



# THE PWI SURVIVAL HANDBOOK

"Voices Amplified: Empowering Students of  
Diverse Backgrounds in PWI Spaces"



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# Introduction

Our mission is to create a community at RIT that is supportive of all students, regardless of their race, gender identity, sexuality, socioeconomic status, or any other demographic variables.

This zine was inspired by a need we saw to provide resources and a space of solidarity to ALANA students, as well as to educate non-ALANA students on the challenges and joys of existing as such on the RIT campus.

Our hope is that you will read this and leave with either a sense of belonging, new information, or both.



# Land acknowledgement



We gather on the traditional territory of the Onöndowa'ga:' or "the people of the Great Hill."

In English, they are known as Seneca people, "the keeper of the western door." They are one of the six nations that make up the sovereign Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

We honor the land on which RIT was built and recognize the unique relationship that the Indigenous stewards have with this land. That relationship is the core of their traditions, cultures, and histories.

We recognize the history of genocide, colonization, and assimilation of Indigenous people that took place on this land. Mindful of these histories, we work towards understanding, acknowledging, and ultimately reconciliation.



# ALANA Glossary

**ACA (ALANA Collegiate Association)**- A representative student organization that exists to better the collegiate experience for ALANA students and represent them in student government.

**ALANA**- ALANA-African, Latin, Asian, and Native American. AALANA-African American, Latino/a American, and Native American students and employees of RIT.

**ASC (Academic Success Center)**- An office located in the SAU that provides resources for academic success.

**DDI (Division of Diversity and Inclusion)**- The Division of Diversity and Inclusion works collaboratively with the entire RIT community to create an environment that embraces all students, faculty and staff.

**Faculty Senate**- RIT's Faculty Senate consists of a membership elected by the various colleges.

**Global Union**- RSO representing International students.

**HEOP (Higher Education Opportunity Program)**- A New York State organization which provides the opportunity to pursue a private higher-education for historically disadvantaged students.

**NSC (NTID student council/congress)**- RSO representing NTID students.

**Outspoken**- RSO representing LGBT students.

**PWI (Predominantly White Institution)**- An institution (school, company, etc.) where the majority of the people that are involved are white.





# ALANA Glossary

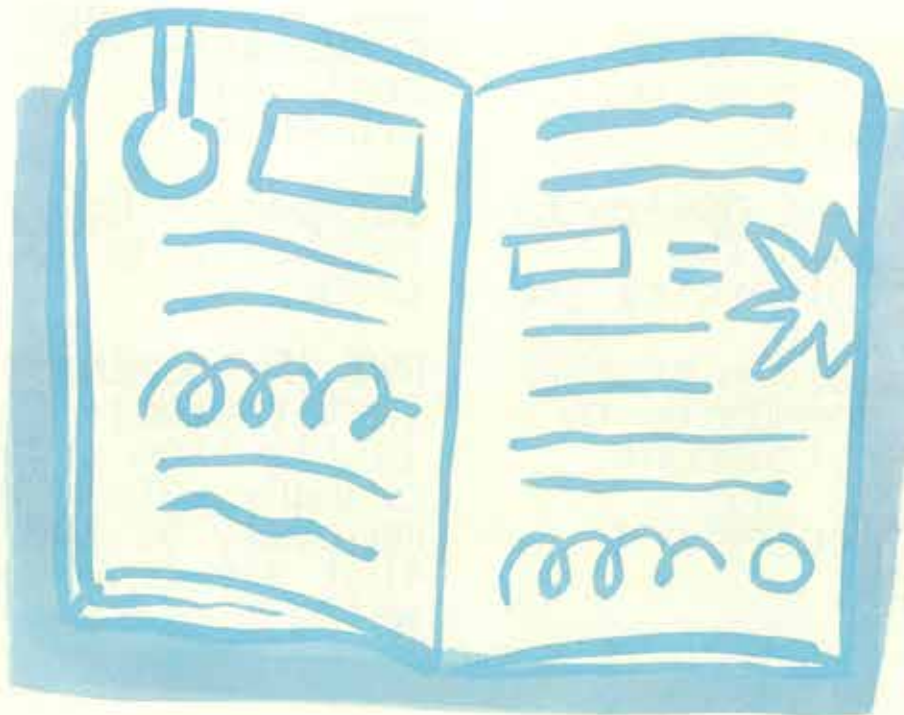
**RSO (Representative Student Organization)**- A subset of student government that exists to represent specific communities at RIT.

**SAC (Student Athlete Advisory Council)**- RSO representing student athletes.

**Staff Council**- The Staff Council initiates policy proposals/revisions, and raises issues for university consideration.

**Student Government RIT**- Student Government's mission is to represent the interests of the student body through the implementation of innovative programs, services, and initiatives that enrich student lives.

**University Council**- The University Council is a group of representatives that consists of the Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and Student Government.





# Support Offices, Resources, & Physical Spaces

**MCAS office**- Located on the second floor of the SAU above Nathan's Soups. Provides academic support to ALANA students as well as a space to relax and study.

**HEOP office**- Located on the second floor of the Campus Center room 03-2720. Support for students in HEOP.

**Women, Gender, and Sexuality Resource Center**- Located on the second floor of the Campus Center room 03-2720. "Provides advocacy, education, and celebration for RIT community members of all genders, gender identities, and sexual orientations."

**Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)** - Located on the second floor of the August center. Mental health support services for RIT students, there is an embedded therapist in MCAS from CAPS.

**OUTspoken**- Located on the ground floor of the campus center in the commuter lounge. They are an RSO for LGBTQIA2S+ students, providing advocacy and representation in Student Government, as well as support services for students.

**Writing center**- First floor of Wallace Library room 5-1640. Provides writing support and consultation by appointment (schedule online).





# Support Offices, Resources, & Physical Spaces

**DDI Hotspot**- Located in Clark A, just up the stairs in the SAU. Provides peer academic support with various courses (see list/schedule of courses on website or @MCASRIT instagram page).

**C.S.T.E.P**- Located on the second floor of the Campus Center room 03-2720. Provides support in STEM for students in the NY state program.

**McNair**- Located on the second floor of the Campus Center room 03-2720. Program for grad school support. Apply online.

**Women In Computing**- Second Located on the second floor of Golisano room 2350. A group dedicated to removing barriers for women and all gender minorities in both the academic and professional spheres.

**Academic Success Center**- Located in the SAU up the stairs next to Artesanos. Provides academic support for students.

**LSAMP**- (Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation)- Located on the second floor of the Campus Center room 03-2720. Provides support for underrepresented students in STEM.





# Clubs and Organizations

**COSALANA** (College of Science ALANA) - Support for College of Science ALANA students.

**College of Science Ambassadors Program** - Provides support for students relating to the greater RIT community.

**ECCO** (Engineers of Color Creating Opportunities) - Provides leadership development, community service opportunities, and support for ALANA engineering students.

**M.O.C.H.A** (Men of Color Honor and Ambition)

**W.O.C.H.A** (Women of Color Honor and Ambition)

**NSBE** (National Society for Black Engineers)

**BACC** (Black Awareness Coordinating Committee)

**OAS** (Organization of African Students)

**CSA** (Caribbean Student Association)

**LASA** (Latin American Student Association)

**TBTC** (The Black Thought Collective)

**LuL chapters** (La Unidad Latina, Lambda Upsilon Lambda Fraternity, Inc.)

**Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.**

**Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.**

**Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.**

**Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.**

**Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc**



# Clubs and Organizations

**Unity House**-Special interest housing for african american students. Located on Colby E

**Corazones Unidos Siempre, Chi Upsilon Sigma National Latin Sorority, Inc.**

**La Unidad Latina, Lambda Upsilon Lambda Fraternity, Inc.**

**Latino America Unida, Lambda Alpha Upsilon Fraternity, Inc.**

**Sigma Lambda Upsilon/ Señoritas Latinas Unidas Sorority, Inc.**

**Omega Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.**

**Alpha Kappa Delta Phi International Sorority Inc.**

**Sigma Psi Zeta Sorority, Inc.**

**SHPE** (Society for Hispanic Professional Engineers)

**Black Thought Collective**- Black discussion group

**COMS** (Computing Organization of Multicultural Students)

**Velocity**- Hip Hop dance group

**LOCS** (League of Curly-Haired Students)





# RIT throughout the years

Meet professor Luvon Shepard. After graduating highschool he attended Roberts Wesleyan for two years. Originally, his plan was to obtain a general education degree in history and pursue an art degree later, but after running out of money during his sophomore year he decided to take a break to work.



During this time, he was drafted into the army. While he was away, the country was going through a period of social upheaval. The civil rights movement was in full effect, there were race riots happening in Rochester, and the Kennedy assassination had just taken place.

The moment Professor Luvon Shepard first stepped foot on campus he realized that the community here at RIT was vastly different from the community he had been accustomed to growing up in Rochester. If his old community was a fishpond, RIT was an ocean. In highschool Luvon was the best artist in class, but at RIT there were at least 40 other students who were just as good as he was.

Not only did Luvon face an increase in competition, but he was one of the only black students on campus at the time. When he attended RIT, there were no black student organizations and nowhere to go to meet people of color.





# RIT throughout the years

He recalled having only two black professors during his education at RIT. Despite being in such an unfamiliar environment, his time in the military gave him a unique perspective, a different outlook on the world. He didn't feel shocked by what was happening like most people at the time. His exposure to other places and people made him realize that what matters most is your frame of mind.

After graduating from RIT, Luvon got a job at the Memorial Art Gallery and began using his knowledge and experiences to build relationships between The Gallery and inner city communities. As more black students began attending RIT, they formed black student organizations and began pressuring school officials to hire more faculty of color. Shortly after the ALANA students started advocating for the betterment of the community, Luvon was scouted by the Dean of CAD and offered a job.

## Minority Students, Faculty Sought

The RIT Minority Student and Faculty Recruitment Committee has been established to facilitate the acquisition of additional minority graduate students and faculty. For the first year, the committee will implement these objectives through industry loans, the use of the Educational Testing Service's Minority Graduate Student Locator Service, scholarship aid, the acquisition of grants, and cooperation with all academic units in the identification of minority students and faculty who would be interested in RIT.

The committee will also attempt to establish ties with one or more primarily Black or Hispanic colleges for the purpose of facilitating faculty exchanges that are approved by the respective academic units. All objectives are part of a three-year development plan.



# RIT throughout the years

Despite being hired primarily to make the students of color on campus feel more welcome, everyone loved having him as a professor. To him, being hired was just as beneficial for the ALANA students as it was for the non-ALANA students.

His experiences as a student and professor at RIT taught him that diversity benefits everyone. Creating spaces that encourage us all to embrace our culture and showcase individuality is the key to growing as a community.

## RIT Time Machine





# Supporting Indigenous Students

Sharing insight on the history of Indigenous Students at RIT, how we can better support indigenous students, and the experience of indigeneity at RIT, we have Kendall Scott, the director of the Native American Future Stewards Program:

"RIT is situated on land with ancestral ties to the Seneca Nation, one of the six nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. The Seneca people refer to themselves as Onöndowa'ga:' in their own language. The Haudenosaunee Confederacy played a significant role in the development of democratic principles, influencing the formation of the United States Constitution. Their system of governance, based on principles of consensus-building and representative decision-making, left a lasting mark on the concept of democracy. It's important to acknowledge and honor this rich heritage as part of our college's history."

"The historical presence of Native American students on our campus dates back several decades, but it has been an evolving journey. The Native American Future Stewards Program, initially known as the Future Stewards Initiative, was established in 2008 by Dr. Jason Yonkers."





# Supporting Indigenous Students

The Future Stewards Initiative has played a pivotal role in fostering a supportive environment for Native American students at RIT, aiming to enhance their academic and social experiences. Over time, the representation of Native American students has evolved as the program has grown and diversified. Currently, student clubs like the Hawaii Culture Club, American Indian Science and Engineering Society, and Native American Student Association operate under the umbrella of the Future Stewards Program, further enriching the campus community and promoting cultural awareness and engagement."

"At our institution, Native American students have historically encountered significant challenges in accessing education. These challenges include a lack of representation, financial barriers, cultural misunderstandings, academic preparation disparities, and geographical obstacles. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that includes providing culturally responsive support services, financial assistance, academic preparation programs, and fostering an inclusive campus environment. By recognizing and actively working to overcome these challenges, we can create a more equitable and supportive educational experience for Native American students."





# Supporting Indigenous Students

"Incorporating the perspectives and voices of indigenous peoples into advocacy work for Native American students on campus is paramount. We prioritize creating spaces for indigenous students to share their experiences, concerns, and aspirations. This includes actively involving indigenous students in organizations that operate under FSP. Additionally, we collaborate closely with tribal leaders, elders, and community members to ensure that their voices are heard and respected in decision-making processes that impact Native American students. By centering indigenous perspectives in our advocacy efforts, we strive to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all indigenous students on campus."

## Staff and faculty Q & A

What do you like about being a person of color on campus?

"I enjoy being able to connect with students from underrepresented backgrounds who aren't in the college of science or interested in science but see representation through me."





# Student Q & A

What do you like about being a person of color on campus?

"We have a big ALANA community here at RIT. Because we're at a PWI we stick together and support each other academically, mentally and physically."

"I enjoy being able to connect with my peers. I feel like I'm in a bigger space and have more opportunities to meet more people of color."

"There's a large number of opportunities here on campus. There's so many clubs, organizations and societies that you can join. There's a lot of resources on campus that you can utilize. Anything you need is on campus you just need to know where to look. There's a lot of freedom here at RIT. You can learn anything you want and you have access to all of RIT's labs and resources."

"Even though we're at a PWI everyone in the Black Student Organizations make you feel welcome and at home."





# Student Q & A

What do you like about being a person of color on campus?

"I enjoy hanging out with the other black students here at RIT. Even though we're all black, we're all from different parts of the world. It's interesting to see how our experiences can be the same in some ways and different in others."

"My favorite part of my experience as a POC on campus is the community. Even though we're small, we're very tight knit."

"I enjoy being a part of RIT's Black community. Every black student I met on campus is supportive, friendly and wants to build community. It's great to be a part of a community where you feel safe and welcome."





# Staff and faculty Q & A

## How can RIT improve?

"There's only a few faculty members of color here on campus so it's hard finding a community of people that look like you, come from the same socio economic background as you or like the same music as you. RIT should work on recruiting more diverse faculty and find ways for faculty members of color to mentor students. Having someone who recognizes and understands your culture is important. As a dean I can advocate for students from underrepresented socio economic backgrounds and help faculty better understand their experiences."

"The number of hispanic faculty and staff is very minimal. The number of Hispanic people in leadership roles is nonexistent. Culturally authentic food was a problem when I started and it continues to be a problem. There's no food that I like on campus. Before covid I was only eating salads and chicken. Now there's Pasta bakes at Ritz but it's nowhere close to rice and beans or the other foods that I normally eat. Visiting chefs are pretty lacking as well. There's so many great local restaurants that aren't even considered. RIT and Rochester are two completely different worlds. Finding a way to bridge the two communities together could benefit the university and the students."



# Student Q & A

## How can RIT improve?

"Orientation groups should be more ethnically diverse. When I was freshman I was the only black person in my group and it made me feel left out. They should also incorporate interactive racial bias training into orientation. I remember during my first year a black lives matter flag was put up in Kodak quad. At night a group of white people tried to take the flag down and put up a Trump flag. As a community we went together and tried to tell them to stop. It was a bad situation and it never got resolved. It felt like they could do whatever they wanted without any repercussions. When it comes to identity based housing Unity house isn't what it needs to be either. Every year we recruit and try to get the floor filled with black people and every year there's a white person on the floor. They usually don't even know how they got there. We should be able to have the entire Unity House for Unity House."

RIT needs a safe space for Students of color. Sure there's places to go, but we need somewhere to call our own."



# Student Q & A

## How can RIT improve?

The first way RIT can improve to accommodate people of color is recognizing where they aren't doing enough. RIT should strive to show their support for the ALANA community by being less performative and more action oriented. Students of color should know that there are organizations and communities on campus that aim to make their collegiate experience better. The university should work on being more respectful of our culture and making culturally diverse experiences more available to Alana students. Right now there are only a few approved caterers. Most of the visiting chefs aren't even approved caterers. There's so many amazing authentic restaurants in the area and we're still not seeing enough of our REAL cultural food. We also need better living conditions in special interest houses so students will want to stay on floor. Right now the only identity based special interest house we have is Unity House and Colby E doesn't have air conditioning. ALANA students need RIT to put more effort into hiring and retaining faculty and staff of color. We need to see more people who look like us and understand us in positions of power on campus."



# Student Q & A

## How can RIT improve?

"We think RIT should have more culturally connected spaces. It feels like the Mosaic center is being gentrified. We'd appreciate it if we could have our own space for people of color who want to connect."

"Rit says a lot but doesn't necessarily do a lot to back up their words. RIT's promises seem to be geared towards getting new students and not necessarily retaining them. If Rit put more effort into supporting the students that are already here ALANA or otherwise, it would approve the RIT experience for everyone."



# Finally Some Good F\*\*\*\*\*G Food

**Jamaican Soul** (211 Genesee St,  
Rochester, NY 14611)

**Europa Deli** (1694 Penfield Rd,  
Rochester, NY 14625)

**Livie's Jamaican Restaurant & Import  
Market** (375 Chili Ave, Rochester, NY  
14611)

**Reggae Jamaica Restaurant & Bakery** (1485  
Dewey Ave, Rochester, NY 14615)

**Dmangu** (154 Genesee St, Rochester, NY  
14611)

**BBQ CHICKEN korean BBQ** (510 Monroe Ave,  
Rochester, NY 14607)

**Borinquen Bakery & Restaurant** (1195 N  
Clinton Ave, Rochester, NY 14621)

**El Latino Restaurant** (1195 N Clinton  
Ave, Rochester, NY 14621)

**Mi Viejo San Juan Restaurant** (1143  
Joseph Ave, Rochester, NY 14621)

**Peppa pot** (522 E Main St, Rochester, NY  
14604)

**Everything Iz Good** (522 E Main St,  
Rochester, NY 14604)

**Dmangu** (154 Genesee St, Rochester, NY  
14611)



# Annual events

Carabash (U of R) - September

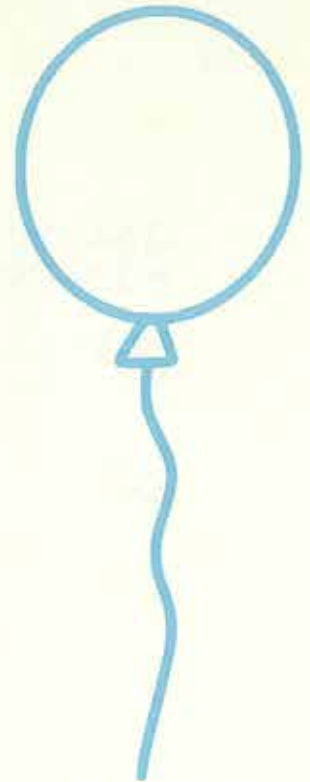
Jouvet (Geneseo) - September

DDI Family Meeting (R.I.T) -  
October

Lambaween - October

College Night (The Strong  
Museum) - November

Spring Fest (R.I.T) - April



## Statement of Information

All of the quotes and stories in this zine were gathered from ALANA students and faculty at RIT. Statistics were gathered from various sources, all of which can be found using the URLs at the bottom of each page. Thank you for reading!

