Commencement? What does it mean? Maybe it mostly means “relief.” After years of having a student in college, you now have a college graduate.

However you view it, commencement is a beginning, not an end. Each year, more than 3,000 students proudly walk across the RIT graduation stage. In their heads are calculus equations, business principles, essays they’ve read and, hopefully, all the knowledge they’ve accumulated in their relatively short time here. As they approach the stairs to the stage, they are students; as they leave, they are alumni. For them, it’s the beginning of a different way of life and a different relationship with the college.

Their undergraduate study may be behind them, but they still have decisions to make. Shall they look for a job in their hometown or elsewhere? Shall they set their sights on additional academic degrees? Should they travel the world? Whatever they decide, they should know there is support for them right here.

NTID’s Director of Alumni Relations, Jan Esposito, herself an RIT alumna, is your graduate’s direct connection.

A pep rally kicked off NTID/GALLY Weekend, a spring event sponsored by NTID Student Congress that alternates locations between RIT/NTID and Gallaudet every year. Students come from colleges as far away as California to meet and socialize with other deaf and hard-of-hearing students from all over the country.

After the scheduled sporting events, students danced and ate their way through the evening and ended up at a post-party held on campus that offered a climbing wall, sumo-wrestling, and of course, more food!

RIT/NTID’s flag football team played Gallaudet in one of several friendly competitions.

Jon Lejeune was really into the swing of things showing school spirit with classic RIT brown and orange face paint.

In this issue:
- Home for the Summer
- Calm Down
- Staying Hale and Hearty
- Parents Make it Happen
- Financial Aid

The RIT tiger mascot helped get things started at the NTID/GALLY Weekend pep rally.

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Calm Down!

By Virginia Kitchens, Associate Dean
Division of Student Affairs

It seems to be a lot of

If you view college communities as

You can imagine that campuses are not immune

each social issue. For example,

Research shows that more than

Students entering college are

Sharing a room for the first time, and

Sharing it with a roommate who is a

virtual stranger. This new relationship

is happening while students are trying to

absorb all other aspects of college life.

Sometimes these interpersonal

relationships are not easy to manage.

And then we read that, on some

campuses around the nation, students

are complaining about being

harassed by fellow students via e-mail.

Many of the difficulties that arise are

the result of inadequate conflict

resolution skills. Here are a few conflict

resolution tips to share with your

student that will hopefully help him or

her avoid interpersonal difficulties.

- Communicate directly with the person

  with whom you have the issue.
- Try not to discuss the issue in the heat

  of the moment.
- Talk about concerns while they are

  small; don't wait until a disagreement

  escalates.
- If necessary, ask for help—an

  instructor, peer, or a resident assistant

  may offer a good perspective on

  resolving the conflict.

Stress is a normal part of college life.

Our goal is to help your son or daughter

learn to advocate for himself or herself in

a productive way, and to negotiate

positively the encounters that will add

richness to his or her campus experience.

Developing conflict resolution skills

serves us all—both on campus and on

the nation's highways. Here's to

controlling the road rage in all of us!

Student Poets Visit Japan

Last year, Film and Animation

major Sam Sepah was thrilled

when he learned that, as a

winner of the Robert F.

Panara Haiku/Tanka Competition, a

video of him performing his haiku

would be shown on an outdoor video

screen in Tokyo, near the United States

Embassy.

Thanks to the Postsecondary Education

Network (PEN)-International, sponsor

of the annual competition, Sam and

four other winning poets from RIT/NTID

visited Japan in May to celebrate

their artistic success and enjoy

a cultural exchange.

Combining an ancient Japanese poetry

form with the expressive beauty of

American and Japanese Sign

Languages, the Haiku/Tanka

Competition has become an annual

opportunity for students from both

RIT/NTID and Japan's Tsukuba College

of Technology (TCT) to try their hand at

creative poetry writing.

The competition began in 2000 as the

brainchild of now-retired NTID Professor

Jerome Cushman, as a way to honor

beloved Professor Robert F. Panara.

Panara, NTID's first deaf faculty member,

regularly incorporated haiku into

the English classes he taught for deaf

and hearing students.

Cushman's idea found support from

PEN-International Director James DeCaro

and The Nippon Foundation of Japan,

the philanthropic organization that funds

PEN-International.

According to competition rules, students

may submit Haiku (three-line poems) as

well as Tankas (five-line poems).

This year, a record 249 poems

were submitted by 28 students from

both schools.

Competition winners were announced

at the annual event, which this year

took place at RIT/NTID.

Competitions were staged separately at

both colleges, but video conferencing

allowed the students to watch each

other's performances.

This year's RIT/NTID student winners are

Stephen S. McDonald, Sam S. Sepah,

Jessica A. Thumber, Jack R. Williams, and

Christopher J. Zahnle. Honorable

mentions were given to Leon Lin,

Michelle Peterson, and Cassie Haynes.

McDonald's Tanka follows:

red sun
on the horizon
reflecting off
knolls of sand
my desire to drink

TCT's five student winners and four

faculty members visited RIT/NTID in

March, and welcomed NTID's student

winners and chaperones in May.

Winning poems can be found on the

PEN-International Web site at