



Current Issue

- Home
- News
- Current Issue
- Special Reports
- Statistics
- Law and Politics
- Athletics
- Technology
- Diverse Podium
- Events
- Archives
- Career Search
- Advertise
- Subscribe
- Products & Services
- About Us

Current News

President Stays True to Faculty Values

by Lydia Lum
Mar 19, 2008, 00:03

Email article
 Printer friendly

DI: What drew you to the University of Houston?

RK: I was looking for a university in a metropolitan area that is globally oriented and willing to step outside the box. So far, it has been much more than what I imagined it would be. There is phenomenal diversity here, and UH already has high-quality community partnerships with others.

DI: Speaking of diversity, you're leading a university with a great deal of racial parity. Student enrollment is about 39 percent White, 20 percent Asian, 20 percent Hispanic, 13 percent Black. Another 7 percent are from overseas. What are your thoughts on that?

RK: It's very energizing. I feel so much at home here. I spend a lot of time walking the campus.

DI: When you were a teenager in India and your parents told you of an arranged marriage you would enter, one of your reactions was disappointment that you might never pursue a master's degree. You not only pursued your education in this country, but you carved an ambitious career. At what point did you believe a college presidency was within reach?

RK: I put my heart and soul into what I do without plotting and planning my next move. But when I became a dean in 2000, a letter came to me mistakenly addressed as "president," rather than "dean." My husband held onto that envelope and predicted I would become a president. He has always been two steps ahead of me!

DI: What are your goals?

RK: Student access and success at the university and beyond it. Also, the fourthlargest U.S. city really does deserve a nationally recognized, nationally competitive public institution. We are in the middle of getting feedback from students, faculty and the community before forming specific plans as part of our "First 100 Days" period.

DI: As chancellor of the four-campus UH system, how much time have you been able to devote to the other schools? One of the other campuses is more than 100 miles from the flagship.

RK: I visited the other three campuses my second week here. I intend to visit them as often as possible and am pleased to see that each has a unique mission.

DI: Share with us some memorable professional advice you received. RK: Stay humble no matter what position you hold. Anything you accomplish is because of the work of many people.

DI: What characteristics have helped you ascend through the administrative ranks?

RK: I've tried to stay true to faculty values. We are in the business of knowledge. The priorities are academics and student needs. So many smart people help educate students, help them learn. I always encourage faculty to do what they do best. We work as a team. I am only one player among many.

DI: What words do you live by?

RK: When life gives you lemons and everyone else is busy making lemonade, think about making margaritas!

[Click here](#) to post and read comments

© Copyright 2007 by DiverseEducation.com

[Top of Page](#)

DiverseJobs

"the higher education job source"

Search jobs



[Faculty jobs](#)

[Academic Administration](#)

[Executive positions](#)

Featured Employer



Featured Employer



Featured Employer



Upcoming Special Reports

Illinois
HIGHER EDUCATION
DIVERSITY IN
THE LAND OF LINCOLN
ISSUE DATE: April 3, 2008
ADVERTISING DEADLINE: March 13, 2008

Diversefairs

Employers,
meet hundreds of
qualified candidates!