



President's I ♦ N ♦ S ♦ I ♦ D ♦ E ♦ R

From the Desk of Gregory G. Dell'Omo, Ph.D., President of Robert Morris University



President's Message

Last spring, I met with some of my staff to prepare for a meeting with the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* editorial board. That's an opportunity that doesn't come around often, so I wanted to make the most of it. We discussed what I should share with the *Post-Gazette* about RMU and what makes us distinctive. I posed a question: "Why should a student come to Robert Morris University?"

It sounds like a simple question, but it's vitally important, particularly for an institution like RMU that has grown so much in recent years. The answer can provide a blueprint for the future. If you can't explain why a student should enroll in your university, then how can you expect to persuade them to do so?

RMU has many strengths, but I believe there are three defining characteristics that draw students to us. For one, we offer a professionally focused education that allows our students to move seamlessly from the classroom to the workplace – and the proof lies in our 93-percent job placement rate. This grew out of our origins as a business school, but it has continued even as we have added approximately 20 new degree programs in fields including health care, education, engineering, the sciences, communications, information systems and media arts. I attribute it in part to the hard work of our faculty, many of whom, in addition to having excellent academic credentials, have years of professional experience in the fields they are teaching.

Of course, our students deserve a fair share of credit for their own success, and that brings me to the second attribute that defines the RMU experience: an emphasis on engaged learning. What students learn in the classroom is certainly important, but what they do outside the classroom – such as international studies, internships and community service – is just as important when it comes to shaping their character and leadership skills. Not only do we provide our students with these kinds of opportunities, but we attract the kind of student who actively seeks them out. This year, we are introducing the Student Engagement Transcript so that students can document their involvement in these activities, and give future employers and graduate schools a complete picture of their undergraduate career.

Finally, RMU has a persistent focus on quality in its academic programs, its student services and its facilities. We are making significant investments in our campus to accommodate new programs and provide the kinds of facilities that today's students expect. We've hired new faculty members to provide smaller class sizes. We have discipline-specific accreditations in nursing, education, computer science and education, and we are in the final stages of candidacy for accreditation in business. By 2009, more than two-thirds of all RMU undergrads will be majoring in academic programs that have specialty accreditations.

Professional focus, engaged learning and a commitment to quality – that's why students come to RMU. In this year-in-review edition of the *President's Insider*, we have provided select examples of these values as demonstrated by our students, our programs and facilities, and our faculty. I hope you enjoy them.

Sincerely,

Gregory G. Dell'Omo, Ph.D.

Student News **RMU Engineering Students Take On the Baja SAE Challenge**

A team of eight RMU engineering students competed in May in the Baja SAE regional competition in Edwards, Ill., marking the first time the University has participated in this demanding contest.

Baja SAE, organized by the Society of Automotive Engineers, calls on teams to build an off-road vehicle to race over rough terrain and traverse water obstacles. Each team built a car using the same specifications and the same type of Briggs & Stratton engine. RMU finished 84th out of a field of 94 – a respectable result for a first-year team.

The project was initiated by engineering student Ryan Hendrickson, who graduated in May with a concentration in software engineering. He is now a software developer for Boeing, where he works on software quality testing for the International Space Station.

“I can’t tell you how proud I am of our engineering students for their effort and perseverance in the face of significant odds,” said Winston Erevelles, dean of the School of Engineering, Mathematics and Science. “This is a prime example of student engagement.”

RMU Named to Community Service Honor Roll

The Corporation for National and Community Service has named RMU to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for exemplary service efforts and service to disadvantaged youth.

The Community Service Honor Roll is the highest federal recognition a school can achieve for its commitment to service learning and civic engagement. Honorees for the award are chosen based on factors including scope and innovativeness of service projects, rate of student participation, incentives for service, and the extent to which the school offers academic service-learning courses.

RMU earned its place on the honor roll through a variety of community service programs, including: the Mooncrest Afterschool Program, in which RMU partners with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Pittsburgh; and the annual First Day of Service, in which first-year students volunteer at local nonprofit organizations.

RMU-TV’s Colonial SportsCenter Celebrates 10 Years on the Air

Colonial SportsCenter (CSC), a student-produced 30-minute sports highlight show airing weekly on RMU-TV, celebrated its 10th season in April. CSC includes highlights of athletic events, features on athletes and coaches, and commentary on regional sporting events, and has received numerous local and national awards. Among the show’s honors are a Mark of Excellence in Sports Reporting from the Society of Professional Journalists in 2004, a Communicator Award in 2006, and multiple Aegis Awards in 2006.

Past anchors and producers have enjoyed successful careers in the media, and include on-air talent at NBC affiliates in Tucson, Ariz., and Columbus, Ohio; sports writers at newspapers in Beaver, Pa., and Frederick, Md.; a managing producer for a national high school sports Web site; and a producer/director for the Pittsburgh Steelers.

“CSC has been the consistent benchmark for RMU-TV programming,” said Michael DiLauro, director of the University’s Academic Media Center. “Engaged students learn from older students, creating quality productions, enthusiasm and pride that has generated countless successful television careers.”

Campus News **RMU Commences Ambitious Campus Building Plan**

The University has launched the first phase of a 20-year campus master plan, which calls for dramatic improvements to the 230-acre campus in Moon Township and continuing renovations at RMU's building in downtown Pittsburgh. The initial three-year phase began in earnest over the summer and will cost approximately \$23 million. It includes:

- Construction of a 12,000-square-foot building that will house laboratories, classrooms, faculty offices and a nursing simulation center
- Construction of two new buildings for the School of Business
- Extensive upgrades to Hale Center, the University's main classroom facility
- Major renovations of the University's existing residence halls, and the construction of new townhouse-style residences
- The creation of a loop road to carry traffic around the perimeter of campus to create traditional, pedestrian-friendly quadrangles

This plan will create a true living-and-learning environment and give our students a strong sense of place. A decade ago, RMU's freshman class was 50 percent commuter, 50 percent residential; today the class is 25 percent commuter and 75 percent residential. Approximately 1,200 students live at RMU's Moon campus. That number will grow to 1,300 by 2010. By 2013, RMU will have room for 1,600 students.

School of Education and Social Sciences Earns National Accreditation

RMU's School of Education and Social Sciences has been accredited by the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC), making the University the first education school in Pennsylvania to receive TEAC accreditation. TEAC granted RMU the agency's maximum initial accreditation of five years.

"This is an important national recognition of the quality of our faculty and the programs they offer," said RMU Provost David Jamison, J.D. "Our elementary education and business education degrees and secondary education certifications were all created to prepare teachers for the classroom challenges of the 21st century, and TEAC accreditation reflects their excellence."

Approximately 700 students are enrolled in the school, and about 500 of them are pursuing an education degree or teaching certification. SESS offers degree programs in elementary and business education, as well as certification programs in biology, communication, English, mathematics, social studies, and instructional technology specialist. It also offers majors in social science and applied psychology.

RMU Adds Biology Degree

Starting in the fall of 2009, RMU will offer a Bachelor of Science degree in biology through the School of Engineering, Mathematics and Science (SEMS). It is one of approximately 20 degree programs RMU has added since becoming a university in 2002.

The biology major will provide another option for students in RMU's Pre-Medicine Program, who may also choose to major in environmental science.

"This is a great opportunity to further enrich our science curriculum and bring strong, academically advanced students to our programs," said Maria Kalevitch, Ph.D., professor of science and associate dean of SEMS. "Science education at RMU is marked by personal attention, small class sizes, state-of-the-art laboratory facilities and an emphasis on technical skills."

Faculty News **RMU Attracts Experienced and Rising Faculty with Top Credentials**

Our faculty had a very good year in 2007–08. We hired 18 new faculty members during the 2007–08 academic year, and promoted three faculty to university professor, RMU's highest academic rank: Robert Skovira, Ph.D., professor of computer and information systems; Carl Ross, Ph.D., CRNP, CNE, professor of nursing; and Valerie Powell, R.T.(R), Ph.D., professor of computer and information systems.

Below are some of our faculty's other noteworthy achievements for the past year:



- **Winston F. Erevelles, Ph.D.**, dean of the School of Engineering, Mathematics and Science and professor of engineering, received the 2008 SME Education Award from the Society of Manufacturing Engineers. His teaching, research, service and publishing interests are in the areas of automation, robotics, rapid prototyping, reverse engineering, process monitoring and control, and computer-integrated manufacturing.



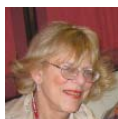
- **Stephen Foreman, Ph.D.**, associate professor of health care administration and economics, has been named a 2008 Fulbright Scholar to Ukraine by the U.S. Department of State. He will lecture at Crimea State Medical University in health policy during the 2008-2009 academic year.



- **Fred G. Kohun, Ph.D.**, university professor of computer and information systems, received the 2007 Computer Educator of the Year Award from the International Association of Computer Information Systems for his outstanding record of teaching, research, administration and service to the academic community and the information systems profession.



- **Peggy Morrison Outon**, executive director of the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management, was honored by the Girls Scouts of Western Pennsylvania with the 2008 Pearl of Excellence Award at their Women & Girls of Distinction event. The award, the highest honor given by the Girl Scouts, is presented to a woman who exemplifies sacrifice in service to the community.



- **Valerie J.H. Powell, R.T.(R), Ph.D.**, university professor of computer and information systems, was appointed to the Pennsylvania Governor's Chronic Care Management, Reimbursement and Cost Reduction Commission in 2007, because of her expertise and credentials in health care computing.



- **James E. Rebele, Ph.D.**, professor of accounting, was the first individual from outside the United Kingdom to receive a Lifetime Achievement Award from the British Accounting Association's special interest group on education for his outstanding contributions.



- **Carl A. Ross, Ph.D., CRNP, CNE**, university professor of nursing, received the Pennsylvania Nurses Association's Nurse as Global Citizen Award in 2006. The biennial award is only given when a candidate is shown to demonstrate citizenship, strength of character, commitment and competence, and when peers recognize the recipient as one who "makes a difference and inspires other nurses to make a difference in the world."



- **Daniel J. Shelley, Ph.D.**, professor of education, received the 2008 Pioneer Award from the Pennsylvania Association for Educational Communications and Technology for his significant and consistent contributions to the field of instructional technology.



- **Daniel Barr, Ph.D.**, associate professor of history, won the Philip S. Klein Pennsylvania History Prize from the Pennsylvania Historical Association for his article, "A Road for Warriors: The Western Delawares and the Seven Years' War."



- **Monica VanDieren, Ph.D.**, assistant professor of mathematics, received an \$111,000 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for her model-theory research and outreach to promote mathematics and science to young women.