



Dean, National Technical Institute for the Deaf
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rochester, New York

THE OPPORTUNITY

The National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), the world's first and largest technological college for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (DHH) students and one of the nine colleges of Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), seeks an inspiring, visionary, and student-centered leader to serve as its next dean. As the only institution of its kind embedded within a major research university, NTID plays a defining role in shaping educational pathways and advancing equity for DHH learners.

This is an exceptional opportunity for a dynamic academic leader who can champion NTID's distinctive strengths while guiding the institute through an evolving landscape in higher education, technology, and student support. The dean will be a steward of NTID's academic enterprise, fostering collaboration across RIT's colleges and supporting faculty and staff in pursuing teaching, scholarship, and innovation that advance NTID's mission. The dean will join RIT and NTID at a pivotal moment as the institute refines its strategic priorities, deepens its research enterprise, and reimagines pathways that prepare DHH learners for a changing world.

Success in this role will require a seasoned academic administrator with a record of scholarly achievement and a deep commitment to inclusive pedagogy and student success. They will bring a steady hand to complex academic planning and a forward-looking mindset to questions of program evolution, resource stewardship, and institutional direction. Equally important is a leadership style grounded in empathy, integrity, and curiosity that creates a campus climate where people feel supported. Effective communication skills for this role will include advanced proficiency in American Sign Language and familiarity with Deaf culture and the challenges facing DHH students and graduates.

To assist in this important search, RIT and NTID have engaged Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, in partnership with Innivee Strategies, a Deaf-owned and led national executive search firm.

Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the firms as indicated at the end of this document.

HISTORY

NTID was established in 1965 with a mission to provide exceptional technical and professional education to DHH students. Following many years of dedicated advocacy by political, educational, and Deaf community leaders, Public Law 89-63 was signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965 to authorize the creation of NTID as a coeducational postsecondary institution dedicated to serving DHH students. RIT competed against eight other institutions before being selected as NTID's sponsoring university, and the Institute officially began operations in 1968. RIT was selected as the home for NTID based on its strength in technical education, its reputation for preparing students for successful careers, and its well-established and highly successful cooperative education (co-op) program.

Throughout its history, NTID has celebrated numerous milestones that underscore its impact on local and global stages. The Institute has developed partnerships with peer institutions worldwide, enhancing international collaboration and cultural exchange. Today, NTID remains a beacon of excellence in Deaf education, committed to empowering students through comprehensive academic programs.

CURRENT CONTEXT

NTID is one of the nine colleges within RIT. NTID functions as an independent entity primarily funded by government resources and offers specialized programs and services. Additionally, it provides students with accessible academic and extracurricular opportunities within the larger RIT community.

RIT commenced a strategic planning process in 2024 to develop a framework to guide its direction over the next decade. The RIT Strategic Framework will be finalized by late February 2026, and the strategic pillars include transformative student experiences and success; world-changing research; a culture of well-being and belonging; and global reach and mindset. NTID is beginning its college strategic framework (NTID Strategic Journey) process in spring 2026, which will be built on the RIT Strategic Framework.

Academics

NTID is one of the world's leading academic institutions in the education of DHH students and is a powerful force for change in their lives. NTID offers a multifaceted approach to an accessible and inclusive educational experience, with a focus on career success. RIT/NTID offers a breadth of academic programs. Some programs are directly administered by NTID, including associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. Cross-registration, where NTID-supported students are matriculated in one of RIT's other colleges, is seamless with any RIT program. NTID's AAS and AOS degree pathways are central to its mission, providing students with direct workforce preparation and a solid academic foundation. The current enrollment includes approximately 54% of NTID students enrolled in RIT [Bachelor's Degree Programs](#) and 14% in [Graduate Degree Programs](#). NTID has about 16% of students enrolled in [Career-Focused Associate](#)

[Degree Programs](#), 15% in [Associate + Bachelor's Degree Programs](#), 14% in [ASL-English interpretation](#), and 7% in the [Master of Science in Secondary Education](#).

RIT/NTID delivers relevant, experiential educational programs that empower students to be problem solvers ready to contribute immediately to the workforce, no matter where their ambitions take them. These programs are complemented by one of the longest-running and most successful co-op programs in the country. Students join the NTID community from a variety of educational backgrounds and experiences, as well as preferred language and communication mode(s). RIT/NTID is widely regarded for its accessibility for DHH students, and RIT is one of only six universities in the nation to be named a Microsoft Accessible University. RIT/NTID Audiology and Speech and Language Centers mean that students don't have to leave RIT's campus for comprehensive audiological, cochlear implant, and speech-language services. RIT/NTID offers students a wholly unique educational experience that celebrates the distinctive culture of the DHH community integrated in a top-100 private research university that blends cutting-edge science, technology, and business with the arts and design to advance societal good.

Student Body and Campus Life

NTID currently serves more than 1,100 students, many of whom live, study, and work alongside hearing students on the RIT campus. RIT/NTID is deeply committed to access and attracts students from across the U.S. and around the globe; 61% of incoming NTID students arrive from mainstream high schools, and 39% come from schools for deaf students. In the last academic year, RIT/NTID provided more than 128,000 hours of interpreting services in and out of the classroom, more than 28,000 hours of captioning services, and more than 44,000 hours of notetaking.

With a number of [student clubs and activities within NTID](#) and more than 300 student clubs and organizations supporting 13,000+ on- and off-campus events, RIT/NTID students are actively engaged in a vibrant campus life experience. Involvement opportunities range from [24 varsity athletic teams](#) to [NTID performing arts productions](#), where DHH performers create thrilling theater experiences.

Faculty and Staff

NTID's dedicated and talented faculty and staff provide direct instruction, tutoring, academic advising, and counseling for DHH students pursuing academic programs at NTID. NTID currently employs 557 faculty and staff. The faculty comprises 49 tenured and tenure-track faculty, and 95 non-tenure-track faculty. The staff comprises 413 employees, including 207 access service professionals such as ASL-English Interpreters and captionists. Many NTID faculty and staff are alumni themselves, often rejoining after working for some time in industry or government, showcasing the deep impact the NTID educational experience has on students who remain a part of the community as alumni and throughout their professional careers.

Research

NTID strives to be a global leader in DHH research that enhances the lives of DHH individuals. Faculty at NTID work either on discipline-based research within their own academic departments or come together in research centers and labs to work on strategic research projects. Students are encouraged to actively collaborate with faculty on research projects. Research and scholarship are organized into centers focusing on four strategic areas: teaching and learning; communication; technology, access, and support services; and employment and adaptability to social changes and the global workforce.

Research centers include the [NTID Center on Access Technology](#), the [NTID Research Center on Culture and Language](#), the [Sensory, Perceptual, and Cognitive Ecology \(SPaCE\) Center](#), the [Center for International Educational Outreach](#), [DeafTEC: Technological Education Center for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students](#), and the [Deaf Health Care and Biomedical Science Hub \(Deaf Hub\)](#). Research labs include the [deaf x laboratory](#) and the [Perception, Language, and Attention in Youth \(PLAY\) Lab](#). Research remains a top priority for RIT/NTID as RIT pursues R1 university status. RIT's research enterprise reached \$105 million in expenditures for Fiscal Year 2025.

President Caroline M. Solomon

A renowned scientist and researcher, Dr. Caroline M. Solomon is the first woman to lead NTID since the college's establishment in 1965. Throughout her career, Solomon has devoted herself to encouraging and nurturing deaf and hard-of-hearing students in STEM fields. She joined the faculty of Gallaudet University as a biology instructor in 2000 and rose to the rank of professor in 2011. She received Gallaudet's Distinguished Faculty Award in 2013 and was recognized by the Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography with their Ramon Margalef Award for Excellence in Education in 2017. She was appointed the dean of faculty at Gallaudet in 2024.

Solomon earned a bachelor's degree in environmental science and public policy from Harvard University and a master's degree in biological oceanography from the University of Washington's School of Oceanography. She earned a PhD in marine, environmental, and estuarine sciences from the University of Maryland and has presented her research at national and international conferences. She is the co-creator of a database of science- and technology-related terms in American Sign Language to enhance accessibility for individuals who are deaf studying or working in the sciences.

Rochester Institute of Technology

As one of the nine colleges of RIT, NTID is integrated into the vibrant social and academic life of one of the top universities in the nation, working at the intersection of technology, the arts, and design. The university enrolls more than 14,000 undergraduates and 2,600 graduate students in more than 200 programs across nine academic colleges, four [international campuses](#), and other degree-granting units. *U.S. News & World Report (USNWR)* ranks RIT No. 88 in its "National Universities" category. The publication also ranks RIT No. 5 in the U.S. for co-op or internship programs, and No. 42 among most innovative schools.

ROLE OF THE DEAN

The dean is the chief academic officer for NTID and has responsibility for all academic programs, program assessment, research administration, and faculty development. They will also work collaboratively with NTID academic affairs staff and faculty to implement academic strategic planning and program evaluation. The dean serves as the NTID representative to the RIT Academic Council, along with the other deans of RIT's colleges, to collaborate on academic and research programs and to strengthen student support initiatives. The dean works collaboratively with NTID and RIT staff and faculty to ensure the NTID academic mission will enhance student achievement, faculty success, and creative scholarship. The dean, in collaboration with the NTID president, will support professional development and evaluation of NTID Academic Affairs staff and faculty.

The dean reports to NTID President/RIT Vice President Caroline Solomon. As chief academic officer, the dean is supported by a talented team of 2 associate deans, 9 department chairs, the Executive Director of NTID Professional & Student Scholar Development, and the Senior Director for Research Development.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN

Lead NTID through shifting demographics and rapid technological change.

NTID is experiencing a shift in who its students are and their educational backgrounds, shaped by changing Deaf identities, widespread mainstreaming, and a pipeline of learners whose communication backgrounds and academic preparation vary more than ever before. Many students arrive with uneven foundations, particularly in reading, math, and ASL exposure, which places new demands on advising, support structures, and pedagogy. The next dean will partner across units to better understand feeder systems and adapt academic and co-curricular supports to meet students where they are. Enrollment planning will be a central task; historic reliance on a limited set of Deaf schools is no longer sufficient on its own, and NTID will benefit from creative, proactive recruitment that engages mainstream K-12 settings, community organizations, and international pipelines.

As NTID adapts to this increasingly diverse student population at a technical university, the dean will champion a balanced academic environment that advances technological innovation and pedagogy while grounding students in the liberal arts. The liberal arts nurture students' curiosity, communication skills, and capacity to understand different perspectives. With that grounding, students are better prepared to engage confidently with the rapidly expanding influence of AI. Building on these strengths, the dean will be expected to integrate new technologies into the academic vision, expand NTID's AI initiatives, and position the college as a leader in accessible technology. There is room to expand technology-enabled learning and strengthen industry connections.

Reimagine academic programs and expand innovative pathways aligned with workforce needs.

NTID is well-positioned to refresh its academic portfolio to expand access and accelerate career momentum. Building on existing strengths, the next dean can expand certificate and short-term credential options to meet learners at different stages and to respond quickly to emerging workforce demands. A thoughtful review will help programs stay current with evolving technologies and industry practices while preserving the strengths that make NTID distinctive. Programs should be reviewed on a regular cadence, and the dean will collaborate with faculty to make measured adjustments, including directing energy toward areas of growing student interest and workforce demand, such as health-adjacent fields and accessible technology. The successful dean should reduce the obstacles that often slow program development, enabling new programs to move more quickly from concept to launch. This includes improving approval processes and incorporating early input from employer partners.

Foster collaboration across RIT and beyond.

The next dean will play a pivotal role in strengthening the institute's connections across RIT, ensuring that students and faculty are fully integrated into the university's academic and research ecosystem. Opportunities abound to deepen partnerships with RIT's other colleges, where shared interests in technology, human-centered design, creativity, and accessibility can spark meaningful interdisciplinary work. Clearer pathways for cross-registration, co-teaching, and joint program development will help NTID students access the full breadth of RIT's offerings, while giving RIT students greater exposure to Deaf culture and accessibility leadership.

Externally, in partnership with the NTID president, the dean can expand relationships with schools, nonprofits, employers, and industry partners who can be successful collaborators in curriculum offerings, research, or strong co-op opportunities for students. These partnerships are vital to shaping programs that reflect current workforce needs and to creating more opportunities for students to engage with real-world projects.

Elevate research and accessibility initiatives.

NTID is uniquely positioned to advance as a leader in applied research, particularly in areas that sit at the intersection of technology, accessibility, and Deaf studies. There is a strong interest in expanding scholarship in areas where NTID has notable strengths and room to grow: assistive technologies, AI, communication access, and the lived experiences of DHH communities. The next dean will play a key role in strengthening the infrastructure that supports this work, from mentoring early-career faculty to shaping processes, start-up support, and grant development pipelines that help researchers pursue ambitious projects. Scaling professional development will be critical; there is a need for clearer guidance on research expectations and for more structured preparation to secure external funding. The dean will also advocate for the resources, like time, staffing, and collaborative spaces, that further this work.

Advance student success, retention, and belonging.

The next dean will be a present, visible leader engaged in the day-to-day life of the community. The next dean will meet students where they are, show up in academic and co-curricular spaces, and communicate clearly about priorities and decisions that affect their experience. A key focus will be advocating for cross-registered students as they navigate programs across RIT, and strengthening coordination so pathways, expectations, and support services feel seamless.

Access remains central to this work. Services and communication should be responsive to diverse modalities, with particular attention to deafblind students and others with specialized needs. The dean will encourage culturally responsive communication and set expectations for inclusion in every interaction. Just as important is social belonging and creating environments where students can connect with peers, faculty, and staff. Emphasis on belonging, peer connection, and early, proactive interventions will be essential to improving student retention and outcomes.

Support a cohesive, inclusive, and transparent organizational culture.

The next dean will have the opportunity to strengthen a community already deeply committed to NTID's mission by refining the systems that guide collective work. This will mean clarifying roles and responsibilities, setting shared expectations, and documenting policies and processes that, over time, have become highly dependent on individual institutional memory. This clarity should be paired with meaningful professional development: coaching for department chairs and staff managers, mentorship and research support, and role-aligned growth pathways for staff. The community values accountability as a supportive, growth-oriented practice, and the dean will reinforce fair, transparent standards that align with NTID's shared goals. There is a desire for a leader who is not afraid to make thoughtful changes when existing structures no longer serve the community, and who can do so with transparency and respect.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no person will embody every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional and personal qualifications:

- A strong academic foundation, including a record of teaching, scholarship, and service, eligible for appointment at the rank of professor
- PhD or equivalent terminal degree from an accredited institution
- A deep understanding of and involvement in Deaf culture and the ability to work with diverse members of the DHH population representing a range of preferred languages and modes of communication
- Candidates must demonstrate advanced fluency in American Sign Language in alignment with NTID tenure and promotion requirements

- Significant academic administrative experience with proven ability to execute ambitious, fiscally responsible initiatives
- A record of developing and supporting excellent academic programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, both within and across disciplines
- Facility in change management, with the ability to empower, delegate, and build consensus
- Capacity to maintain poise in complex and conflictual situations, to understand opposing views clearly, and to persevere when principles or strategic considerations are at stake
- A deep, student-centered approach to academic leadership, with a record of strengthening systems that support persistence, belonging, and equitable outcomes
- A strong commitment to fostering belonging, and a record of demonstrated success in recruiting, advancing, retaining, and working collaboratively with a faculty and staff with varied backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives
- A participatory and collaborative leadership style
- Commitment to an active faculty governance model
- Recognition of the evolution of the higher education business model, the forces and trends impacting the landscape, and the ability to prepare the plan for a successful future
- Lead efforts to increase support of faculty research and scholarly contributions
- Ability to represent NTID and the academic mission to external audiences and/or demonstrate the potential for success in this work; strength in storytelling
- A commitment to sustaining a culture defined by trust, transparency, and open communication

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

This is a permanent, full-time position in Rochester, New York, with a targeted salary range of \$180,000 to \$190,000. Located just six miles from the RIT campus, Rochester, New York, is the third-largest metro area in New York State. The Rochester area is also home to one of, if not the largest, per capita population of deaf and hard-of-hearing people in America, with a very strong Deaf community and culture. While out at restaurants, sporting events, or arts and culture programs, accessibility and inclusive communication are centered in the community, and it is not uncommon to have staff and community members fluent in ASL.

The region between Lake Ontario and the scenic Finger Lakes is rich in cultural and ethnic diversity and is known for its intellectual capital, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit. Greater Rochester is home to leading companies, high-tech industries, and start-up enterprises in optics, photonics, imaging, advanced manufacturing, engineering, software and IT, food and beverage manufacturing, agriculture, and health care. As of the 2020 census, the metropolitan statistical area had a population of nearly 1.1 million.

Rochester is a multifaceted, vibrant city, and the region boasts an exceptional quality of life, with cultural amenities and recreational activities; affordable health care and cost of living; excellent schools; and the arts, culture, sports, and nightlife of a big city with the ease and comfort of a small town. The region has been ranked 6th among 379 metro areas as one of the “Best Places to Live in America” by Places Rated

Almanac. At the same time, Rochester has been ranked in the Top 50 for New Tech Hubs by Bloomberg, in the Top 25 for America's Most Innovative Cities by Forbes, and in the Top 10 for Smartest Cities in America by The Daily Beast. Rochester is a thriving culinary destination, a nature lover's paradise, a locale for charming festivals, and an imaginative arts and theater community.

Rochester is a six-hour drive to New York City and a three-hour drive to Toronto, and its airport includes non-stop flights to 23 cities in the U.S.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the search process is complete. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the [Isaacson, Miller website](#).

Isaacson, Miller
Pam Pezzoli, Partner
Annah Wells, Senior Associate
Melissa Barravecchio, Senior Search Coordinator

Innivee Strategies
Shane Feldman, CEO
Melissa Elmira Yingst, Consultant

RIT provides reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities under the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the New York Human Rights Law, or similar applicable law. If you need reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, and you wish to discuss potential accommodations related to your application for employment at RIT, please contact Isaacson, Miller and Innivee Strategies as indicated above.

RIT does not discriminate. RIT promotes and values diversity, pluralism, and inclusion in the workplace. RIT provides equal opportunity to all qualified individuals and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, age, marital status, sex, gender, religion, sexual orientations, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, veteran status, or disability in its hiring, admissions, educational programs, and activities. For more information or inquiries, please visit [RIT/TitleIX](#).

The hiring process for this position may involve a criminal background check and/or motor vehicle records check. Any verbal or written offer made is contingent on satisfactory results, as determined by RIT's Human Resources. RIT uses E-Verify to confirm employment eligibility for new and existing employees working on federally funded contracts that contain that requirement. Before considering employment with RIT, please read the language from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the Social Security Administration, and the Department of Justice by clicking on the associated links below. You must have Adobe Reader to view these posters.

[English E-Verify Participation Poster](#)

[Spanish E-Verify Participation Poster](#)

[English Right to Work Poster](#)

[Spanish Right to Work Poster](#)

Clery Act Safety Information

Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) is committed to the safety and security of all members of its community. The Clery Act information is provided in compliance with federal law to inform current and potential RIT students and employees of crime reporting procedures; Campus Safety law enforcement authority; crime statistics for three previous calendar years; and other matters of importance related to safety and security on campus. You can obtain a copy of the most recent [annual Safety and Security report online](#) or by contacting the Office of Public Safety at (585) 475-2853 or by sending a request to RIT Public Safety 61 Lomb Memorial Drive Rochester, NY 14623-5603.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Rochester Institute of Technology. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by Rochester Institute of Technology would supersede any conflicting information in this document.