Employment for your students is on your minds, I’m sure, and it’s on our minds as well. In October, I had the opportunity to testify in Washington, D.C., before the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions on the topic of “Leveraging Higher Education to Improve Employment Outcomes for People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.”

I was proud to be able to share information about RIT/NTID’s extensive co-op program, which allows students to apply their skills and training to real work experience prior to graduation. I also was proud to note the work of the NTID Center on Employment (NCE) staff who travel around the country developing relationships with employers and educating them about the benefits of hiring deaf and hard-of-hearing workers. I shared information about NCE’s 11th annual job fair for deaf and hard-of-hearing students and graduates, as well.

Encouraging a spirit of innovation in our young people will help prepare them to compete in the world of work. Here at NTID, we have several efforts revolving around that idea. We have broken ground for Sebastian and Lenore Rosica Hall (see p. 4), a building that will provide the venue for groups of students and faculty to work together on new ideas and research. And now there is “The Next Big Idea” (see article at right).

Our commitment to career education has never been stronger or more important than it is today. We will continue to find opportunities to prepare your students for successful careers and rewarding lives. It’s our mission and our passion.

The Next Big Idea!

The Next Big Idea is a new competition in which multidisciplinary teams of deaf and hard-of-hearing students work together to create a product, business or technology that will be useful to the deaf and hard-of-hearing community. ZVRS, a video relay telecommunications firm that employs approximately 90 RIT/NTID alumni, is the generous sponsor of this competition, and is offering prizes of $5,000 for the first place team, $3,000 for second place and $1,000 for third.

The first round of the competition launched in early October with interested individuals presenting a three-minute pitch about their Next Big Idea. Each pitch had to contain information about the product or service, the gap that the product or service would fill, the target demographics for the product, the feasibility of developing the product or service and a timeframe for development.

Nine out of 13 teams made it through the qualifying round, and at the next round in December, seven teams of students presented their idea to a panel of judges made up of faculty, staff and ZVRS officials. Five teams were chosen to continue and will receive seed money to allow them to develop their idea more fully and discuss it at the final round, which will be held at the Imagine RIT Festival in May 2012.

Curious about what the Next Big Idea might be? Without giving anything away, the teams have submitted ideas related to dance, communication, technology, social media, improvements in hearing devices and improvements in things that people use in everyday life. For competition updates as they occur, visit www.ntid.rit.edu/outreach/nextbigidea/updates.

Eleventh Annual NTID Job Fair a Huge Success

Last fall, more than 40 employers from around the country sent nearly 100 representatives, 20 of whom were RIT/NTID alumni, to meet and interview deaf and hard-of-hearing students and graduates seeking co-ops or permanent employment. More than 320 motivated, dressed-for-success job seekers attended, ready and eager to talk about their training, skills and plans for the future.
Who to contact
These resources are available to help answer questions you and your student may have to assure a successful college experience at RIT.

**NTID Student and Academic Services**
Robb Adams, Associate Dean
reanse@rit.edu
585-475-6597 (v) 866-948-6871 (videophone)

**NTID Student Life Team**
Dan Millikin, Director
dpmlki@rit.edu
585-475-7496 (v/TTY) 585-286-4562 (videophone)

**Student Health Center**
585-475-2255 (v) 585-475-5515 (TTY)

**Public Safety**
585-475-2853 (v) 585-475-6654 (TTY)
IM: RITPublicSafety

**NTID Counseling Services**
Mark Rosica, Chairperson
mjrnc@rit.edu
585-475-6288 (v/TTY)

**NTID Student Financial Services**
nssasa@rit.edu
585-475-7496 (v/TTY)

**RIT/NTID Financial Aid Counseling Services**
Gail Brown, Coordinator
gabsf@rit.edu
585-475-2186
585-475-6909 (TTY)

**First-Year Experiences**
Amy Stornello, Manager
alsrla@rit.edu
585-475-6885 (v/TTY) 585-475-5017 (videophone)

**Career Exploration Services**
Mary Karol Matchett, Chairperson
mkmnca@rit.edu
585-286-4854 (videophone)

**RIT Residence Life**
Stephanie Bauschard, Assistant Director EPB area
scbri@rit.edu
585-475-5518 (v/TTY)

**Substance and Alcohol Intervention**
Services for the Deaf (SAISD)
Chintana Phetphanh, Staff Specialist
scphhc@rit.edu
585-475-4978 (v/TTY)

**Intercollegiate Athletics and Recreation Support**
Jan Strine
jnsdhd@rit.edu
585-475-6104 (v/TTY)

**NTID Center on Employment**
ntidcoe@rit.edu
585-475-6219 (TTY)

**Office of the NTID President**
585-475-6317 (v/TTY) 585-475-9798 (FAX)
585-286-5096 (videophone)
www.rit.edu/NTID

**Services for the Deaf (SAISD)**
585-475-5017 (videophone) 585-475-6885 (v/TTY)
alsrla@rit.edu
Amy Stornello, Manager

**Department of Defense Job Information**

Rita DeFalco is putting her business and human resources studies to good use as the on-campus recruiter for the United States Department of Defense Student Training and Academic Recruitment (STARS) program. Each year a team from the Department of Defense selects an RIT/NTID student to fill this one-year, peer-to-peer effort to educate fellow students and alumni about Department of Defense employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Rita has an office in the NTID Center on Employment where she meets with students about the program.

“I explain the program and show them the variety of job possibilities for government work,” DeFalco says. “We talk about the different locations where they can work and the benefits that a government job can bring. It’s a great feeling to encourage students to think about themselves in government jobs, match them up with job possibilities and help them through the application process.”

When you connect with your student, suggest that he or she contact DeFalco at rita.defalco@cpms.osd.mil or at the NTID Center on Employment at ntidcoe@rit.edu to learn about co-ops and permanent jobs at the Department of Defense.

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**Editor/writer:** Kathy A. Johncox; kajnod@rit.edu

**NTID Parent News is a publication of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, a college of Rochester Institute of Technology.**

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**RIT promotes and values diversity within its workforce and provides equal opportunity to all qualified individuals regardless of race, color, creed, age, marital status, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, veteran status or disability.**
A New Career Planning System

Chairperson,
NTID Department of Counseling and Academic Advising Services
Mark J. Rosica

The Counseling Department underwent a bit of a “facelift” last summer. The Career Resource and Testing Center (CRTC) in LB Hall was updated with new paint and carpet, new computers, a large conference table for meetings and other small touches designed to make the space inviting for our students and counselors.

This fall we saw more traffic in the CRTC. We know the paint job is good, but we also suspect that students are coming in to use the department’s exciting new career assessment tool.

The new tool, FOCUS 2, is modeled after the famed IBM Career Planning System. What makes the program so valuable is that, in addition to assessing students’ interests, personalities, values and other characteristics, it also further analyzes students’ responses and aligns them with RIT’s 200 majors, telling students exactly what RIT programs are a good fit for their skills and interests.

In recent years we have seen a steady increase in the number of students who come to SVP, NTID’s summer orientation program for incoming freshman, knowing what programs they want to study. Not all, however, know at what level they should begin. FOCUS 2 is one more tool our counselors can use to help direct students to their individual “starting lines.”

The language used in FOCUS 2 is understandable, it’s fast—each section takes only 15-20 minutes to complete—and I believe it is going to help us do an even better job of guiding students toward programs of study that match their skills. We used it in all Freshman Seminar classes this fall and in five Career Decision classes during winter quarter. For more information, contact me at 585-475-6288 (voice/TTY), by videophone at 585-286-4651 or by email at mjrnvc@rit.edu.

Coffee Chat

Manager,
Summer Vestibule Program/
First Year Experience
Amy Stornello

My fondest memories of college were the times I spent chatting with friends at Starbucks. I wanted our students to have that same experience, and also to have a chance to meet faculty and staff members in a relaxed atmosphere outside the classroom.

Students this fall had a new option for the activities hour that falls between classes on Friday afternoons. “Coffee Chats” in the CSD Student Development Center gives students the opportunity for “coffee, conversation and connections”—participating in conversations with faculty and staff members on topics ranging from credit card management to classroom etiquette.

“Coffee Chats” take place amid the comfortable tables, chairs and couches of Ellie’s Place, a section of the CSD Student Development Center named for Dr. Eleanor Rosenfield, former associate dean for student and academic services who passed away in 2010. We meet every Friday 1-2 p.m., and students can just “drop by” as there is no registration or obligation to stay the entire hour. We try for a mix of serious and lighthearted topics, and all ideas are welcome. Future topics will include the pros and cons of buying vs. leasing a car, how to start the job application process, readjusting to life at home during school breaks and bonding with animals.

This type of fun and casual interaction between students and their professors really embodies Ellie’s spirit. It’s a great way for students to connect with faculty, staff and each other and break the ice. For more information, contact me by videophone at 585-286-5019 or by email at alsrla@rit.edu.
President Bill Destler, NTID President Gerry Buckley and more than a hundred spectators participated in a groundbreaking ceremony for Sebastian and Lenore Rosica Hall, a state-of-the-art facility that will foster innovation, entrepreneurship and original research for RIT/NTID students. A major grant of $1.75 million from the William G. McGowan Charitable Fund includes a matching grant challenge of $250,000. Gifts in any amount from alumni, parents, faculty and staff will be included in this challenge and matched. Visit www.ntid.rit.edu/rosica-hall/matching-challenge to learn how you can help strengthen opportunities for deaf and hard-of-hearing students to join the inventors, researchers and entrepreneurs of the future.

Michael J. Fox Featured Speaker
Actor and author Michael J. Fox, featured speaker at Brick City Weekend’s Student Government sponsored Horton Distinguished Speaker Series, mesmerized the capacity audience with a presentation that included stories of Hollywood successes and his personal challenges with Parkinson’s Disease. Prior to the presentation, Fox accepted an official RIT Men’s Hockey team jersey presented by Student Government President Greg Pollock, and told Pollock and the Student Government leadership that RIT’s hockey team was “his favorite college hockey team.” Fox wrapped up his presentation waving his hands in the air (a gesture of applause for deaf and hard-of-hearing students).

Update Your Email...Please!
We need your help to stay in touch. We are planning on creating an electronic issue of Parent News in the near future, and would like to have updated emails for all our Parent News fans. Please go to www.rit.edu/NTID/update and add your email address to the mailing list. As always, this information is confidential, and we’ll only use it to connect with you regarding information related to your student’s RIT/NTID experience.