

*This message is sent on behalf of Jeremy Haefner, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs*

Colleagues,

You will recall that in 2012, Rochester Institute of Technology joined the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE), based at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. COACHE, a consortium of over 200 colleges and universities, is a research initiative committed to supporting senior academic officers in developing best faculty recruitment and talent management practices. Membership in the collaborative enables colleges and universities to gather sound diagnostic and comparative faculty data needed to inform discussions, generate ideas and initiate appropriate actions. The core component of COACHE is a web-based survey specially designed for pre-tenure, tenure - and non-tenure-track faculty to collect information about their experience at their institution. Institutional reports provide college and university leaders with a powerful management tool to identify core strengths and determine areas to improve and enrich the quality of faculty work-life.

In the spring of 2016, RIT administered the COACHE survey to all full-time RIT faculty and I am pleased to share with you the Chief Academic Officer's (CAO) report, which you can find on the RIT COACHE [website](#).

As with the survey in 2012, an RIT leadership team, consisting of the faculty, deans, and administrators selected five institutions as a comparison group for our faculty survey results. The team used a scaled rating system with RIT faculty compensation benchmark schools in mind. COACHE recommended using the following criteria: which other institutions RIT faculty job candidates apply to, where they choose to work should they decline an RIT offer, and where faculty transition to work if they resign their positions at RIT. The comparison group consists of institutions that also are COACHE consortium members and who participate in the survey at the same time as RIT. In this case, the 5 selected institutions are Lehigh University, Syracuse University, Tulane University, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

Launched in January 2016, the RIT COACHE survey was open to all non-administrative full-time tenured, pre-tenure and non-tenured faculty. The University's Oracle database maintained by the Human Resources Department was utilized as the primary data source for the identification of faculty participants using prescribed COACHE metrics. RIT's response rate (51%) exceeded the selected comparison institutions (49%) and the total COACHE 2016 cohort (47%).

When RIT administered the survey in 2012 for the first time, we identified areas where the institution was doing well and areas where we needed improvement. Using this approach again, the deans and I, along with a small taskforce of faculty, reviewed the results found in the 2016 CAO report. The team feels that

- health and retirement benefits,
- personal and family policies,
- governance (including trust, shared sense of purpose and productivity), and
- senior leadership

are areas where the university is performing well in regards to faculty satisfaction. We also note that appreciation and recognition, which were identified as areas needing improvement in 2012, have shown improvement in 2016.

The team identified

- department engagement,
- department quality,
- tenure policies and expectations, and
- promotion to full professor practices

as areas where RIT needs improvement. By reviewing the report carefully, you will see that department quality refers to challenges we face in addressing sub-par performance and teaching effectiveness of faculty. It is notable that tenure policies, expectations and promotion to full professor practices were areas where RIT needed to improve in 2012. The university spent considerable time and energy in clarifying the tenure and promotion policies and made significant changes to the criteria at the university level. Clearly, we need to do more work in understanding the dissatisfaction by faculty in these areas and I have asked the deans to facilitate conversations in the colleges. We will follow up with the community in the spring semester.

In addition to the CAO report, the college deans have now received their reports and the deans will be sharing their reports later in the semester.

I encourage you to review the CAO report carefully and discuss the results, along with your college results, in your department meetings. Your department chair will make sure that your thoughts and inputs are brought to our attention. On behalf of RIT and our aspiration to make this university a great place to work, I thank you all for completing the survey and remaining engaged in the conversations about the results.

Jeremy Haefner

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs