as oblige us to accept members we feel might not be appropriate for

our respective houses. We are currently working with Ms. Mary-Beth Cooper and Mr. Frank Lamas to resolve the issue, however I was wondering what your stance on this matter is. If you need more information as what the standards entail, I would be more than happy to give you a brief description as well as what parts in particular we would like to revise to better fit our needs. Thank you very much for your consideration.

A: For this question, I consulted with Chuck Lamb, director of residence life, who has been working on this project.

The Special Interest House program is one of the premier highlights of our housing system at RIT. This program is a vibrant part of our living community. The success of the Special Interest House program depends on the cooperation and collaboration of the Special Interest Houses, Residence Life and Housing Operations.

Students select a special interest house based on the quality of its program. It is paramount that the special interest house recruitment and selection process compliments the quality of this housing program. It is also critical that students representing each of the Special Interest Houses positively represent RIT and their house in a professional manner that mirrors the quality of program offered by the house.

A series of changes to improve the system and program itself are underway, under Chuck Lamb's leadership.

Here is a quick summary of the forthcoming changes:

- * Personal interviews are no longer necessary for acceptance to the floor (this isn't required for admission to RIT; why for a SIH unit? Is a prospective student who can't attend an interview as the current students in the houses want at a disadvantage for acceptance? That should not be the case.

- * Selection criteria will be created by each house which will be used by the current members of the houses to evaluate new students.

- * There will be a limit of 24 off floor members

- * Current house members select the new members for next fall with advising of the process being provided by Residence Life and Housing Operations staff.

If you have additional questions or concern please feel free to contact Chuck Lamb at: 475-6022 or chlrla@rit.edu

Date added: 1/29/2005

Q: President Simone,

I have a couple questions that I would like to pose. First off I would like to talk about housing. Currently I am in dorm housing, but at the beginning of the year I was very aware of many problems pertaining to housing. Mostly that there was a massive overflow, many student were placed in temporary housing and left for off campus housing or had to wait to be placed elsewhere. In an effort to increase retention I would think that you would have some sort of solution posed for this problem, most apparent being build a new dorm. Your inevitable rebuttal to this statement being that at the end of the year there are open dorms, thus making a new dorm unjustified. But if you consider the students that leave because they are unable to find housing, I would think that keeping those students would begin to defray the cost of another dorm.

My second question has to do with meal plans. I have confronted food services in the past about the meal plans that are available and my thoughts about them. I was left feeling somewhat less than satisfied with answers that I was provided with. From what I understand food services actually makes money. This does not seem to be an appropriate situation. Again my understanding is that the reason for their need to produce income is to contribute it to the college. This is in fact a way of raising tuition is it not? I apologize the statement is not entirely correct; it is a way to raise tuition on those who are living in the dorms, seeing as a meal plan is required there. I believe the most appropriate solution would be to reduce the price of food cost to the point where the operation of food services is covered and not profiting. The cost that RIT endures for this should in fact be redistributed via an increase in tuition. This fairly spreads the cost to all the students instead of just those living in the residence halls. A final addendum is about meal plans themselves. Consider a quick example. The 14 meals per week plan, comes with \$80 debit, the 10 meals per week comes with \$150 on debit. Now that is 4 meals less per week (44 meals) at a cost of \$5.75 per meal (as explained to me previously, the 5.75 figure already accounts for overhead in the way of employees and what not) this totals \$253 meaning that the difference on the debit account should reflect that number. Where does the other \$183 go? If overhead is already accounted for then the money is pure profit? Simply because I don't want to eat at Gracie's as much in a week? That seems somewhat unfair. Thanks for your time; I look forward to your response.

A: It is true that we have a high housing demand from our students, especially our returning students. Our research indicates that at most institutions we compare ourselves with, upper-class students tend to leave the university campus system for various reason. Most seek the independence from rules and regulations by living off campus. At RIT the trend is reversed, most of our upperclassmen tend to stay on campus, which causes a bottleneck for sophomores and some juniors. Now, we could deny housing to juniors and seniors, and I am sure that you can image the fall out from that decision.

Our goal at the University is to house 67% of our fulltime student body, which has been the case the last few years. Our housing priority is to require housing for all freshmen (except commuters) and guarantee housing to our sophomores. We also attempt to house juniors and seniors as well. Our goal with housing is to offer it to students but not guarantee where you will be placed.

You mentioned temporary housing. Every University that we are aware of has some form of temporary housing during peak fall quarter enrollment. We have utilized various types of additional space in the residence halls to meet the demand for housing and have managed the system in an orderly fashion. It is true that some upperclassmen move off campus because of housing. Most I have communicated with did so because they believed it was cheaper, didn't want to deal with the rules, or didn't get the type of housing they wanted. We have never turned any student away who wanted housing. Students have left housing because they didn't like the on campus options available to them.

The University will not build any additional housing in the next few years. However, College Town on the corner of John Street and Jefferson Road will provide some housing close to campus when it is up and running in a few years. I feel good about the fact that Housing Operations is managing the system in a fair and humane way. If you would like to discuss this further, please feel free to contact Dr. Howard Ward, Director of Housing Operations for a personal meeting @ 475-6011.

Question 2 (meal plans):

Answer: The Food Service Department is required to cover all of its operating expenses on an annual basis. As an annual budgetary goal, the Food Service Department is required to return a small surplus to the Institute. This surplus is between 2% and 4% of the departments anticipated revenue. In some years this has been accomplished and in other years it has not. The main goal if for the Food Service Department is to cover all the expenses for providing 10 different food venues across the campus.

In the years that a slight surplus is generated, these funds are returned to the Budget Department to be used to offset other Institute expenses. Also the Food Service Department has been allowed to reinvest some of this surplus in to renovating dining facilities. Two years ago, we were able to remodel the dining room at Grace Watson Dining Hall and we are currently planning for improvements to the Commons. We use any surplus to benefit student's directly and when ever possible return it to the Food Service Department to be used to improve their service to all students.

If you have any other questions on meal please feel free to contact Jim Bingham, Director of Food Service at jcbfsa@rit.edu

Date added: 2/15/2005

Q: Dear President Simone,

With the recent advent of learning communities for this year's freshman, there has been a concern among the SIHA (Special Interest Housing Association) community that increasing these learning communities for later freshman classes will decrease membership ranks in Special Interest Houses. For example, Business Leaders of Tomorrow (BLT) has reported a 30% drop in membership due to many members leaving for learning communities.

What do you plan to do with learning communities that does not conflict with the membership of Special Interest Houses? Is there a way that both SIHA and the learning communities can somehow co-exist and help each other out to improve membership without diminishing the other?

Thanks.

A: We believe there is room in the world for both the Learning Communities and Special Interest Housing. The presence of the Learning Communities simply provides another attractive menu item to students as they explore on campus living options.

We do not believe the emergence of Learning Communities had much to do with the drop in potential membership in Business Leaders of Tomorrow. BLT is the newest Special Interest House and is still evolving.

While we do plan to increase the number of Learning Communities, the vast majority of them will be non-residential students.

Date added: 2/16/2005

Q: President Simone,

Do you think it would be better for students as well as RIT if our utility bills were separated out of our rent? I'm not sure I feel comfortable paying the same price as someone with 7 or 8 computers running in their apartment. I'm sure that rent in UC, for example, could be reduced by a significant amount if RIT weren't footing the bill for people that use their AC on a 60 degree day with the windows open (which I've seen numerous times). What are your thoughts?

Thanks!

A: There was a time, prior to University Commons, when utilities were separate from the monthly rent rate. The units were individually metered and students would actually activate service with the provider similar to how we manage it in our homes.

Some of the problems with this were:

* The first student to move into the apartment ended up putting the utility bill in his/her name. Then would need to rely on the other roommates to hand over their portion of the charges each month. As you can imagine this was an area that prompted many roommate issues.

* If a student didn't pay the charges, utility companies would disconnect service. At that point, RIT had to step in and assist.

* Student feedback continually highlighted that students wanted one rate, and for the charges to be on their student account.

When the decision was made to include utilities in the rent, RIT was able to purchase utilities in a bulk rate manner, thus being a better rate overall to students.

While I can understand your concern, I think there are still an overwhelming number of students that prefer one rate all inclusive of their utilities.

Date added: 3/10/2005

Q: Why is building Collegetown and other structures more important than constructing more dormitories? Half of RIT undergraduates are currently living off campus.

A: Our goal at RIT is to house 67 percent of our fulltime student body, which has been the case the past few years. Our housing priority is to require housing for all freshmen (except commuters) and guarantee housing to our sophomores. We also attempt to house juniors and seniors as well. When compared to other universities around the nation, RIT is very "residential", offering lot's of options.

RIT has no plans to build any additional residence halls in the near future.

Collegetown is in the early planning stages and will come on line in a couple of years. We are busy meeting with a potential developer. Housing in Collegetown will not be University housing, but private housing which will be made available to students and the surrounding community. Essentially, RIT will own the land at College Town, but lease the rights to a developer for an area that has a mix of retail, entertainment and housing.

If you would like to discuss this further, please feel free to contact Dr. Howard Ward, Director of Housing Operations for a personal meeting @ 475-6011.

Date added: 4/01/2005

Q: Dr Simone:

I am inquiring about the lottery system that Housing Operations uses to assign students housing. The way it works now is that freshman students are given highest priority when selecting housing. This means that as a student progresses through the years at RIT, their chance of obtaining an on campus apartment decreases. Shouldn't the oldest students get highest priority when selecting housing?

A: Dear Upperclass Student,

You are correct, assignments in Phase II of Housing Selection are made in class standing order with current 1st year students going first, then 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th following, each class at a time. Research and experience tells us that rising sophomores still need a strong support system and connection to the university, housing, and the staff that supports both to be successful.

As students progress through RIT and gain experience and maturity, they have the wherewithal to handle different types of living situations on campus and off campus. The traditional model that you speak about in your email where you pay your dues and gain priority still exists in some areas; however it does not apply well to what we know about human development and the college student who is a freshmen versus an upperclassman.

Prior to Phase II of Housing Selection, we offer Phase I where 3,300 upperclass students have the opportunity to obtain RIT housing through renewing their RIT housing contracts for apartments and the RIT Inn.

During this sign up, students renewing their contracts pull many upperclassmen that are currently living in the residence halls on to their apartment or Inn contracts for the next year to replace roommates who are graduating or going on co-op.

Housing Operations offers housing to ever current student that asks for it no matter what the class standing. If you would like to sit down with Housing to discuss your options, please contact:

Howard Ward
Assistant Vice President

Housing Operations
475-6011
hxwbsr@rit.edu

or

Carla DiLella
Assistant Director
Housing Operations
475-2878
csd1223@rit.edu
<http://finweb.rit.edu/housing>

Date added: 6/23/2005

Q: The RIT Housing Connection's website has long been used by students, both on-campus and off-campus, to find roommates and places to live. This year, they change their policy to no longer allow off-campus postings, pointing students to generic roommate websites. Given the current shortage in housing, and the fact that these external websites make it difficult to find other students to live with (not to mention they charge upwards of \$20/month to use them), why was this new policy implemented? It does a great disservice to all students at RIT, and it completely subverts one of the main missions of OCASA.

A: Thanks for your question.

We stopped facilitating a listing for off-campus landlords primarily because there were some significant issues with a landlord off campus. The students involved in the situation were looking to RIT for support in dealing with the landlord.

There are many services through the internet that offer listings (not all have a charge), there are local publications (i.e., rent Rochester), as well as a number of locations on campus that offer the ability for people to post if they have apartments to rent.

Here are three sites we always suggest to students which do not cost anything to use:

Rentrochester.com
Apartment.com
Democratandchronicle.com

As for OCASA, this has not been an initiative within their organization that we are aware of.

If you have further questions, please contact Housing Operations at 475-5815.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Date added: 2/10/2005

Q: Dear Dr. Simone--

I have a couple of network-related questions. First, do any other residence halls aside from Baker still have 10-megabit Ethernet, instead of the prevalent 100-megabit? Is there any plan in place to bring Baker and these other residence halls (if any) up to date? Additionally, if the cost of wiring Riverknoll for Ethernet makes it impossible, would it be possible to make the Riverknoll area a wi-fi hot spot?

Thanks for your time.

A: First, similar questions to yours have been asked in the past and I urge you to look at the "frequent questions" link off this site and review the information technology section.

Now to answer your questions, we turned to ITS for some feedback. Here is their response:

The majority of the dorms are 10m/bit connections. The only areas that are all 100m/bit are the newer apartments.

We do have a cascade plan in place. We will not be purchasing any new network equipment for the residence halls at this point. Our main focus is on the Academic side to refresh and upgrade network equipment. As we refresh, we will cascade the switches (which are 100m/bit) into the residence halls.

The cascading plan will be in full swing starting fiscal year 2006. It is still unclear where Baker falls on that plan.

The Riverknoll situation is still being examined.

The wireless (wi-fi) is a complicated problem. We tried many different approaches to add wireless at Riverknoll, however the cost for labor and material was very expensive. At the end, we still would not be providing adequate connectivity. In fact, the students that have Roadrunner will have higher connectivity than any wireless solution.

Date added: 3/30/2005

Q: How come there are no tutorials for Thunderbird on the ITS to setup email?

A: For a question this specific in nature, I turned to the expertise of Information and Technology Services. Here is what they have to say on this issue:

We generally recommend that RIT students, faculty, and staff use one of the following clients for reading mail - Microsoft Outlook (for Windows users) and Microsoft Entourage (for Macintosh users). We make this recommendation because these packages best support the email and calendaring features available at RIT.

Mozilla Thunderbird is an excellent email client, and is one of many mail clients that people choose to use instead of Outlook or Entourage.

This is fine with us, and we do provide help and assistance to people using Thunderbird and other clients. There are so many alternative email programs, however, that we simply cannot keep up with the changes to maintain our own custom documentation.

Mozilla has some excellent documentation on Thunderbird available at <http://www.mozilla.org/support/thunderbird/>.

Date added: 3/30/2005

Q: President Simone,

Student social security numbers have been stolen from several universities recently. Examples include the University of Texas in Austin (February 2003), George Mason University in Virginia (January 2005), and University of California at Berkeley (March 2005).

With that in mind, why is RIT still using Social Security numbers to identify students? RIT asks for SSN for almost every student-institute interaction, including course registration. It also prints the SSN on many of its forms and mail sent out to students.

Given the recent SSN thefts from other universities, I urge you to reconsider this policy. I propose instead having RIT generate and use its own identification numbers. Otherwise, RIT remains an alluring target for identity thieves.

A: This is a very timely question. Thanks for asking.

RIT has been actively working to replace the Student ID with a RIT generated number. As you might imagine, this is a very large project that involves significant systems modifications and other changes across the campus. The project is currently in the design/development stage and is targeted to be implemented during the 2005-2006 Academic year.

While the major systems changes are being made, a number of process/form changes have been implemented to further reduce exposure of SSN in campus transactions.

A number of campus communications are planned to keep the RIT community informed as the transition approaches.

Finally, this question has been asked in this forum previously and you may want to view those responses also under FAQ "Information Technology."

Date added: 4/15/2005

Q: Why can't the RIT network be installed into Riverknoll apartments? It made sense not to install it when there was talk of getting rid of the old Riverknoll apts. but now that they have been re-painted to apparently last a few more years, wouldn't it be possible to let those of us in the 'knoll' get some free internet instead of shelling out \$40 a month? The credit on our bill is ok...but that comes late in the year and doesn't do much to balance out the monthly cost to starving students... If installing wired internet would be too expensive, what about adding Wi-Fi antennas so students could choose to buy a wireless adapter card to gain access?
Thank you.

A: We have done a great deal of research over the last few years about "wiring" Riverknoll. There are a few potential solutions, however all of them are fairly expensive to implement. The biggest problem is that there is no fiber optic cable that runs to the complex. This is required for any of the solutions and is one of the biggest expenses, since we would need to dig and run cable to the complex.

Furthermore, we would also need to pull and install cable to each room.

Wireless or Wi-Fi is not really a good option. The complex is populated to the point that if any wireless were to be installed the students would end up with less bandwidth than their current roadrunner solution.

So, the most cost effective and comparable network service is to wire the entire complex, to look like the rest of the dorms and apartments.

Housing Operations continually works with ITS to research options for connectivity at Riverknoll.

So far, we have not received negative feedback about the quality of the Road Runner service from the residents of Riverknoll. But I will pass this along to ITS.

Date added: 5/05/2005

Q: I'm curious about the limited access of the SIS website. More than once I've attempted to check my grades or my course schedule and I've been hit with a message stating that I cannot access these things after midnight. It doesn't make sense to me that a website should have hours. While many websites go down for an hour at most in off-peak hours, such as early in the morning, in order to fix problems and the like, having an important reference such as SIS unavailable for so much time every night seems unfair and inefficient, especially at registration time.

A: Your comments and suggestions are very appropriate and we can certainly empathize with the frustration that both our faculty and students feel with limitations in the availability of some student services. These types of situations are exactly the reason that the Institute is currently engaged in numerous Information Technology related initiatives to improve the service levels we provide to our students and enhance the relationships between students, faculty, and staff.

Examples of these initiatives that are already in progress or scheduled to start in the near future include a new Academic Planning & Registration System to replace our current quarterly registration system, an Institute-wide Degree Audit System, an enhanced myRIT portal with integrated services for use by faculty, staff, and students. All of this in addition to 'behind the scenes' efforts being put forth on items such as identity protection.

New technology is being deployed that will enable all the new services and systems being developed to provide RIT's students with enhanced student services and self-service capabilities; including increased accessibility to these services both day and night.

Comments and suggestions such as yours are vitally important to realizing the goals of our new strategic plan and, as such, are always welcomed and appreciated. While we can't change everything at once, we certainly are trying to get as much done as possible - as quickly as we can.

Date added: 5/17/2005

Q: Dr. Simone,

It's 6pm on May 14th, and it's pouring rain the weekend before finals. I walk on over to my friendly NRH computer lab, and it's closed?!? Seriously. It's not midnight or 3AM, but 6 in the evening. There's no reason why this lab should be closed, after I passed two other students walking away from the lab in utter disgust. I guess I won't be getting any work done, because I'm not going to trek a quarter mile in the rain just to make a few printouts for a school project.

Which prompts the question, what's the reasoning behind closing this resource to students on the weekend? Perhaps other labs are open at this hour, but why is the only lab that services the residential side of campus shut down at such an early hour?

Residents in the dorms complain about nothing to do on the weekends here at RIT -- is this a solution to the problem, by closing the computer lab?

By the way, many other schools have at least one 24-hour computer lab - several that are much smaller in size and funding. Has this been considered?

Thanks for your time.

A: Thanks for your question. I checked with Information & Technology Services on this and here is what they reported back:

The NRH lab hours are based on student usage that is monitored on historical hourly usage. Based on this information, there was not sufficient demand to have the lab open on Saturday evenings. RIT has conducted evaluations of a 24 hour lab in the past. It was determined that there was not a suitable solution available, in part due to the many varied requirements for software licensing of specialized applications that are specific to academic programs (and the subsequent hardware requirements).

While RIT does not require students to own their own computer, a very large percentage of students have at least one computer and many have multiple computers, which may account in part for the reduced demand for open labs.

ITS manages a number of labs on campus including the NRH Lab. The operating hours can be checked online and are posted at:

www.rit.edu/~wwwits/services/computer_labs/labs/all_hours.html#NRH

Date added: 1/27/2005

Q: Another question I have a very big concern with is why did RIT decide to cut funding with the interpreting service. Every quarter when I try to register for my courses, I found my options to be severely limited. I mean its is so very limited, it is not very uncommon to hear one supported class in conflict with another supported class. Its a constant frustration that may cross-registered students goes through every quarter. Every quarter, I would go to the interpreter service office to request they support the class I wish to take. Of course I was turned down because they simply do not have enough funding and resource to grant me my wish. I, along with many other students are forced to rearrange our schedule, taking courses with teachers who are inexperienced with deaf...who have bad reputation and so forth. The interpreter office try to work with the counselor in each department to pick one or two sections of each course to support that would best suit the students. Unfortunately they forget the student's opinion. I am under belief that if the interpreter service are to be able to receive more funding, they would then be able to gather better resource and provide better service and thus offer better options for the cross-registered student. It would be nice to experience something that is considered unique and important part of our time in school. Selecting the courses for the following quarter for they greatly impact on our performance, motivation and drives to do our best. Having such limit cause a serious blow to our moral and our appreciation of RIT.

A: For this question, I turned to Alan Hurwitz, vice president and dean of NTID. Here is his response:

"You raise several points about the availability of interpreting services, the first of which is your concern about cuts in funding. Let me reassure you; there has been no cut to interpreting funding. In fact, funding to interpreting services has increased annually and so has the total hours of service provided each year. This year the federal budget that was signed by President Bush just before RIT's holiday break included funding for five additional full-time interpreting positions. These are being filled as quickly as possible.

However, the hours of interpreting service required on campus increases each year as well, with increasing numbers of NTID students cross-registering at RIT, expanding undergraduate program offerings, deaf faculty members joining RIT colleges, and rapidly increasing participation by deaf students in graduate studies. In many ways, these increases in the need for interpreting are the product of our success in bringing deaf and hearing people together at RIT. Additional resources will be provided for interpreting services as the needs require and we are able find the necessary funds.

A second set of concerns you raised relates to limitations and burdens imposed by using interpreting services. You can understand why careful management of this expensive resource is necessary. It would be unrealistic to cover every calculus class

when one or two sections could serve all the deaf students. There is no denying that the strategies used to manage these services place some additional steps in front of deaf students. Access Services tries to work closely with faculty advisors and students to ensure all students can enjoy the access services they require. There are strategies students can use to maximize their chances of getting services. Advance planning with your advisor and early registration and requesting for services improve the chances of getting what you'd like. Just as for any student, some opportunities may be closed out on you. On balance, we see RIT offering a fantastic variety of accessible courses every quarter providing the largest amount of access services in the world through NTID.

The Interim Director of Access Services, Mr. Steve Nelson, would be happy to meet with you to discuss the details of your recent experiences. He would like to follow-up with you to see if improvements to the processes used to select the classes to receive interpreting services can be made with your feedback. He can be reached at v/tty 475-6463, or sandis@rit.edu

Thanks for asking.

PARKING / TRANSPORTATION

Date added: 1/27/2005

Q: I was doing a research paper for my class. I chose the topic of doing research on parking lots at RIT. I was pretty surprised at the many facts I've found. Interestingly enough while we have 10,005 parking spaces, its a fact that more than half of those spaces are reserved. Many more of those spaces are ridiculously far such as G, H, B and A lot. A, B, C and K lot are already used up primarily by residence hall students. Other than G, H, N and T lot, the remainder of the lots have at least half of the lot reserved for faculties, staffs and students who are willing to pay more for a parking permit. In my estimate there are still a very large number of students who live off campus, including myself. With already half of the lots taking up with reserve, I can't seem to bring myself to pay 45 dollars per quarter or 140 dollars for a full year. It seems to me, many other students are not willing to pay for that reserved price.

Even though as I admit that it seems relatively cheap, have you ever considered building parking garages? Not only it would eliminate parking lot that are considered to be far, but it would also eliminate snow plowing, increase number of spaces for students off campus and still allow spaces for faculty and staff...in addition its incredibly easily maintained, at least on some level. What is your input on this??

A: Let's run through the parking numbers first:

- * Yes, we have 10,000 + spaces.
- * We have 1,554 reserved spaces.
- * We have 6,147 spaces on the academic side of campus and 1,479 are reserved.
- * We have 1,517 spaces on the Residential side and 45 are reserved. The \$45.00 per quarter breaks down to \$4.50 per week for reserved parking. T-lot and D-lot were recently expanded for additional parking.

In terms of building a parking garage, we have researched this area. On a per car basis, initial costs can run approximately 10 times more than that of open lots. In addition, the cost of long term maintenance can also exceed that of open lots. The downside to the garage is with our climate because they deteriorate so quickly. It's simply not cost effective.

For information on parking, please contact Jeff Meredith in Campus Safety at 475-2043 or jcm1170@rit.edu

Date added: 3/01/2005

Q: I've heard that now RIT plans to charge students for parking - is this true?

A: No, this is not true.

Meanwhile, RIT offers a reserved parking program to all our students and employees for a nominal fee on a quarterly or yearly basis. This is available for those who have a desire to come and go, or wish to park closer. More information on this program can be obtained on our website: <http://finweb.rit.edu/campussafety/parking.html>

Date added: 6/21/2005

Q: Dr. Simone,

There is currently an abundance of reserved parking on campus. While some of the reserved spaces have been converted back to general spaces for the summer, it is common to walk through an entire row of empty reserved spaces. Will the empty reserved spaces be converted to general parking? In E lot, that would double the number of general spaces.

Thank you

A: Thank you for taking the time to share your feedback with us. Each summer, the Parking Office assesses opportunities to increase general parking across campus, and we anticipate making additional adjustments as appropriate (including E-lot).

Your feedback is very important to us and feel free to contact our Parking Manager, Paula Benway at pfbcps@rit.edu or at 475-6006 any time to share ideas and opportunities.

Date added: 6/23/2005

Q: Dr. Simone,

What happens to the money that is collected from parking fines on campus? Does it simply go into some sort of "general fund", or is it earmarked for a specific use?

Also, approximately how much total money is collected each year for parking fines?

Thanks.

A: Annual parking fine revenue is recognized as income on our general ledger within the Campus Safety budget, thus this helps to offset operating expense of that department. Operational expenses of Campus Safety include costs directly associated with providing security and parking management functions of the university.

RIT's parking related expenses are not borne solely within the Campus Safety Department. Facilities Management Services also incurs costs of routine and deferred maintenance to maintain the lots and signage, including the lighting and servicing of the lots throughout the seasons.

Our annual parking fine revenue varies from year to year; FY04 was \$468,000, while FY05 is projected at about \$370,000.

RIT FACILITIES

Date added: 2/09/2005

Q: I would like to know the cost involved in setting up the infinity sign that is located in front of the Kate Gleason college of Engineering building.

A: The sculpture was created for RIT when the campus moved from downtown Rochester to the town of Henrietta in 1968.

For some time in the 1990s, the sculpture did not rotate. In 1998, members of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers rebuilt the motor that makes artist Jose De Rivera's sculpture revolve. The cost to run it is nominal.

De Rivera (1904 -1985) often incorporated the Mobius strip (a form with only one side, created by giving a narrow strip a half twist before closing the loop) in his work. De Rivera became well known for his sculptures exploring "motion, light, material and space."

The rotation of the loop creates forms continuously altered by time and space. The RIT piece resembles De Rivera's "Infinity," located outside the Museum of History and Technology, part of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

The sculpture revolves 12 times an hour. In fact, people rushing back and forth across the quad might not even notice the subtle motion.

Date added: 2/10/2005

Q: Hi President Simone!

I have two questions about the carillon music I hear on campus. One, where is the carillon located? I can't tell where it's coming from. Two, how do the songs that are played get selected? I enjoyed the holiday music this past December! It's so nice to hear the bells play every day and I enjoy listening to the songs, especially as I sit in my office in the Gannett Building. Thank you for your time!

A: The beautiful chimes and music the campus enjoys three times each day comes from a carillon housed in the Schmitt Interfaith Center. There is also a speaker tied in from the James E. Booth Building. The Center for Religious Life programs the selection and times when music plays.

Actually the musical chimes and hour strikes the RIT hears each day comes from the second of two carillons RIT has enjoyed over the past twenty years. With guidance from Al Davis, vice president emeritus, and the generosity of the Schmitt Foundation, the gift of a new carillon was given to RIT in 2003, and installed later that summer.

By the beginning of this spring quarter, a new "chip" will be installed to provide the campus community with greater varieties of classical, popular and religious music.

Date added: 2/16/2005

Q: President Simone,

I was wondering why there isn't a short paved walkway in front of UC326 from Andrews Memorial Drive. It is clearly needed as a short path forms every time it snows. This makeshift path could also potentially be very dangerous, especially with the mud and ice. The current walkway only accommodates people going to UC325.

I would also like to say that I think the small improvements, such as campus maps and the new bus stop near Crossroads, make a big difference. I think that these small improvements should be continued. Perhaps benches like the one near UC17 could be installed near bus stops (when feasible). However, these benches should face forward and not overlook a swamp like the UC17 one.

Thank you for your time.

A: We will look into your suggestions.

New pathways are typical throughout housing. In some cases, there are safety concerns and we do not want to encourage pedestrian traffic in a certain area. In other cases it is as simple as not anticipating the need for a certain path at the time of construction.

We'll take a look at the area you are referring to, and if it is feasible we will consider a walkway in that location.

Date added: 3/28/2005

Q: I have a question. Where can I get a high resolution of RIT map? Thank you.

A: RIT maps are created and kept by Facilities Management Services.

You may view and download a variety of maps at the following site:
<http://facilities.rit.edu/maps/>

Contact FMS at 475-2842 if you need further assistance.

Date added: 4/01/2005

Q: President Simone,

I realize this question may not exactly be "your area", but I believe that you're in the

position to do something about the problem. In University Commons, by the older buildings (1, 2, 3...) there are some dilapidated gas grills. The actual grill portion of the units is missing, making it impossible to even use charcoal. Over by the new UC buildings (325, 328, 329...) there are new charcoal grilling stations with 2 grills and benches. It would be nice if the older grilling stations were upgraded to this new style...after all, spring is just about here, and we all love hamburgers.

A: We have noted these areas as well and we knew that we would have to replace them this year. The plan is to put in the charcoal type grill that we are using in all apartment housing areas.

We'll check on the status of the order and plan to have them installed for the start of the nice weather.

Date added: 4/06/2005

Q: Why are the pillars in the field house yellow and not orange?

Thank you.

A: Student Government has taken an active role on promoting orange in the field house and elsewhere on campus.

It is a legitimate issue and one that we are taking into consideration because it involves spirit and pride.

In terms of painting the field house pillars orange, it is something we are taking into consideration. But we also have to consider the cost/labor involved.

Stay tuned.

Date added: 4/15/2005

Q: Dear Dr. Simone,

What is the plan for the old swimming pool by the SAU? A faculty member and some students I know would like to see it renovated as a bowling alley. Given the width of the pool plus the additional surrounding space, I'd venture about three or four or possibly more lanes could be squeezed within that area. Is the plan feasible and

something in consideration? What other considerations are being made for this facility?

A: Actually the SAU originally had a bowling alley but it was removed a number of years ago due to limited usage.

Concepts are still being developed for the former swimming pool area and we have involved students in the process. We have a number of clubs and organizations on campus that need more space.

At this point, the area may be designed to have three floors with a combination of student support space, multi-use space, and socialization space.

Once a concept has been agreed upon, we will try to fundraise for it with the start of construction being dependent upon the amount of dollars we can raise.

Date added: 4/28/2005

Q: What has happened to the bike rack that used to be at the west entrance to building 8, near building 13? Proper bike parking was difficult enough before its removal. I know that improperly parked bikes detract from the beauty of the campus, but if proper bike parking is not provided, it leaves bikers with few options. I have seen many others attaching their bikes to nearby benches and trees, and it looks terrible. Can more bike parking be provided, or at least return the bike rack that was removed from building 8?

A: The Facilities Management Services folk we checked with are not sure what happened to the rack (it's an awfully large "souvenir" for someone to walk off with!) formerly at this location but we will put one back ASAP.

Also, we have on order and will install later this spring/summer a new improved rack in this and several other locations on campus.

Date added: 6/07/2005

Q: Dr. Simone-

I graduated from RIT this past weekend and have one final question. I have a genuine interest in the state of RIT's campus and its changes. As a result I like to check to the

Facilities Management Construction Info website
(<http://facilities.rit.edu/construction/>).

The issue is that I have found this website's updates to be fewer and farther between. I think this is unfortunate and unwise. I think the website is a great marketing tool that should be used. Think about showing alumni what projects are going on, so they can be excited about donating money. Additionally, imagine future students seeing what isn't built yet, but they can expect during their tenure at RIT. The website has great untapped potential.

PS – My family was very impressed with you signing and speaking your speech.

A: First of all, congratulations on becoming an RIT graduate!

It is good to know someone enjoys the FMS site and cared enough to write to us with feedback. Your note will cause us to renew our efforts to keep the site current. The website is administered by a unit with many responsibilities, and they often have to prioritize what should be fresh content.

We will do our best to keep this up to date.

P.S.: Thanks for compliment on the sign language. I sign my commencement remarks every year.

RIT HISTORY

Date added: 2/17/2005

Q: Hello Dr. Simone,

I remember back in the previous configuration of the SAU quad that there was a time capsule buried in the sidewalk with a little plaque stating when it was placed and when it was to be opened. When I go to where it should be now, I see trees and a hill. Was the capsule moved elsewhere on campus? Simply uprooted and kept? Or did no one pay attention and it was simply lost?

Thank you for your time.

A: The capsule was dug up during the recent changes to the area, Unfortunately, the capsule was not weather-tight and the contents were found to be destroyed (not as a result of construction).

We have a list of contents from the 1969 burial, a year after RIT moved from

downtown Rochester to Henrietta.

We are looking at doing another time capsule as part of the 175th anniversary.

Here are some of the items that were in the original capsule:

- A set of United States proof coins bearing the date 1968.
- A cancelled check from RIT Student Association, which was presented to the administration at a rally on the old downtown campus, the morning after the decision to move to Henrietta.
- A copy of RIT student catalogs.
- A copy of RIT's first honorary degree and the citation for Mr. William Scott Vaughn, the recipient of this degree.
- An RIT Doctoral hood from an academic cap and gown which was first used in the dedication ceremonies.
- A list of all names, individual and corporate, who contributed to the New Campus Fund.
- A 1968 freshman hat.
- A selection of fraternity and sorority pins and medallions.
- A tape of the final TV broadcast on the old campus.
- An RIT guides blazer.
- An RIT pennant.

RIT MYTHS

Date added: 2/02/2005

Q: President Simone, I have heard rumor of an RIT presidential taxi cab, repainted to represent RIT. Does this RIT taxi exist? If so, why is it never seen on or around campus? It should be brought out of storage, especially for Brick City Fest and Spring Fest.

A: Yes, we do have such a taxi.

First, here is some history:

It was purchased by former RIT President M. Richard Rose in 1982. Dr. Rose used a similar Checker Cab to drive visiting dignitaries around campus when he was president of Alfred University prior to assuming the presidency at RIT.

At RIT, it has been used to pick up guest speakers, etc. at the airport and to show VIP's around campus. It is a 1971 Checker "Marathon" Cab. It is stored at Liberty Hill.

If Student Government wants to use the taxi, they must arrange for pickup through Hans Witt (334-6559) and Campus Safety. RIT personnel maintain the vehicle.

STUDENT LIFE

Date added: 1/05/2005

Q: Hello President Simone,

Has there been any consideration to the idea of expanding the winter holiday break from two weeks to three therefore aligning our spring break with the spring break of most other colleges and universities around the country?

Thank you.

A: The quarter system makes RIT different and unique.

Next academic year, classes end on Dec. 17th, 2005, and resume Jan. 9th 2006, giving the students a three week break. This occurs on average once every seven years and is the most extreme return date in January. Usually classes go later in December and start earlier in January to avoid pushing Commencement into June.

In terms of spring break aligning with other schools, it all falls to the calendar.

Date added: 3/21/2005

Q: As we all know, the Field House has been a wonderful addition at RIT. One thing that I was wondering if it will ever be used for is to host a large school party (perhaps a dance party or something)? I often hear the criticism from students that there's

nothing to do at RIT. While I disagree, I do find that most of RIT's dances are quite small (0-100 people), which isn't conducive to the kind of collective school spirit that the institute wants. Many students I think opt not to go to these small parties because, for one, they are so seemingly exclusive or small. The Field House has the potential I think to bring a large population of students together for a great social dance in the population of 1,000 or more students. There aren't a lot of large parties like this, and I think large parties could wump up some more spirit around the campus. I'm not trying to propose becoming a party institution, but 1 or 2 major school dances organized for a large collective school body would be a wonderful spirit-developing activity. Organization and decoration of the dances when well-thought could lead to some major student enjoyment and consequential success.

A: Lambda Alpha Upsilon fraternity, the College Activities Board, and Campus Life are all co-sponsoring an event on April 2nd called Mi Tierra. This event will be located in the Clark Gym and features Latino and Reggae music. Most of the music will be performed by a DJ, but there will also be some live performances. We expect over 1,000 people to attend.

There has not been any similar type event scheduled for the Field House to this point. We have found that the Clark Gym has been more conducive to the dance venue, so far but we are open to possibilities for the space as we move ahead. CAB and other programming groups are planning for upcoming events and we will pass this suggestion on to them.

Also, it should be noted that on March 18 RIT students hosted a tsunami relief benefit concert at the Field House, featuring 10 bands.

Date added: 3/23/2005

Q: President Simone,

Why is it that faculty groups and other such events take precedent over student government? Every year we try and reserve the 1829 room for our SG meetings that go from 1-3PM, and every year we seem to have problems getting this room. Today, for instance, we are forced to have our meeting in the Ocaso office which is inadequate in size, to say the least, all because Transfer Day wants the room. I think that SG should have the right to use the room that we reserved a year in advance and should not be treated like we are less important than other groups and pushed aside.

I hope that in future years this can be resolved and SG will always have a place to meet without interruption.

A: At the moment, the reservations system for the Student alumni Union is based upon a priority system. Certain administrative areas, for example the President's office, Admissions, Orientation, Commencement, and Conferences (Government and Community Relations) do receive a priority over student events. During the past four years, these groups have increased programming.

Currently Campus Life is scheduling space for next year. We are expecting some of the space conflicts will be resolved. For example, Admissions Open Houses are being moved to the field house. We are also conducting an audit of resources for clubs and organizations, to be completed next winter.

Finally, when the Student Alumni Union renovations are completed (still in the planning, fund raising stages), we will see some relief as additional meeting rooms will be included in that area.

I have passed along your concerns to Student Affairs, as well.

Date added: 4/28/2005

Q: President Simone,

Why is there a SG Senator representing "The community including all Female students", but not one for the community including all Male students?

A: I consulted with Student Affairs to refresh my memory. Here is their response:

"The Women's Senator position was created several years ago as a proposal to improve representation of those populations whose specific needs could not be necessarily addressed through the current Major Student Organizations already in existence on Student Government. Three populations were considered. They included a senator for women; the Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender population, and Freshmen.

The positions were implemented in the Senate as a pilot project for approximately two years, after which they were adopted as permanent voting seats.

The rationale was that all of these populations, including women, are often marginalized in the dominant culture, and represent specific social needs often associated with oppressed groups. Due to the fact that RIT is primarily a male campus, it is viewed as the predominant population around which the campus culture is constructed. While it is not directly oppressive, it dominates the culture, and whether fair or not, is perceived to drive the campus culture that can at times, exclude these other groups."

TOP QUESTIONS

Date added: 1/27/2005

Q: With all the talk about retention here at RIT I have been forced to think about why our retention rate is so bad. In thinking about this subject I couldn't help but wonder what typical retention rates are at other universities and what they are doing to improve them. Hearing our numbers really doesn't mean anything to me since I have nothing to compare them to. Also, what are the main reasons you hear from students about why they don't like RIT. I personally love it here and can never get a good answer whenever someone complains to me.

A: First of all, I am glad you "love it here."

Student success is what RIT is all about. Student success means that students graduate from RIT, feel good about their experience here, and move on to successful lives and careers.

In terms of your question, the average graduation rate (nationally) is around 50 percent, so we're definitely better than average. We are also higher than many of the SUNY schools. But the schools we see ourselves as competitive with--in terms of students and faculty--tend to be in the 70-90 percent range.

Rensselaer is around 77 percent, Cornell is 90 percent, Syracuse is 77 percent, MIT in the low 90's.

There is no "main reason" why students leave RIT. Some are homesick, some have family and financial issues, and many leave because they have struggled academically. The students who stay are the ones who feel they belong to a community and who are engaged in their learning, sharing positive relationships with faculty and other students.

Recently, I named Kit Mayberry as vice president of academic affairs. Her chief responsibility is to focus on student success and retention. We are striving to make RIT a great university.

Date added: 3/01/2005

Q: Why is RIT trying so hard to recruit more students when we already have more than we can handle? People are living in "temporary" housing for years and don't even have their own mailbox. There isn't enough parking for commuters to get to their classes without large inconvenience. Why don't you work on accommodating the students you have before inviting more overcrowding?

Also, I was wondering why the abandoned Racquet Club apartments are being converted into senior housing. Wouldn't it make more sense to fix them up or make the new apartments available to the upperclassmen who are struggling to find housing at RIT?

A: We adopted a growth plan in 2001 that calls for enrollment to cap around 17,000 by the end of the decade. Today, we have more than 15,300 full- and part-time undergraduate and graduate students.

As a university, we are adding new programs on a regular basis to reflect the changes in the workplace. We now have 340 career-oriented programs. It should be noted that as we have grown, we have actually increased quality - a mean SAT score of 1220 for this year's freshmen class.

Our goal at RIT is to house 67% of our fulltime student body, which has been the case the last few years. Our housing priority is to require housing for all freshmen and guarantee housing to our sophomores. We also attempt to house juniors and seniors as well. Our goal with housing is to offer it to students but not guarantee where you will be placed.

In terms of temporary housing, every university that we are aware of has some form of temporary housing during peak fall quarter enrollment. We have utilized various types of additional space in the residence halls to meet the demand for housing and have managed the system in an orderly fashion.

RIT will not build any additional housing in the next few years. However, College Town on the corner of John Street and Jefferson Road will provide some housing close to campus when it is up and running in a few years. RIT is not paying for the senior housing complex in the old Racquet Club area. Instead, the university is leasing the land to a developer who will absorb costs. If you would like to discuss this further, please feel free to contact Dr. Howard Ward, Director of Housing Operations for a personal meeting @ 475-6011.

In terms of parking, RIT has 10,005 parking spots on campus. There is free parking all over campus, with the exception of R lot. We believe we have enough parking spaces on campus, and we are one of the few schools in the Northeast that doesn't charge an extra fee for parking.

Date added: 3/14/2005

Q: Dr. Simone,

With the current debate on Social Security, what are your views on President Bush's proposals? As an economist and head of an organization that pays what I'm sure is a lot of money into the trust fund, you must have some interesting perspectives.

A: The issue is extremely complex as you well know. Some of the underlying principles are:

- * We should be making strategic decisions now. We should provide for a fiscally stable system into perpetuity. We should not transfer the burden and obligation to future generations.
- * The Social Security system was established to provide a basic floor or safety net for everyone, recognizing that not everyone may need such assistance, but, beforehand, we do not know who will and who will not. Therefore, we ask everyone to pay into the system. Since people pay into it, they should have the right to receive future benefits from their current contributions.
- * We need to agree on the demographic and actuarial assumptions necessary to determine the timing and magnitude of future deficits. Should the financial obligation be funded with a system of regressive taxation (as is the current case) or should it be progressively funded. One way or another, if the government supports social security, it has to raise the money through taxation.
- * This leads to the question of whether the annual contributions by individuals should be invested entirely or in part by the federal government, or should individuals have discretion to invest some, none, or all of the contributions on their own?
- * These are just some of the principles and questions. I have opinions, but no solid answers. I need to watch the debate. Ultimately, my vote would be determined by the proportion of social security benefit I believe the individual should be responsible for and that portion for which the government should shoulder responsibility. A lot of philosophical and ideological considerations go into this determination, in addition to the associated economic and political factors.
- * One possible option would be to have, let's say, 75 percent of the social security contributions being invested by the government in safe treasuries, with up to 25 percent being invested in one or more stock indexes certified by the government, with the condition that the individual match the stock designated dollar for dollar from additional private funds, with no opportunity to withdraw the funds until retirement. The debate will identify numerous alternative approaches to consider.