
Questions and Answers with Dr. A. Simone

July-Dec 2003

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ACADEMICS

None.

ALUMNI

None.

ATHLETICS

None.

CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION

Date added: 10/28/2003

Q: We can see everyday that the new field house is coming along. I think the question a lot of people are asking these days is when the field house is scheduled to be finished and is it running on schedule.

A: Great question.

The target date for completion is April. If the building is enclosed (we're getting close) before the snow flies, then we expect to meet that date. Our goal is to have the Field House done for 2004 graduation ceremonies.

After a very hard winter and wet spring, the construction workers have caught up. All of the steel work is now done and the recreational pool was recently dug.

When this multi-purpose facility is done, students will be able to use it for concerts, intramurals, speakers, conferences and other activities.

Thanks again for the question.

Date added: 10/28/2003

Q: This fall, there is a lot of construction on the Quarter Mile and on Lomb Memorial Drive. The inconveniences of these particular renovations are widespread and students are simply appalled this is happening in the first month of school. Is there anything the President's Office plans to do to stop this kind of construction from happening in such an untimely manner again?

A: Thanks for the question. My office and the entire support staff are very sensitive to this issue. Every attempt is made to minimize construction-related inconvenience to students, faculty and staff. There are many reasons why all the campus construction isn't completed over the summer including simply not enough days in the summer for the amount of work, delays in receipt of materials, etc. Rest assured however that everyone shares the goal of minimal impact to the community.

The work on Lomb Memorial Drive is safety related. The raised crosswalks/speed bumps take about a week to "cure."

All the work you are seeing on campus is part of a plan to create friendlier spaces for

students. The construction season is limited due to weather, but I think we've made great progress improving the campus landscape at RIT.

Date added: 10/28/2003

Q: All this construction was promised to be finished by week 4 (which was already late by the original schedule). When will the stairs in the middle of the quarter mile, all the crosswalks, and the turf field be finished?

A: I am happy to report that we are in the homestretch in these construction areas and we are excited about the latest improvements to the campus. The stairs and the crosswalks near the Quarter Mile will be done by early November. In fact, the stairs will be dedicated along with the new Eastman Kodak Quad on Nov. 14. Kodak officials will join us in the ceremony. The turf field is on schedule to be finished in late October. Lights will be installed in December.

The weather, delays in receipt of materials and other factors always play a part in construction projects. Yet these projects have been and remain on schedule. These latest projects are part of our larger vision to continuously improve the campus.

Date added: 12/15/2003

Q: When I first came to RIT, I was impressed by the network of tunnels which connected various buildings throughout campus. I was surprised that the tunnel networks, which are mostly complete, were never connected. If RIT spent so much effort and money constructing the tunnels, it seems wasteful to leave them uncompleted. Are there any plans to connect the tunnels? When the Gannett Quad was renovated, there was a perfect opportunity to connect the liberal arts building to the Eastman building? Also, with the construction of the field house, now is a perfect time to build a passage way from the SAU to the Greek row tunnels. Perhaps this should be done before renovating the quarter mile?

A: Thanks for the question. There are no plans to expand the tunnel system because the cost to do so would be astronomical. With project budgets always being tight, every dollar is needed to build and maintain the new buildings themselves. The tunnels we do have serve a purpose, but it is not the intent to have everything connected underground.

During the past 5 years, RIT has invested \$220 million in capital projects including

new and improved academic buildings, student residential areas, recreational space and more.

CAMPUS SAFETY

None.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Date added: 10/28/2003

Q: President Simone, I keep hearing about this project called College Town. Can you explain what it is and when is it coming?

A: College Town is a concept we have for the northeast section of RIT's property, near the corner of Jefferson Road and John Street. It is currently in the conceptual phase, but we what we envision would be a great asset to RIT. College Town would be a mix of retail and housing. It would include boutique shops, restaurants and housing for students. RIT would own the land, but lease it back to a developer. The College Town concept envisions commercial, professional service, residential and entertainment space being housed in an architecturally distinctive setting with appeal to both RIT and to the greater Rochester community.

To see a map of the proposed College Town, go to:
<http://facilities.rit.edu/Construction/collegetown/index.htm>

Date added: 10/28/2003

Q: President Simone, I heard that RIT is trying to host a Presidential debate in 2004. Is that really true?

A: Yes. The idea for hosting the debate surfaced in planning RIT's 175th anniversary, which kicks off with commencement 2004. The Commission on Presidential Debates recently visited RIT and the university is in competition with 13 other potential debate sites. There will be three presidential debates and one for vice presidential candidates. The commission has specific criteria that a venue must meet to be the host site, including the size of the hall, media area, security and transportation. RIT may have an edge here: the new Gordon Field House and Activities center that is set to

open in the spring of 2004. The state-of-the-art facility will be well-suited to meet the technological capabilities that are required by the commission for a debate site.

Final sites will be announced in November. More than 2,000 journalists from around the world are expected to cover the debates. Hosting this event during RIT's anniversary year would provide an exceptional educational opportunity for students, alumni, faculty and staff of this university, as well as for the greater Rochester community, to recognize and appreciate the relationship between education, citizen participation and the democratic freedoms that we enjoy.

FINANCES

Date added: 10/28/2003

Q: Are there really two different tuitions at RIT? Can you explain that?

A: RIT will increase tuition and other charges for the 2003-04 academic year with changes that will reflect a new "two-tiered" tuition increase for full-time undergraduate students. Tuition for full-time matriculated students will increase by 5 percent to \$20,445. Tuition for entering freshmen and transfer students will increase by 8 percent to \$21,027.

The two-tiered approach was established in order to minimize the impact of tuition increase on returning students and their families, who face difficulties in responding to changing costs. Recent enhancements in RIT programs and facilities will also benefit new students over a greater number of years enrolled. One example: The opening of the new \$25 million Gordon Field House and Activities Center, scheduled to open in spring 2004.

Overall costs of attending RIT, which includes room, board and fees, will increase 4.7 percent for enrolled undergraduates. The overall cost increase for undergraduates entering RIT will be 6.9 percent in the 2003-04 academic year. It should also be noted that approximately 70 percent of RIT students receive some form of financial aid. This year, for example, students will receive about \$62 million in institutional grants and scholarships from RIT.

FOOD

None.

HOUSING

None.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

None.

NTID ISSUES

None.

PARKING / TRANSPORTATION

None.

RIT FACILITIES

None.

RIT HISTORY

Date added: 10/28/2003

Q: What is Liberty Hill?

A: Liberty Hill is a historic cobblestone home that was given to RIT during its 150th anniversary campaign by Dr. and Mrs. Frank Lovejoy Jr. It is where I reside with my wife, Carolie. We proudly share this old family home with guests from RIT and the community. The home, built in 1839, now sits on 21 acres at 2201 Lehigh Station Road in Pittsford. It was also once the home of Frank Lovejoy Sr., a former Kodak president and chairman of the board.

We welcome students to Liberty Hill on many occasions. For example, the Liberty Hill Breakfast Series runs throughout the year. Here, we feature guest speakers from throughout the Rochester community and beyond. Our speakers have included CEOs, doctors, ambassadors, newspaper editors and more. The talks generally run from 7:15 to 9 a.m. If you are interested in attending when we resume this fall, please contact Barry Culhane at 475-7202 (brcnge@rit.edu) or Teri Trevino at 475-7500 (tnt5038@rit.edu).

Also, we invite new students out to Liberty Hill for a picnic each fall. The picnic includes live music, swimming and softball. Stay tuned for details for the upcoming September picnic!

RIT MYTHS

Date added: 10/28/2003

Q: There is a rumor going around that the Olsen twins are coming to RIT. What is up with that?

A: Unfortunately, it was just a spoof. RIT and the twins were the subject of a fake CNN.com-like website that claimed the Olsen sisters were going to attend RIT. The site included a typical press picture of the girls, RIT's logo and well-written text. The spoof received national media attention. While we would certainly welcome the twins, they still would have to prove successful in a rather rigorous college-preparatory program in order to be accepted. We welcome them to apply!

STUDENT LIFE

None.

TOP QUESTIONS

Date added: 10/28/2003

Q: Dr. Simone,

I was wondering why the funding for Gracie's Dinner Time Theater (GDT) was cut? As you know the funding was put in place by former RIT president Rose because he felt that having more than one publication would help to heighten student involvement in the community. However, you cut their funding because GDT publishes inappropriate pieces. Well, isn't the point of higher learning at an institution to swap ideas and opinions and learn from one another, even if you don't agree with what is being said? Shouldn't it be your job to see what the students feel? I know it was brought up at an administrators meeting and they didn't seem to have a problem with GDT, they felt no action should be taken at the time. However, you did so anyway. Why? why not ask us? Why not get SG involved? You know, if you wanted the RIT community to get more involved you should at least make the effort.

A: Thanks for the question.

I have had ongoing conversations with the editors of GDT over a period of years. My issue with GDT was not what they said, but how it was said. I believe there is a community standard that needs to be met. It is not a matter of free speech: just because one might have the opportunity to speak freely on a given issue in a given way (and I have no quarrel with that), it does not mean that they should exercise that freedom in a way that is offensive and disrespectful to others. One could argue that what is "offensive" to one individual is not necessarily "offensive" to another individual, and that is what free speech is all about. I understand that.

I also have a responsibility as the President of RIT to set standards and provide an example of professional and acceptable discourse. Because a particular statement is "legal" under the first amendment, does not necessarily mean that it reflects the values, standards, and expectations of the Institution as a whole. Part of my role and responsibility is to exercise judgment in that regard. I have exercised that judgment with regard to GDT, and concluded that there are many other activities at RIT that deserve the financial support of RIT's scarce resources more than GDT. I made the judgment that the allocation of scarce RIT dollars to some of these other activities, who make persuasive cases every year for either enhanced funds or new funds to get started, are more in keeping with the needs and character of the RIT student body.

I respect your right to disagree with my judgment. However, it is my judgment to make, and I would hope that you would respect that. Thanks for your note.
Cordially yours,

Albert J. Simone
President

Date added: 10/28/2003

Q: I don't know if you have noticed as of late, but the web mail/IMAP servers have been running with tons of lag. Is there any plans in the near future for ITS to do an upgrade to the web mail server and the IMAP servers? I've seen other 'State' school web mail services and they all run much smoother than the service that is provided to us.

A: Yes, our current web mail/IMAP servers are lagging. I'm told these legacy systems are struggling with our current load. In the short term, we are taking measures to improve the performance of these existing systems. At the same time, Information and Technology Services (ITS) is implementing a new email and calendaring solution which will address these issues long-term. The new system has been designed to scale not only to our existing environment but to be scalable for the future as well. This should provide a reliable email environment for IMAP and Web mail access.

There is an email student public forum that is scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 28 from 2-3:30 p.m. in the Xerox Auditorium. A communication will be sent to all students Tuesday, Oct. 21. In this forum, the new email system will be introduced to students, providing an overview of the benefits, features, and functionality. There will be a student testing period that will be occurring from the middle of November to January. Students who are interested in testing the new system will be asked to register - information will be provided at the forum; 300 students will be asked to participate. Full rollout of the new student email is targeted for the beginning of February.

Date added: 10/28/2003

Q: As our generation develops to become future leaders of America, what do you think are the most important roles and focuses/issues that should be addressed in our communities and in society as a whole?

A: Thank you for your question. You really have raised a question of comprehensive breadth and depth. One could write volumes in an attempt to answer it. I will be necessarily brief.

From a national perspective, we need to focus on diversity and pluralism. By the year 2016, the Caucasian population will start to decline in absolute numbers in the United States. By the year 2050, there will be more people of color than Caucasians in the United States. While opportunities for and accomplishments of people of color in the United States continue to improve, much more needs to be done to assure that when

people of color are in the majority in the United States (2050), the access that they will have to our societal, economic, financial, and political structures are equivalent to that enjoyed by the majority population today. For example, the college going rates for Native American, Hispanic American, and African American graduates of high school are significantly lower than they are for Caucasians and Asians. There are many factors that account for this - too many to go into here. We have to work hard in the years ahead to make sure that access is the same for every American, independent of ancestry.

Another issue is globalization. Increasingly, Americans will be working with, working for, hiring, selling to, buying from, and partnering with people from other countries, other races, and other cultures. We have to be comfortable and effective in this new world of "oneness" if we are to maintain our quality of life and achieve peace in our time.

An important key to solving both problems is the access to and opportunity for quality K-12 education for all Americans. There is great work to be done here, particularly in our central cities and rural areas.

I could go on. These certainly are three of the top ten.

Date added: 12/17/2003

Q: Often you are emphatic about the fact that there is no intention to change the focus of the school from being career-oriented to research-oriented. There is a segment of the university community that is very supportive of changing the school's focus. By holding onto our trade school roots, aren't we lagging behind many other universities? RIT will not be able to attract the greatest minds (e.g. Nobel laureates, astronauts, inventors) to come here unless it creates an environment conducive to research and innovation. Is it engraved in stone that RIT will always remain a career-oriented school?

If the main cause of concern is that expanding graduate programs will adversely affect the quality of undergraduate education, why not change the organizational structure so that it doesn't?

A: A university cannot be all things to all people. Each university has to find its niche and focus its strategies on the appropriate mission.

RIT is clearly not a "trade school." In fact, rather than lagging behind other universities, we are leading many of them. More and more universities who have a traditional liberal arts orientation or consider themselves to be "research universities" are recognizing that they need more of a balance, and are moving more and more in

the direction of a career focus.

RIT, in order to achieve its mission, also needs to achieve the appropriate balance. While we emphasize preparation for careers, we also note that careers involve growing with an organization (or organizations) over a lifetime of work, increasingly taking on greater and greater levels of responsibility. A trade school does not prepare one for this kind of career. Therefore, RIT expects each and every faculty member to be on the frontier of knowledge in their field, and expects, further, that certain faculty in specified programs will be extending the research (albeit primarily applied research) in their field, being among the leaders (including research universities) in their areas of interest. We also recognize that leaders in industry and life have to have an understanding well beyond their specific discipline - they have to know the social, political, and economic framework within which their careers evolve. Accordingly, every major at RIT requires a significant amount of work in the liberal arts and social sciences to provide a balance and to hone leadership skills.

Having said this, the primary emphasis of academics at RIT will be on teaching and learning. We will not in any way diminish our attention to or support of undergraduate education and teaching in order to promote our graduate education and research. Rather, to the contrary, we will utilize our faculty scholarship and research to enrich the teaching and learning function. The teaching and learning function will remain career-focused and oriented, but not from a "trade school" perspective. Again, the career focus will be enriched by the association in the classroom with professors who are engaging in scholarship and significant applied research in their fields, relating these to preparation for successful careers, which also implies a thorough grounding in the liberal arts and social sciences.

In this way, RIT is in many ways a unique university that is leading higher education. I see ourselves as a leader not a follower, and the evidence is, as I indicated at the outset, that numerous other universities are moving in our direction as we ourselves continue to evolve.