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"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

— FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

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EDITORIALS

No excuses at RIT

■ Commitment to diversity is responsible for major changes at the school.

The idea of a battery-powered blimp to videotape hockey games at Rochester Institute of Technology has been floating around for years. It was only when Alvin Spivey and his Imaging Science and Technology Club grabbed onto it that the blimp recently became a reality.

Spivey, an imaging science major, is one of a growing number of students of color on the RIT campus. His presence and that of more students and faculty who are African American, Latino and Native American are a credit to a commitment to diversity by RIT President Albert Simone and his administration.

Simone insists that his deans and department heads not engage in making tired excuses that there aren't enough qualified minority students and faculty available.

Over the past year, a specialized recruitment program was developed to focus on diversity. Look

at the results: This year alone, of 84 new faculty appointments, 26, or 31 percent, of all hires were from the three minority groups. The new hires nearly doubled minority faculty on campus.

Keep in mind that, nationally, only 6 percent of faculty in science and technology disciplines are African American, Native American and Latino.

Too, look at the improvement in student body makeup. At a time when RIT has become more selective, admitting students with a minimum mean grade point average of 89 and an average SAT of 1209, 10 percent of this year's freshman class are Latino, African American and Native American. That's a new record.

What's more, minority students at RIT have grown from 6 percent to 10 percent of entering engineers, while their ranks jumped from 14 percent to 22 percent in engineering technology and from 7 percent to 10 percent in science.

Commitment is clearly making a huge difference at RIT. That's how to keep talented students like Alvin Spivey coming. □