“What is the Rice education of the future?”

1. How can we change the holistic Rice experience to include the activities and experiences students derive the most value from, preparing them for the challenges of the 21st century?

2. How can we do this in a way that re-aligns the current Rice experience, rather than adding to and overwhelming it?
Overview

1. Survey of perceived value of the Rice experience
2. Results of the “Rice Education of the Future” campus-wide conversation
President Leebron’s pie chart

For illustrative purposes

President Leebron, Presentation to the SA, Fall 2014
Students perceive value outside the classroom

“The following experiences add value to your time at Rice. Reflect on how relevant they are to you, how unique they are, and how much they add value. Using the sliding bar assign 100 points across the seven to indicate the relative value of each to you.”

n=3,871/99.1% of all undergrads
Value proposition of “2025” is today

25.24% Classroom
9.70% International
16.07% Leadership
14.40% Research
11.78% Civic & community engagement
8.41% Entrepreneurial
14.40% Being mentored

President Leebron's Pie Chart (2025)

25.26% Classroom
6.32% International
20.00% Leadership
14.74% Research
11.78% Civic & community engagement
14.74% Entrepreneurial
9.47% Being mentored
Evolution over time

- Being mentored
- Entrepreneurial
- Civic & community engagement
- Research
- Leadership
- International
- Classroom

allocated percentage points

- fall 11
- fall 12
- fall 13
- fall 14
“How satisfied are you with each of the experiences you rated above?”
Campus wide conversation: “Rice education of the future” initiative

The Rice Education of the Future (REF) initiative facilitated campus-wide dialogue aimed at spurring institutional, ground-level change to address key aspects of the undergraduate experience, including academics, extra-curriculars, mentorship, and social life.

REF Team
Process

• Social media and photo campaign, engaging 1500 students, faculty and staff

• 10 discussion groups engaging 120 students, faculty and staff, in the following topics: Social Impact, Entrepreneurship, Mentorship, Teaching Excellence, Alumni/Houston Community, Expanded Resources, Integration, and Academic Improvements (in History, Psychology, and Biosciences)

• Second survey to assess student’s support and priorities for the final recommendations (400 participants)

• Town Hall attended by 70 members of the Rice community, synthesizing and generating consensus around key recommendations

• REF report and approval by SA Senate
Timeline

Oct 8th: Create the REF Initiative
Oct 7th-15th: Visit residential colleges
Oct 15th: Begin online engagement
Oct 22nd-Nov 14th: 8 Focus area panels
Dec 5th: Campus-wide Town Hall
Dec 10th: Synthesize findings into REF Report
Dec 11th: Report shared with administration and Board of Trustees
Jan/Feb 2015: Meet with administration to discuss findings
Resource intensive recommendations

• **Create new undergraduate courses that focus more on applied, direct, and experiential learning (#1 ranked on survey):** Offer courses that provide students an opportunity to solve real-life problems (such as ENGI 120) across all academic disciplines.

• **Create a "Rice Owl" platform (#2 ranked on survey):** Create an interactive digital hub of alumni and current undergraduates that provides profile information, career paths, and potential relationships based on shared interests. This could enhance mentorship and planning of undergraduate/postgraduate career, and “activate” the Owl Network.

• **Form an inward facing entrepreneurship organization and space (#3 ranked on survey):** Create an organization and physical space providing resources such as an year-round incubator, legal and financial services, mentorship, seed funding and design spaces. This inward-facing version of the Rice Alliance could crystallize the entrepreneurial atmosphere of the Rice community.

• **Endow chairs for teaching excellence:** A new class of endowed chair would recognize extraordinary performance and incentivize faculty to focus on teaching excellence. This could be a short term, rotating position that would incentivize culture of teaching excellence at Rice.
Low resource recommendations

• **Create an alternative Rice Degree track that emphasizes experiential learning:** An alternative track for earning a Rice degree would decrease traditional classroom courses, instead emphasizing personal development opportunities (e.g. experiential learning, civic engagement, internships, and entrepreneurship) in a way that does not dilute the academic rigor of a Rice degree.

• **Restructure course evaluations to include teaching innovation:** Adding an additional dimension to course evaluations that allows for input on the structural way in which the class was taught, especially with regards to whether the style of teaching (e.g. lecture, SCAL@R, flipped) would provide instructors with meaningful feedback and encourage a culture of teaching innovation.

• **Require a teaching excellence letter in the Promotion & Tenure Dossier:** Requiring a focused letter on teaching excellence would directly increase the ability through the P&T process to consider teaching and would incentivize faculty to excel in teaching.
The future is now: “We are a small, high-powered research institution that should take advantage of our potential to provide the best undergraduate experience in the country. By implementing the types of changes listed in this survey, we will be able to better prepare our undergraduates for promising futures in a variety of industries and graduate programs.”

-Anonymous Rice Undergraduate