

Serving the Rensselaer community since 1885

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Ana Wishnoff Following your passion from day one at RPI

Staff Editorial Students should be able to shape Union

ADMINISTRATION

RPI anticipates new capital campaign



PRESIDENT SHIRLEY ANN JACKSON POSES with student leaders for a photo at an ice cream social, which was the first of many capital campaign kick-off events.

Brookelyn Parslow
Senior Reporter

IN ANTICIPATION OF RENSSELAER'S CAPITAL campaign launch on Friday, October 13, President Shirley Ann Jackson released three emails to the RPI community, each detailing a main objective of the campaign.

The first email, released on September 29, focused on "bridging the gap" and "creating access and enhancing the student experience." Jackson mentioned that the cost of a Rensselaer education has risen, and that currently 43 percent of the undergraduate population has financial needs that exceed the financial aid given to them. The gap between need and aid is currently \$32 million per year. As a result, the campaign is largely intended to build a

"student aid endowment" that could make RPI more accessible to people of different financial backgrounds.

In addition, the campaign will be used to continue down the path of "pedagogical innovation" so that once the "best students" are at RPI, they can receive the "best possible education." This innovation currently includes The Arch; Clustered Learning, Advocacy, and Support for Students; and mixed-reality experiences, and will expand as research uncovers different methods for teaching and learning.

The second email, released on October 2, revolved around "The Faculty 500," which includes "attracting top faculty" and "empowering world-changing research."

See CAPITAL, Page 3

RENSSELAER UNION

Protest denied

'Lab safety class' still planned

Sidney Kochman
Senior Reporter

LAST WEEK, BRYAN JOHNS '19 SUBMITTED AN APPLICATION dated Thursday, September 28 to Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students Travis Apgar to hold a demonstration in "areas surrounding EMPAC and the Folsom Library." According to the application, the demonstration was scheduled for 4:30 pm on Friday, October 13, which is the same time that President Shirley Ann Jackson plans to kick off a capital campaign in the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center during Reunion & Homecoming weekend. Apgar denied the application to hold a demonstration.

Apgar elaborated that a demonstration may "disrupt" these events and "exceed [Rensselaer's] capacity for providing safety and security." Additionally, he noted that "we made a decision some time ago that we would not approve demonstration applications for the dates of October 12–14, 2017." Apgar wrote that he welcomes a meeting with Johns "to discuss alternatives days and times [Johns] might conduct the demonstration." According to Apgar, Johns has not taken him up on his offer to meet.

In response to the denial, the Save the Union organization sent a campus-wide email decrying Apgar's letter. "If no reasonably-defined form of demonstration can happen within an event (as the law provides) and none can happen reasonably proximate to it (as Apgar contends), no meaningful demonstration at any event is possible."

Save the Union says that despite the administration's denial of the demonstration, it is planning to hold a "lab safety class" at 4 pm on Friday on the field outside of EMPAC, which overlaps with the proposed protest from Johns' original application. It encourages attendees to "wear lab safety goggles in addition to black clothing to mourn the end of our once student-run Rensselaer Union."

The message did not originate from an RPI mail server, and how Save the Union gathered student email addresses to build its mailing list is unclear.

See PROTEST, Page 2

RENSSELAER UNION

Student government hosts town hall

Darby Burns
Staff Reporter

ON OCTOBER 7, IN RESPONSE TO THE resolution passed in the Senate, there was a town hall meeting in the McNeil Room to discuss the current state of the Rensselaer Union. It was led by senator Hannah Merrow '18, and the panel members consisted of the current Grand Marshal Justin Etzine '17, Greek Senator Sean Ferracioli '17, Class of 2018 Executive Board Representative Erica Lane '18, Senator Joshua Thomas '20, Graduate Senator Michael Gardner, Senator Steven Sperazza '18, and Senator Chris Duffy '20.

The meeting started out with a brief summary regarding the Union's history from its founding in 1890 until the present day.

The meeting then transitioned into a question and answer session with the student panel. When asked about his

mention of "thinly-veiled threats of retaliation and expulsion" in his email to members of the Union, Etzine refused to name anyone specifically, but did state that "they did occur and they were concerning enough to me that I felt it was prudent to mention it to everyone, so that people could understand the kind of the situation that we're in." Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students Travis Apgar then requested the opportunity to respond as well, and assured everyone in the audience that "there will never be a case where any kind of action of that sort would take place for a student leader doing their job here."

In response to further student questions, Etzine went on to talk about what the committee's role was, and is, in the hiring process for the director of the Union. The committee participated in on-campus interviews, and he believes that, moving

forward, they should have a closed meeting to discuss their thoughts on those interviews and to provide their feedback to the Executive Board. Lane also talked about what the committee has done, and mentioned on-campus interviews, phone interviews, and said that students were involved throughout that process.

Sperazza then spoke to the resolution that was just passed in the Senate, which stated that there was no conflict between the *Union Constitution* and the Institute's *Bylaws*. He said that the resolution was mostly a response to the resolution put up by the Board of Trustees, and Etzine added that it was also an effort to respect the wishes of the Board of Trustees and reaffirm that the *Constitution* was, and still is, compliant with the Institute's *Bylaws*.

Next, Etzine talked about the differences between a student-run

Union, which we used to have, and a student-operated Union, which we have now. He said that the major one is that in a student-operated Union, students need to comply with the institute's agenda, whereas when the Union is student-run that doesn't need to be taken into account.

Apgar responded to a question asking if students participating in the upcoming protest could potentially face retaliation from the school by stating that civil discourse is highly valued on the Rensselaer campus, and that if a student is there voicing their concerns in a way that "is in line with civil discourse," then they shouldn't face any retribution. He also discussed the reasoning behind the denial of the protest application, citing a shortage of available staff to handle the event due to other events also occurring on the same day. ♦

EXECUTIVE BOARD

RPI TV Ireland trip, KSA Thanksgiving approved

Jonathan Caicedo
Senior Reporter

DUE TO THE ABSENCE OF PRESIDENT OF THE Union Matthew Rand '19, the Vice President of the Union Rasika Ekhalikar '18 opened the meeting on Thursday, October 5. The first item on the night's agenda was RPI TV's request for fund reallocation for a trip to Ireland this November. They plan to film a documentary on the men's hockey team as it plays in the Friendship Four tournament. RPI Athletics agreed to fund the trip for two RPI TV members, but President Jason Lee '19 came before the board to request funds to allow for two additional RPI TV members. Concerns were raised over whether the two additional members were truly needed, and after reassurance by Lee that they were, the motion to reallocate \$2,447 from RPI TV's Goal C, Program 2, which is the club's income from sales and production, to fund this trip passed 15-0-3.

Afterwards, Graham Knowles from the Archer Center for Student Leadership came before the E-Board to request the reservation of the McNeil Room on November 8 to accommodate a telecast talk by Simon Sinek. The talk will be presented by the Rensselaer chapter of the National Society of Leadership and Success, and will be open to the RPI community. Knowles mentioned the McNeil Room as the prime location for the event due to difficulties acquiring other space on campus because of scheduling conflicts with exam blocks. Discussion revolved around the risks in taking away the McNeil as study space for many students during that time. Mother's Wine Emporium will be available as an alternate space. Nonetheless, the motion to



Elena Perez/The Polytechnic

THE EXECUTIVE BOARD ANNOUNCED the ribbon cutting for the Student Veterans Lounge will take place on November 8. (file photo)

grant the National Society of Leadership and Success a reservation of the McNeil Room on November 8 from 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm passed 16-0-2.

The Korean Student Association then came before the board to request money for an event celebrating Korean Thanksgiving, which would be open to the RPI community. This request was denied in previous years because club membership was lacking. Now that KSA's membership has grown, the E-Board decided to grant the funds from contingencies with a vote of 18-0-0.

Director of the Mueller Center Steve Allard then gave the director's report. He mentioned the continued search for the assistant director of the Mueller Center, and that phone interviews for the assistant director of student activities occurred last week. He also announced the Mueller Center's intention to start offering an English as a second language course.

Ekhalikar then moved on to the president's report. On October 11, there will be a barbecue on '86 Field from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. She also mentioned the completion of

the Student Veterans Lounge and the ribbon cutting ceremony that will take place the Wednesday before Veteran's Day.

Afterwards, the Board passed a motion thanking Rensselaer Union Business Coordinator Nicki Hollister for tirelessly helping RPI Crew get a bus to Rochester, NY this past week, with a vote of 18-0-0. To conclude the meeting, Deepika Senthilnathan '21 was introduced as the third non-voting member of the Executive Board, and was subsequently appointed to the position of club financial advisor. ♦

Protest: Apgar responds

From **Page 1**

The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education weighed in on Monday, with a letter to Jackson calling on RPI to allow the demonstration to occur (<https://poly.rpi.edu/s/zd69a>). "Rensselaer's pre-planned restraint on student and faculty dissent during homecoming, expressly imposed in order to devote all resources to activities promoting the institution, is an unacceptable encroachment on the free speech and assembly rights that RPI promises to its students. Accordingly, FIRE asks that you adhere to your Student Bill of Rights by withdrawing the prohibition on student demonstrations during this period," wrote FIRE's Adam Steinbaugh.

Through an email to *The Poly*, Apgar reiterated that "Rensselaer resources are not able to accommodate" this demonstration. "Those

with expertise in event management and security determined that a demonstration would pose potential disruption of already-planned events and raises concerns for the safety of attendees."

Some of the safety concerns cited by Apgar in relation to Friday's demonstration are access for people with mobility impairments, emergency vehicle routes, and maintaining a perimeter for a fireworks display.

"We support freedom of speech and the students' right to demonstrate," Apgar wrote. "We will disagree at times, and I ask that we all keep in mind this basic truth: to move forward, we must find ways to assume good will on the part of those with whom we disagree, and engage in civil discourse."

Apgar also stated that "inaccurate communications have been distributed across various mediums by those claiming to be

concerned with the state of the student-run Union. These communications include misinformation, incomplete information, and personal attacks." He continued, "In actuality, student leaders are coming to discussions with open minds and recommendations. We are getting good work done, and it's just not being shared."

In the spring of 2016, applications to demonstrate outside of EMPAC during the president's Spring Town Meeting were also denied. However, hundreds of students gathered anyway under the auspice of an open class hosted by Professor Bill Puka, and the administration worked with participants to ensure it was safe. Some of the measures taken included making sure demonstrators knew to stay out of fire lanes and provide paths for first responders to make their ways through the crowd if necessary. ♦

Freshman Election Results

President

Evan Lazaro - 148
Naya Hill - 93
Advaith Narayan - 68
Maria Ruiz Cardenas - 58

Vice President

Zachary Taylor - 199
Nikhil Chamarthi - 153

Senator

Naya Hill - 166
Zachary Taylor - 132
Jonathan Bao - 115
Advaith Narayan - 102
Michael Mathews - 74
Keenan Adams - 73
Jiaxi Mei - 72
Marcel Harabin - 58

Representative

Fitz (Yuan) Gao - 169
Marc Pinto - 155
Noah Cohen - 145
Lisa Sulmasy - 132
Timothy Cieslak - 130
Hannah Daly - 128
Nicholas Dybas - 127
Jiaxi Mei - 113
Christopher Grome - 112

Bold indicates a winner.

Interested in covering events around campus? Like taking pictures?

Interested in student government? Email news@poly.rpi.edu!

RENSELAER UNION

Interview committee memo leaked

No recommendation for Union director; flawed process cited

Tyler Carney
Staff Reporter

ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, A MEMO FROM THE HUMAN Resources Interview Committee Chairperson Michael Cuzzo '18 that was addressed to members of the Rensselaer Union Executive Board was leaked on Reddit. In the memo, the Human Resources Interview Committee decided that it was unable to provide a recommendation for a director of the Union candidate to the E-Board.

The search for a new director was run through William Spelman Executive Search firm. Several thousand applications were received, of which William Spelman selected 50 that were given to RPI administration. The grand marshal and president of the Union gathered student feedback and forwarded that feedback to the Division of Human Resources to ensure candidates were chosen that aligned with student interests.

The memo states that, as far as the committee is aware, this feedback was never implemented into the HR's scoring rubric, which is a tool used to rank the applicants. Assistant Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students Travis Apgar and Interim Vice President for Student Life LeNorman Strong video interviewed five of the 50 applicants. Of those five, two were chosen and those two were the people interviewed by the committee.

The memo states, "At this point, students had not yet been included in any aspect of the formal hiring process." No reasoning as to how these two were the selected candidates, or what happened to the other three that were video interviewed, was provided to the committee.

The committee at this point was given access to HR's performance management tool which is used to determine how well a candidate aligns with the job description. The committee was alarmed with its contents, most notably "the director's newfound budgeting authority and control in the direction of student government."

Another point of contention was how the only reference to the Union being student-governed was found in quotation marks. Members of the committee believed that "they wanted the Union to be student-run in appearance only."

At first, pre-approved questions were provided to the committee by HR, which could be modified. After

some pushback, the members were allowed to submit their own questions. The two interviews were conducted during one-hour lunch sessions. Representatives from HR remained present during them, which "made it difficult, if not impossible, to comfortably speak with the candidates." Furthermore, the representatives "were at times disruptive, interrupting questions and intentionally controlling the topics of discussion."

At the time, the committee members thought HR attending was a normal process, but it was discovered after the interviews that, in the past, representatives were not present for search interviews involving students.

The committee also found that they needed more time to properly interview both candidates, and a request for a conference call was submitted. Vice President for Human Resources Curtis Powell denied this request.

After the denial, Grand Marshal Justin Etzine '18 sent questions for the candidates to Powell. The memo states that there is "currently no evidence that Powell forwarded the questions to the candidates; consequently, the questions remain unanswered."

To the committee, "it became clear that the RPI administration expected the committee to recommend both candidates." Some members also felt as if they were "props" and only there so that HR could "tout student involvement" in the process.

Additionally, the committee had reservations regarding the applicants themselves—along with their answers to certain questions—and "whether or not there was an underlying administrative agenda due to so few candidates being presented, and a stark contrast in terms of experience and qualifications between the two."

The memo states, in conclusion, that they were not able to recommend either of the candidates. They also recommended that the job description be amended, as well as the job duties in the performance management tool. Only after these issues are addressed, and their questions for the two applicants are answered, will they "deliver a detailed report of its findings and recommendations."

The HRI Committee memorandum can be viewed in full at <https://poly.rpi.edu/s/fsg32>. ♦

Capital: New Center for Science, increased financial assistance

From Page 1

More than 360 tenure and tenure-track faculty have been hired by RPI in the past two decades, and sponsored research expenditures have tripled to \$100 million per year. Through the campaign, Jackson aims to raise those numbers to 500 faculty and \$250 million, while also creating more endowed professorships.

The final email, sent on October 6, expanded on "building the third-century campus." Jackson emphasized the need for academic facilities to enable "radically innovative" pedagogy through research laboratories with "cutting-edge capabilities." The capital campaign in 2008 started this process, with renovations to the East Campus Athletic Village, the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center, the Center for Computational Innovations, and the Center for Biotechnology and Interdisciplinary Studies.

It will continue, through the upcoming capital campaign, with a "state-of-the-art Center for Science," and the second phase of ECAV expansion. The Center for Science will focus on research, with an aim to raise "productivity, rankings, and visibility" while accommodating an expanding faculty. An "indoor Olympic-quality swimming pool, tennis courts, practice and playing fields for field hockey and lacrosse, and an indoor field house for track and field" are among the planned additions to ECAV.

Jackson briefly mentioned upgrading and renovating student housing, but did not go into detail on plans for such an effort.

This capital campaign was announced at the president's Fall Town Meeting in 2016 with a brief account of its goals. At the time, Jackson stated that pursuing research grants, increasing financial aid for undergraduates, and expanding graduate enrollment to 2,500 students would be some of the goals of the campaign. The latter, however, was not explicitly mentioned in any of the emails that Jackson released.

On October 9, the pre-campaign launch began with an ice cream social in the Rensselaer Union, which included a brief description of the capital campaign's goals from Jackson. The pre-campaign will continue with a barbecue on October 11 on the '86 Field. The official kick-off will begin on October 12 with a variety of events throughout the weekend. ♦

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Events

Wednesday, October 11, 2017

THURSDAY

October 12

Passport to The New Polytechnic—Engineering: O.T. Swanson Multidisciplinary Design Lab
JEC 3232; 1–2 pm

Walking Tours of Campus
Heffner Alumni House; 2–3 pm

Passport to The New Polytechnic—Engineering: Biomechanics Class
SAGE 3713; 4–5:50 pm

Troy-Green Island Bridge: 1977, Before and After
RU 3510, RU 3511; 6–7 pm
Presentation by George Christian '76 on the 1977 collapse of the Green Island Bridge. All class years welcome.

Black Students' Alliance 50th Anniversary Celebration Trivia Night
Rensselaer Union, Mother's; 9 pm–midnight

Join President Jackson, classmates, teammates, students, friends, family, and all returning alumni for a celebration of Rensselaer, and a look forward to the part we all play in the future of our transformative university. The evening will serve as the launch of a new campaign, designed to position Rensselaer for its third century of leadership in research and education. The campaign will support The New Polytechnic—our unique and transformative paradigm for research, teaching, and student life. Black tie optional—formal or cocktail attire.

Black Students' Alliance 50th Anniversary Celebration Career Panel Discussion
Rensselaer Union, Mother's; 2–4 pm

SATURDAY

October 14

Softball Alumnae Game
Doris Robison Field; 9:30–11 am

Men's Lacrosse Alumni Game
Renwyck Field; 10–11 am.

Tau Epsilon Phi 3rd Annual Alumni vs. Undergraduates Floor Hockey Game
'87 Gymnasium; 10–11 am

Baseball Alumni Yarnold Home Run Derby and Softball Game
Doris Robison Field; 10 am–1 pm

Impact on the Global Challenges: Rensselaer Alumnae in Position to Create Change

EMPAC Theater; 10:30–11:30 am
President Shirley Ann Jackson invites you to attend a panel discussion with Rensselaer alumnae who are top executives in major business and industry. In this intriguing discussion, the contributions of Rensselaer alumnae across all disciplines will be considered, as we work to address the global challenges.

FanFest
ECAV; 11 am–3 pm
A carnival midway featuring games, student performances, carnival snacks, the Food Truck Food Court, and more!

Formula SAE Car Demonstration, Presented by Rensselaer Motorsport
Edgehill Terrace; 11:30 am–1:15 pm

Sheer Idiocy 20th Anniversary Show
EMPAC Theater; 8–10 pm

WEDNESDAY

October 18

MANE Colloquium
DCC 330; 10:30–11:30 am
“Thermochemical Energy Storage with Ammonia”, Professor Adrienne Lavine, University of California.

Civil & Environmental Engineering Fall Seminar Series Speaker—Robin Kemper ASCE President-elect
CBIS Isermann Auditorium; 2–3 pm

All around the world, engineers are pushing the limits of ingenuity and innovation in unexpected, imaginative, and amazing ways. ASCE's grand dream is for civil engineers to be global leaders in building a better quality of life for mankind. In this presentation, titled “Master Your Future,” ASCE President-elect Robin A. Kemper, will share how you can be part of this dream as well as how ASCE can help you grow and succeed in your career.

Class of 2020 The Arch Preparation Fair
Armory; 2:30–4:30 pm

Get all the information you need about academic plans of study, financial aid, housing, finding an away semester experience and more! Every Department will be represented, so you can get help planning out your spring and summer schedule.

FRIDAY

October 13

Research Showcase
CBIS Atrium; 10 am–3:30 pm
Research at Rensselaer addresses some of the world's most pressing technological challenges—from energy security and sustainable development to biotechnology and human health. During this program, researchers will discuss their transformative work, and its potential applications.

Learning @ Rensselaer
Walker 6113; 11 am–12 pm
This workshop offers an overview of the initiatives, learning strategies, and tools supporting active learning for our students at Rensselaer.

RED (Research, Education, and Discovery) Talks—A Transformative Rensselaer Confronts the Global Challenges

CBIS Isermann Auditorium, Bruggeman Conference Center; 1–3 pm
At these “Ted Talk” style presentations, Rensselaer researchers will highlight solutions to societally important challenges where Rensselaer plays a leading role, and how this research was potentiated by the vision of The New Polytechnic and *The Rensselaer Plan 2024*.

Campaign Launch: Presidential All-Alumni Evening
EMPAC Theater and Folsom Library; 5–10 pm

The Polytechnic will hold elections at 3 pm on Sunday, October 15 in our office, RU 3418.

DATA-DRIVEN INFLUENCE

**Hear from an alumnus who
mastered the art of
technological engagement**

Wednesday, October 11

2:30 - 4:00 p.m.

CBIS Auditorium

eship.rpi.edu/2017eoy

DILBERT

by Scott Adams

I NEED YOUR APPROVAL TO TAKE A CLASS ON NEGOTIATING.

SEE IF YOU CAN PERSUADE ME TO APPROVE IT.

I... DON'T KNOW HOW TO NEGOTIATE YET.

THAT'S THE FLAW IN YOUR PLAN.

I CAN'T PERSUADE MY BOSS TO LET ME TAKE A CLASS ON HOW TO NEGOTIATE.

TRY GIVING HIM LOGICAL REASONS. HE'LL RESPOND TO THAT.

AND THEN I WOULD BE ABLE TO NEGOTIATE FOR A HIGHER SALARY.

PASS.

CAN YOU TEACH ME HOW TO BE MORE PERSUASIVE?

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

IT WILL MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD TO HELP A FRIEND.

DOES IT FEEL AS GOOD AS DENYING YOU?

I HAVE NO WAY TO KNOW.

BAH!

I WANT YOU TO LOWER YOUR PRICE, BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW TO NEGOTIATE.

IT'S EASY. ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS OFFER TO PAY MORE THAN THE LIST PRICE AND WAIT FOR ME TO COUNTEROFFER.

OKAY... I'LL PAY 20% OVER THE LIST PRICE.

YOU WIN! SIGN HERE.

WHY ARE WE PAYING SO MUCH FOR THIS SOFTWARE?

BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T LET ME TAKE A CLASS ON NEGOTIATING LIKE I ASKED.

ARE YOU USING THIS AS LEVERAGE TO GET APPROVAL FOR THE CLASS?

NO, I'M JUST BEING INEFFE—TIVE. DOES IT LOOK THE SAME?

I APPROVED YOUR REQUEST TO TAKE A NEGOTIATING CLASS.

WHY DID YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND?

THE INSTRUCTOR OFFERED A GREAT DEAL.

EARLIER THAT DAY

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SPEND OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY TO GET RID OF DILBERT FOR A FEW DAYS?

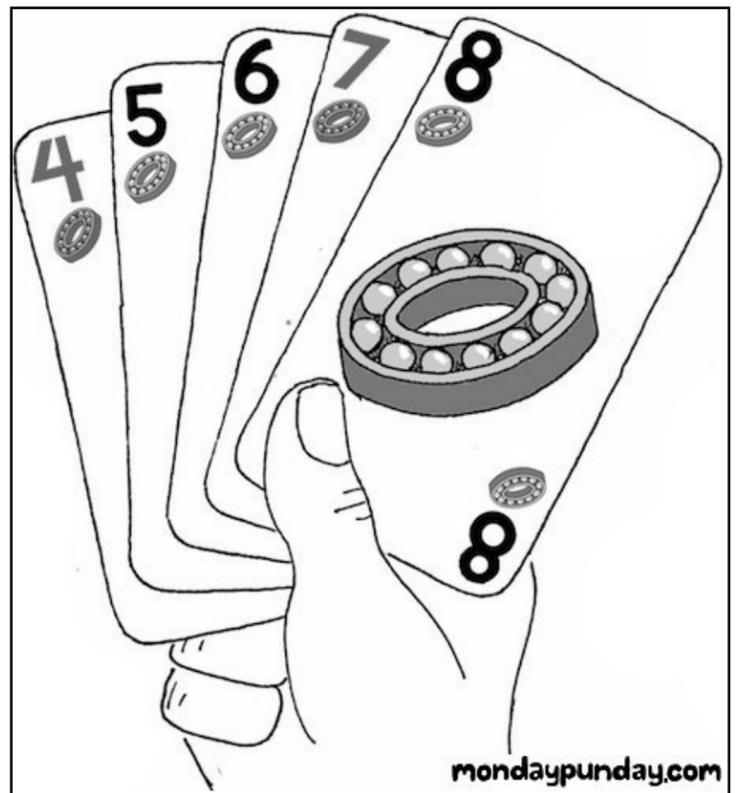
SOLD!

TOP TEN LIST

Songs for President Jackson to dance to

10. Electric Slide
9. Oops! I Did It Again
8. In Your Arms Tonight
7. Hips Don't Lie
6. That song about saving the Union
5. Rensselaer Alma Mater
4. Never Gonna Give You Up
3. Chicken Dance
2. Get Low
1. Ms. Jackson

MONDAY PUNDAY by Matthew Broussard



SUDOKU

	9	8		1				
		3	9	8				1
4			5					
1	4							
3	2						4	9
							3	5
				7				8
7			4	9	6			
			6		5	1		

Instructions

Fill in the grid so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 subsquare contains exactly one occurrence of the numbers 1 through 9.

Last Week's Answers

8	7	9	1	3	6	4	2	5
2	4	1	5	7	8	9	3	6
3	5	6	4	9	2	8	7	1
1	9	8	7	2	3	6	5	4
4	2	5	9	6	1	3	8	7
7	6	3	8	5	4	1	9	2
9	8	2	6	1	5	7	4	3
6	3	4	2	8	7	5	1	9
5	1	7	3	4	9	2	6	8



CRYPTOQUOTE

A Cryptoquote is a simple substitution code where each letter that appears may stand for a different letter. The substitutions are consistent throughout the puzzle. Punctuation is not translated. For example: SIVOISSWC = ENGINEERS Hint: Quote is from one of Union's oldest traditions.

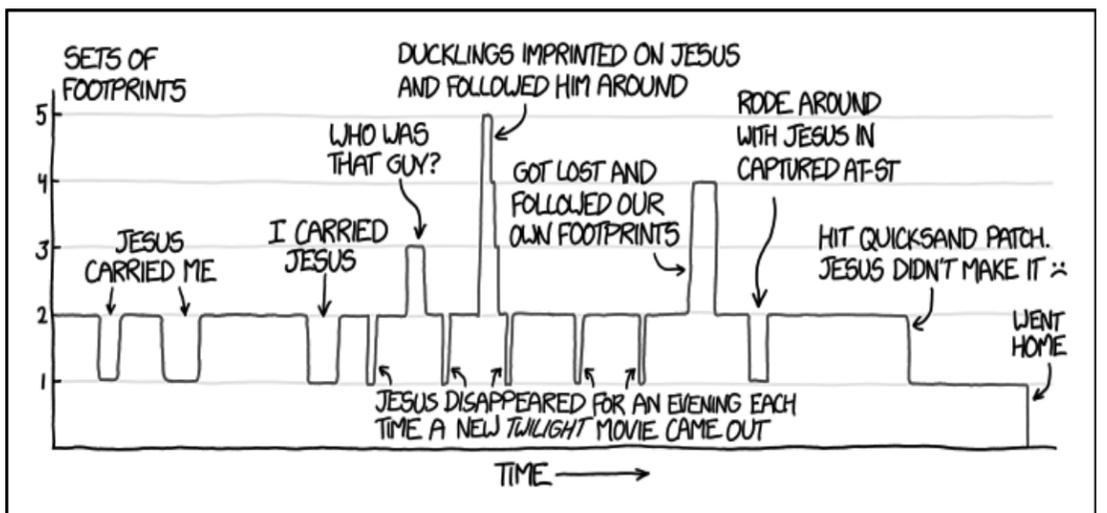
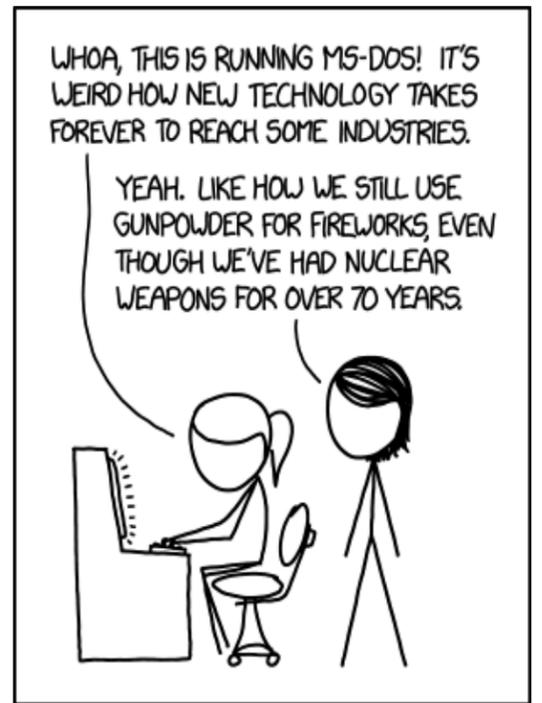
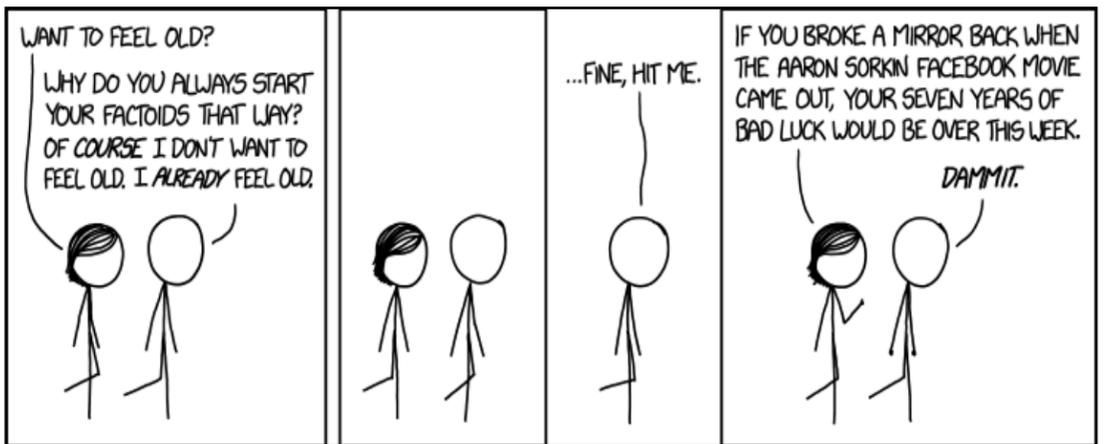
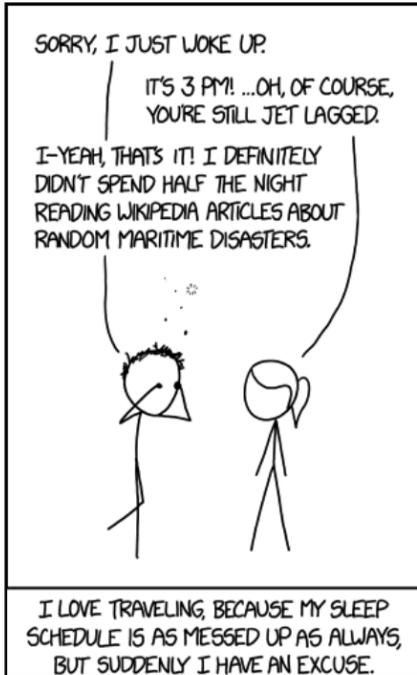
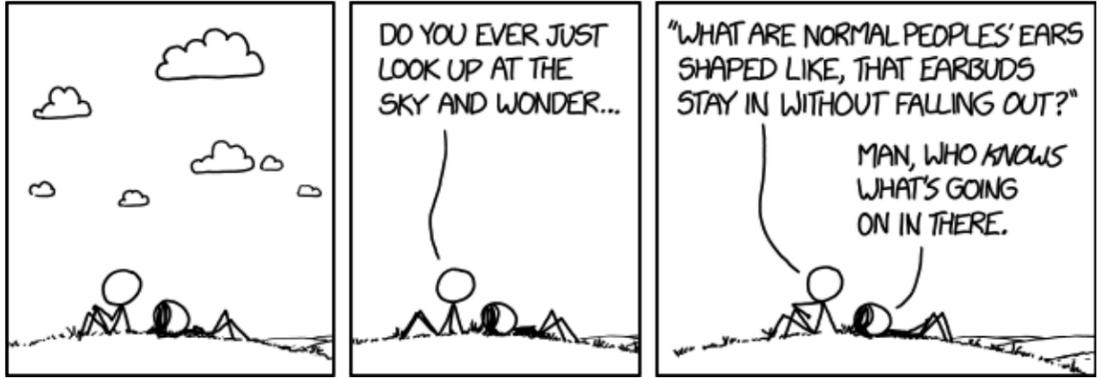
"Oe ock wekoz'n, heew. Pueok ne nck akon, I twsibk nctn. I'ak hen t jkr okpbkno ej sm erz. Ej tuu nck bktoezo I wiwz'n rtzn sm wtghcnkb ne wtnk! Dknkb, zencizh io sebk isdebntzn nctz jtsium. Meg otakw sm wtghcnkb'o uijk, tzw I peguw zkakb jebhkn oeskncizh uifk nctn, oe l'uu hiak meg ezk pctzpk. meg bktwm? Meg rtuf ncbeghc nceok weebo, tzw meg jebhkn tzm ej ncio ctddkzkw. Tzw wez'n meg kakb, kakb iznkbjkbk rinc sm lgoizkoo thtiz, lkptgok ij meg we, l'uu fiuu meg, tzw kakbmez k nctn meg ueak. l'uu fiuu meg wktw. nctn'o rctn l'uu we ne dbenkpn sm jtsium. Dknk, meg gzwkbontzw? Ckm. l qgon otakw megb uijk. Zer, rctn we meg otm?"

Twbitz Neesko,

Odiwkbstz: Ceskpesizh

XKCD

by Randall Munroe



UPAC CINEMA Spiderman: Homecoming Friday • October 13, 2017 7 pm, 10 pm, 1 am • DCC 308 • \$2.50 Argo Saturday • October 14, 2017 7 pm, 9:30 pm, 12 am • DCC 308 • \$2.50

Sports

Wednesday, October 11, 2017

WOMEN'S HOCKEY

Unfortunate plays against Maine Engineers lose two-game series against Black Bears over weekend

Joseph Lyon
Senior Reporter

THE RENSSELAER WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY team played two games this past weekend against the University of Maine. Unfortunately, despite a strong effort by the Engineers, they were unable to swing a win for either game.

On Friday, October 6, the Engineers lost the game with a final score of 2-1. The Black Bears took an opportunity to shoot in the opening minutes of the game. Their shot was stopped by Rensselaer goaltender Lovisa Selander '19, however the puck ended up on the goal line, and was inadvertently knocked in by the Engineers after both teams struggled to reach for the puck. This brought the Black Bears an early lead.

The second period went by without either team scoring, although several shots on goal were made by both teams.

Then the Engineers managed to gain the lead very early in the third period. Megan Hayes '20 found herself with the puck, and passed to Madeline Burnett '21 who made a long distance scoring shot on goal. Shortly



thereafter, the Black Bears took the lead once more with a shot that was unintentionally knocked in by another defender.

The second game, which occurred the following day, once again ended in a victory for the University of Maine. The first period

saw more than half of the total scoring. The Black Bears again scored the first goal of the game very early in the first period. Rensselaer was able to quickly follow this as Marisa Raspa '18 managed a shot just two minutes later.

The second period was once again uneventful, with no scoring shots by either team, although Maine managed to outshoot RPI 11-9.

During the final period, Sabrina Repaci '20 managed to tie up the game 2-2 with a shot into the net assisted by captain Shayna Tomlinson '18. However the Black Bears managed to gain and maintain the lead near the end of the third quarter, with a final shot by Maine off a rebound near the edge of the RPI crease, bringing the final score to 3-2.

The Engineers will be playing another two-game series on Friday, October 13, away at RIT. ♦

MEN'S SOCCER

Engineers victorious

Jacob Kaplan
Senior Reporter

RENSSELAER WON 1-0 AGAINST UNION College at home on Saturday, October 7. The victory puts the Engineers at 7-3-1 for the season.

At the start of the game, Union had the first opportunity to score in the 6th minute, but the shot was saved by goalie Matt LaBranche '20. Joe Di Miceli '21 nearly pulled the Engineers ahead, but his shot was saved and the game remained scoreless. In the second half, Union had several chances to score but all shots missed or were stopped. An attempt by Brandon Pirog '20 went high. Finally, in the 89th minute, Rensselaer drew a free kick at the edge of the penalty area. Miceli took the shot which rebounded off the right post and back to the penalty area, where Trevor Bisson '21 kicked in the game-winning shot for his fourth goal of the season. LaBranche ended the game with four saves. Despite the win, Rensselaer did not have an advantage in shots or corner kicks.

The Engineers will face off against RIT at home this Friday, October 13. ♦

FIELD HOCKEY

Yellowjackets sting

Darby Burns
Staff Reporter

ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7 THE WOMEN'S FIELD HOCKEY TEAM LOST 2-1 TO THE UNIVERSITY of Rochester Yellowjackets. The game opened with a shot from the Yellowjackets, starting them off with a 1-0 lead. Goalkeeper Mackenzie Reininger '18 blocked a shot attempt by Rochester at 22:05. A shot by Taylor Clink '19 assisted by Megan Jones '18 at 24:17 tied up the score to 1-1.

In the 49th minute, Engineer goalkeeper Rachel Kaufman '19 made a spectacular diving save that fended off the Yellowjackets' leading scorer and kept the game at a solid tie. In the 61st minute, Kaufman made another, which was immediately followed by a goal by Lauren Hiltz '19.

At 64:44, things took a turn for the worse and Rochester was able to make a tap-in goal which brought the score to 2-1. Although the Engineers put up a strong fight in the last five minutes with multiple shots made on the goal, including a final penalty corner just before time ran out. None of those shots made it into the goal, and the game ended 2-1.

The Engineers play again at 1 pm on Friday, October 13 at St. Lawrence University. ♦

FOOTBALL

Statesmen sweep

Joseph Lyon
Senior Reporter

THE RENSSELAER ENGINEERS TOOK THEIR second loss of the season, and second consecutive loss this past weekend, when they played at Hobart College in Geneva, New York. The game was a total defeat, with a final score of 0-30. The Engineers were unable to make any scoring plays, putting up barely half of the offensive yards of Hobart.

In the first quarter, the Engineers managed to prevent any touchdowns, but the Hobart Statesmen managed two field goals and ended the first quarter with a score of 0-6. Following this, RPI managed to hold Hobart through the second quarter, keeping the score 0-6 for half time.

Through the third quarter, however, Hobart managed a touchdown with connecting kick, bringing the score to 0-13, and followed that just three minutes later with another field goal, furthering their lead.

Their momentum carried into the fourth quarter, where another two touchdowns were scored, combined with two field goals that brought the final score to 0-30.

Contributing to the Engineers, running back Mike Tivinis '18 led in both rushing with 50 yards and receiving with 33 yards. Quarterback Ed Trimpert '19 led in passing yards, with a total of 90. The Engineers will be playing this weekend against Ithaca College for homecoming weekend on October 14 at 1pm. ♦

Want to write for sports? Like taking photos? Email sports@poly.rpi.edu!

 Rensselaer | LALLY SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

Are you interested in co-term or the Lally MBA?

Join us as the Rensselaer Lally School of Management hosts a co-term program information session for current Rensselaer students. At this event, you can learn more about the Lally MBA and the five M.S. graduate business programs, and how you can earn your business graduate degree in your fifth year!

Eng/Sci+MBA Info Sessions:

9/19, 2-3, Fishbach Rm, Library
9/20, 10-11, Union 3511
10/17, 2-3, Fishbach Rm, Library
10/18, 10-11, Union 3511

Co-Term Info Sessions:

9/19, 3-4, Fishbach Rm, Library
9/20, 11-12 Union 3511
10/17, 3-4, Fishbach Rm, Library
10/18, 11-12, Union 3511

If you're interested in attending, please RSVP:
Email lallyms@rpi.edu.

Contact: Shari W. Quinn 518-276-6947

CAMPUS EVENT

Students catch glimpse of utility aircraft



Jonathan Caicedo/The Polytechnic

MEMBERS OF THE RPI COMMUNITY EXPLORE a Sikorsky UH-60L Black Hawk after a morning landing on Friday, October 6. This event was sponsored by the School of Engineering.

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Delicious gyros from The Greek House

Anna Koenig
Staff Reviewer

THIS PAST WEEK, MY MOM WAS IN TOWN TO bring me basically all that was left of my bedroom after I left for college last month. Naturally, as one does when a parent comes to visit, I suggested that she take me out to lunch downtown, and she happily agreed to it. So, we decided to go to The Greek House, located at the corner of 3rd and Broadway.

This restaurant is family owned and operated, with lots of Mediterranean spreads and dishes to choose from. They are most known for their souvlaki—chicken or

pork wrapped in pita with red onions, tomatoes, and tzatziki sauce—and their gyro, pita bread filled with red onions, tomatoes, tzatziki, and the choice of lamb, chicken, beef, pork, or vegetarian. They also have a gluten-free pita option for those with matching dietary restrictions.

Walking in, I immediately noticed the all-Greek atmosphere, including blue and white striped table cloths, a miniature Greek flag at every table, and a TV that showed breathtaking landscapes. The tables were pretty close together, which I believed to be on account of the homey nature of a family-owned business.

Ignoring how basic of a choice I had made, I ordered the chicken gyro due to its enticing aesthetic. My mother had difficulty deciding between the grilled octopus and a chicken gyro. So, like any reasonable and hungry person would do in her situation, she ordered both. We also decided to share a small plate of Greek fries. Though gyros are pretty straightforward in concept, it is very easy to make it distasteful by adding more or less of an ingredient. That was not a concern here. The chicken was lightly marinated, which tied well with the juicy roma tomatoes and red onions. No matter, the best part was

definitely the bread. It was soft, fresh, and held everything together nicely. It was a little bit on the smaller side, so if you were like me and stupidly removed the foil holding it all together, some food may have fallen out onto your plate. As for the Greek fries, they were steak style, drizzled with parsley and parmesan. The flavors together were decent, but the texture was a bit dull. Overall, I was very pleased with the experience and I hope to make a habit of going there for my regular dose of Greek cuisine. ♦

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

CBIS investigation challenges the norm

Anahit Hovhanisyan
Senior Reviewer

DR. DEEPAK VASHISHTH, DIRECTOR OF the Center for Biotechnology and Interdisciplinary Studies and professor of biomedical engineering at RPI, is recognized for his insightful and influential research concerning the bone matrix. With a plethora of topics to explore, including global health, environmental degradation, and the influence of drugs, Vashishth's research group applies engineering concepts to biomedical

problems and considers the impact on patients—all of which surround the idea of “benchside to bedside.”

Vashishth has had success in understanding the influencing factors of bone fracture. It was found that the collagen network is, in simple terms, affected by non-enzymatic glycation (covalently bonded sugar molecules). In other terms, cross-linked collagen results from increased levels of sugar, which inhibits cells from digesting cross-linked amino acids in matrix proteins and repairing defects in

bones. Thus, the group investigated diabetics and wondered if their bones are more likely to fracture. Two of many approaches taken are further explored.

One approach included a clinic with diabetic patient data, which rejected the correlation between increased sugar affecting bone fracture as a result of bone density measurements. In clinics, higher bone density measurements with x-rays indicate a decreased risk of fracture, and it was found that diabetics had higher than normal bone densities. Thus, the correlation

was rejected and the group began investigating blood-based measures to predict fracture risk. In a second approach, the group developed an in vitro method to make diabetic bones on a lab bench and investigated why the presence of sugar in bone from diabetes makes bones brittle. Similar to diabetes, they also found that, with age, there is an increased presence of cross-linked sugar, indicating that with age comes an increased risk of bone fracture. Thus, research on diabetes in bone could also be of value to large cohorts of the elderly population. Ultimately, the study concluded that there is, in fact, a relationship between sugar and risk of bone fracture. The findings have resulted in a reevaluation of clinical diagnosis for situations beyond diabetes.

The above findings have further led to the development of novel therapeutic approaches to “take the effects of diabetes out of bone” and allow cells to again digest the proteins that are involved with bone repair. “This opens up a whole new field,” said Vashishth, excited to enter a new market and bring his research to bedside. Now, the group is working to improve clinical diagnosis of bone fracture risk by developing a blood-based test using data mining, as well as working to understand how

the bone matrix naturally comes together and use biomimicry to regenerate a new matrix.

Vashishth highlights the importance of both graduate and undergraduate students in his group. They develop methods to test an idea and further evaluate these methods to narrow down a specific and promising course of action. The students in Vashishth's group provide a new perspective to his projects, and he says, “I have students from different departments working in my lab.” This diversity is what allows Vashishth's research to cross fields like materials science, biology, mechanical engineering, pharmaceuticals, physics, chemistry, computer science, and of course, biotechnology.

CBIS is known for encouraging interdisciplinary education and research in its undergraduate research program. As director, Vashishth started an initiative to pair students with faculty not in their major. As a result, 20 to 25 students affiliated with CBIS participate in this opportunity each semester. This has allowed both research groups and students to gain new perspectives and further advance their knowledge. Vashishth encourages students to become involved with research, especially interdisciplinary research, as it is invaluable to determining the unknown. ♦



Brooklyn Parslow/The Polytechnic

DIRECTOR OF CENTER FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES EXECUTES impactful research for global health.

We are pleased to announce that we're welcoming a new column to the paper called “Research Spotlight.”

DOWNTOWN TROY

Comic Jam draws out community creativity at Troy Library

Emma Goldman
Staff Reviewer

WALKING INTO THE TROY PUBLIC LIBRARY IS ALWAYS AN adventure, and Saturday's Comic Jam was no exception. Cartoonist and illustrator Ira Marcks has made it his priority to make the arts more present again in Troy, particularly with the constant budget cuts in arts departments across the country. Saturday's display was just one example of the efforts he goes to in order to make these things a possibility.

Marcks opens every event to people of all ages and skill levels, having a large table filled with art supplies presented to you upon entering. From there, you talk a little bit about the event and what you want to do, and quickly you're on your way to making something more. Pre-made storyboards of four or six frames as well as pens and pencils are distributed to every participant, as well as a story prompt card to help people get started. What then follows is where the real magic happens.

The goal is to have every person create a frame and then pass their story on to the next person to in order to

build a sort of natural and unifying adventure between all participants. Be it the daily routine of magical farm, or accidentally adopting a werewolf, everyone gets to start somewhere to build their own world along with everyone else. Plus, when everyone is done, you get to bring home a completed story created with many new friends, as well as a free copy of Marcks' book *Creative Every Day*, which details what it's like to work in the creative industry in a format accessible to people of all ages.

This experience was really something special and definitely an event to look out for in the future. ♦



Emma Goldman/The Polytechnic

TROY COMIC JAM PROVIDES participants of all ages and skill levels with the opportunity to create meaningful art through a natural, unifying group experience.

Editorial

Wednesday, October 11, 2017

EDITORIAL NOTEBOOKS

Another look at eye contact

THIS SUMMER, I DISCOVERED SOMETHING huge about myself, and others. I rarely made eye contact with anyone. If I did, it was only for a few seconds and never meaningful. It was really just me looking up when I knew someone was trying to look me in the eyes and I knew it would be awkward if I didn't reciprocate. It seems meaningless, but let me tell you how important this realization was.

The moment I realized this was when I took a picture of my friend, really capturing his eyes. I finally noticed he has a green eye and a blue eye! I have no idea how, in the five years I've been around him, I never looked him in the eyes long enough to realize that he had two different eye colors. Then I thought



Crystal Vejar
Ed/Op Editor

back and tried to remember the color of all my friends' eyes. I couldn't, and I was ashamed.

Social signals, particularly eye contact, are critical to social adaptation. Eye contact can express feelings, as well as motivations. It can help you understand how genuine or deceiving a person is, how sad or happy. Looking into someone's eyes really is a window into their soul, or if you don't believe in souls, it's at least a deeper look into a person's body language. The more eye contact someone holds, the more confident they are perceived, even more trustworthy. The more often someone looks away and breaks eye contact, the more they seem like they're trying to hide something.

After I mentioned eye contact to my friend and how I really seemed to have been avoiding it all my life, he wanted to do an experiment. We went on a hike and sat by a river;

we then set a timer for ten minutes. He wanted me to make eye contact, and not look away at all, for ten minutes straight. I didn't even make it three seconds before I felt extremely self-conscious and silly. I kept breaking the contact and tried to get him to drop the subject, but he wouldn't budge. Finally, he gave in and agreed to lower the bar; he set the timer to three minutes.

I started off by blankly staring into his eyes. I wasn't really seeing anything; but I felt him seeing me. Not just looking at me, but really seeing me. It's a feeling I can't describe, and I encourage you all to try it out or even just research it. Making continuous eye contact for prolonged periods of time has been

reported to have some very strange, even psychedelic effects. I know it sounds crazy; but I promise, just research or give it a try. After about 20 seconds of feeling extremely awkward and fighting the urge to break the stare, I had 30 seconds of feeling like I was naked and completely exposed. Finally, I started to actually see my friend. Again, I don't know how to explain it, and all I can say is try it, but I experienced a million emotions in a millionth of a second. I realized a lot about myself and a lot about my friend, so much that I felt the tears well up and a few slid down my face. On a river bank, in the middle of summer, with just nature and my best friend, I cried for a few minutes.

In that moment, I felt like a stronger connection was formed. He didn't even need to break the stare to comfort me, and I felt as if he knew exactly how I was feeling. After that day, I was a little obsessed with the

idea of eye contact. People rarely make eye contact for more than a few seconds at a time. There are even articles about "the rules of eye contact." I really can't think of a time when anyone has made eye contact for more than a minute naturally. I researched it in published papers, blogs, news articles, and even Reddit. What everyone seemed to agree on was that making eye contact can, in some ways, be more intimate than physical contact, and that's why people shy away from it.

Therapists prescribe prolonged eye contact exercises to couples who are having issues, to people with self-esteem issues, and to people who feel disconnected or depressed. I even found research on how it could help schizophrenics and those with autism to reconnect with their feelings and sense of self, as well as getting over social anxiety. I was blown away by the power of eye contact.

I am still extremely intrigued by the subject and hope to experience this again. Maybe I'll hit up one of my friends soon and force them to make eye contact with me for a few minutes. Anyway, from that day on, I've made it a point to make as much eye contact as possible, as often as I can, especially with those I care about. To avoid making things awkward of course, it's never more than a few seconds. I've noticed some small changes. When greeting a stranger, making brief eye contact seems to make the greeting more genuine and leaves more of an impression. Kind, encouraging words have double their weight when accompanied by eye contact and, again, it sounds crazy, but altered states of mind can be achieved through prolonged eye contact. Go look it up! ♦

You do you

AS ALUMNI ARE RETURNING TO CAMPUS THIS WEEKEND, I WOULD assume that many of them most likely "found themselves" or grew into their roots on this campus. College seems like the perfect place for people to really figure out who they are. It's a transition period when you're thrown into this world you've never set foot in before, without any of your main supporters by your side. While it's scary for everyone at first, many students really find out what they're passionate about and who they want to be as they spend four years becoming real people with unique ideas and viewpoints. However, many students don't experience this, and that's not talked about enough.

Everyone assumes that, because you have this vast, wide opportunity of a higher education, that you are magically going to become a new person, fueled by all of this incoming academic and life knowledge. Why is there so much pressure on finding yourself and becoming who you are in these four years? At Rensselaer, most students declare their majors before they start. Although a lot of people switch around, people usually have a general sense of what they want to do. This is one of my favorite things about this school, because it brought us in as freshmen and treated us as if we were already real, complete, "found" people.

I could go on for hours talking about how much of a privilege it is to experience higher education, despite it feeling like a punishment a lot of the time. At RPI, we are tasked, as 18-year olds, to determine what we want to spend the rest of our lives doing. Instead of putting us through general education courses, some we might hate and some we might love, in order to find our passion, we are allowed to declare our passion and follow it from the first day of freshman year to graduation. RPI really facilitates students coming in as people who know who they are and what they want to do, and although this might seem like a pretty mundane part of an education to many students, I find it to be really exciting.

The pressure that society puts on young adults to find themselves in college can sometimes be overlooked, but it is ever-present. You're supposed to have the best four years of your life and learn how to be an adult and blah blah blah. I find comfort in the fact that RPI doesn't force students into finding themselves, but provides the experience for those who feel that they need to. Adulthood and self-assurance do not come by the flick of a switch, as I'm sure many alumni can attest to, and I think it's important that we support and acknowledge people who want to find themselves and those who just want to get their education and move on. ♦



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STAFF EDITORIAL

Our source of pride

Student-run Union seemingly nearing an end; efforts to voice concerns necessary

IN LIGHT OF RECENT EVENTS, THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF *THE POLYTECHNIC* WOULD LIKE to take a moment to explain a source of pride for many at Rensselaer: our beloved Rensselaer Union.

Our Union is unique; it's completely student run. Students do just about everything around the Union. Yes, we have administrative staff—and we love them for the work they do—but our Executive Board, full of student leaders, has the ultimate decision-making power for Union-related business. The Union is a place we can make our own, and that's the reason so many of us spend countless hours involved with it.

However, the recent resolution released by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees puts all of that into question. If parts of the *Union Constitution* are in conflict with the *Bylaws* of the Institute, then Article V of the *Constitution*, which outlines the director of the Union position, may be completely voided. The role of the director of the Union could then extend past "advisory status," with the potential to veto decisions made by the E-Board. It could have the power to make decisions about the Union's budget against the wishes of the student body.

This threatens everything we love about our Union. When students are making decisions, the Union is what students want it to be. Clubs can bring speakers to campus, put on events, or publish articles without having to justify them to an administrator. It's this freedom that students have enjoyed for over 125 years; it has shaped the clubs we know and love into what they are today.

It feels like this is the end of our student-run Union, but we believe that there is still time to turn things around. Now, more than ever, students and alumni must work together to ensure that these concerns are heard by the administration—so that future students may enjoy the same freedoms we did during our time here. ♦

TOP HAT

Union meaningful to student experiences

Existence of student-run Union valuable to Rensselaer community, worth supporting

REUNION & HOMECOMING IS UPON US, AND IT is the one time of year when our campus is visited by countless alumni as they take a glimpse into their past and revisit the places and traditions that meant so much to them when they were students, while learning about what has changed across campus. It is especially poignant this year as a major tradition in an important place has recently changed—after 127 successful years, the Rensselaer Union is no longer student-run. Students and alumni have had much to say about the change, and I have been listening intently and working alongside President of the Union Matthew Rand '19 to represent the student body.

Looking back, I have also changed from when I arrived at RPI, and the Union has shaped who I am as a person today. From the resources available within the Union, I have learned to better understand my strengths and weaknesses; particularly, how to use my strengths to improve my weaknesses. A student-run Union has afforded me incredible leadership opportunities and business

and professional skills that will benefit me in my career after graduation. I recognize that these opportunities spawned from our unique, student-run Union because they gave me the chance to make mistakes, develop solutions, and learn from it all. I believe I matured greatly—and continue to grow—because of such opportunities. I know how important this Union has been to me, so I cannot begin to fathom the awesome experiences the greater RPI community has had as a result of it—students and alumni alike.

As we've seen from recent developments, along with other issues that have arisen with respect to the Union over the past few years, a student-run Union is clearly something the student body deeply believes in and cares for. For some, it even led to their selection of RPI as their alma mater. These students continue to show that they are concerned with the direction our Union is headed in, and their voice is clear in supporting a student-run Union, as opposed to one that is merely operated or utilized by

students. Because of this, I am committed to representing the opinions and interests of the students about a student-run Union as accurately, thoroughly, and respectfully as possible.

This guides the view that we are hoping to achieve. We are meeting with administrators almost daily, where we share our constituents' concerns about the Union. Students are making posters, taking to social media with commentary, reaching out to us, and contacting administrators because they want to be heard; they want their opinions to be known. I believe it is on us, students and alumni, to continue speaking up and sharing our perspectives for how a student-run Union has been meaningful to our student experiences. And for those of you who want to share your thoughts, I can always be contacted at gm@rpi.edu.

Now, more than ever, we are reminded that the RPI community—especially stu-

dents and alumni—need to work together for the benefit of future students. RPI students in the late 1950s and '60s contributed to make their own idea a reality by paying a higher activity fee. This funded the construction of the building that is home to our present-day Rensselaer Union, and it is important for current students and alumni to support its student-run future. Many have expressed that the unique opportunities they've had were only possibly through a student-run Union, and I can certainly relate. Therefore, it is imperative we ensure that the students of tomorrow be given the same chance by supporting a student-run Union today.



Justin Etzine
Grand Marshal

Justin Etzine
152nd Grand Marshal

DERBY

Explore local opportunities

HELLO EVERYONE, I HOPE THAT YOU'RE ALL DOING WELL AND that you've all successfully passed your first round of midterms! Or, at least, are working on successfully passing your first round of midterms, like me. I know that test season is tough for everyone, but thankfully the weather is still beautiful and soon the whole campus will be fully ingrained in the season with round one behind us. This is a great time to get out and enjoy all that upstate New York has to offer! Some of my favorite activities include going apple picking and attending local haunted hayrides. The area is full of beautiful colors, sights, and sounds. Keep an eye out for large, local events too! I was able to stumble across Chowderfest in Downtown Troy during the weekend and it was a great opportunity to support local businesses and get some great food!

In addition to all the great fall activities happening across the Capital District, this week is full of fun events across campus leading up to Reunion & Homecoming weekend. This weekend is a time for alumni from across the world returning to campus to reminisce on their time at RPI, celebrate, and pay homage to all that they learned and all that Rensselaer means to them. Every year, I meet more and more alumni, and each one that comes back does so because of a genuine love for our Institute and our home. I encourage you all to do your best to befriend an alumnus this weekend. Not only can they be valuable resources in a job search, but they can provide you with a new lens to view Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute through, and to be exposed to traditions that you may never have known of.

On Monday, October 9, the Union hosted a student ice cream social where President Jackson, members of the cabinet, faculty, and staff from across the Institute, as well as hundreds of students gathered to celebrate the start of Reunion & Homecoming weekend. Along with introducing the goals of the capital campaign to be launched this Friday, the event was the first of many student-focused events to celebrate. On Wednesday, be sure to go to the '86 field to grab lunch at the campus-wide barbecue!

With all that's going on this week, be sure to keep an eye out for all of the events on campus and to stop by (hint: there's a good chance that there will be free food)! As always, feel free to reach out if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

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As always, feel free to reach out if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.

Matthew Rand
128th President of the Union

Poly Snapshots

Photos and interviews by Crystal Vejar

The Question:

How did you first learn about RPI?



Akhil Jacob
CSYS '20

"I live less than 10 minutes away."



Isaac Wilson
PHYS '20

"I was matched with the school on College Board."



Molly Osterberg
GSAS '18

"My cousin said to apply with him."



Greg Stewart
CSCI/MATH '19

"Googled 'most depressing schools'."



Calliana Faulk
COGS '19

"Design Your Future Day!"



Izzi Cain
DSIS/MGMT '20

"I wanted to live somewhere more exciting than Chicago."

Letters to the Editor

Ceasing donations

AS AN ALUMNUS OF RPI, HISTORICALLY, I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HAPPY TO DONATE TO MY alma mater because I value the great education and time that I spent at RPI. In addition, I consider it a way to “pay it forward,” because both my husband and I were fortunate to receive assistance to attend. As a result, for many years, I have been giving at the “Patroon” level for young alumni.

During my last years at RPI, I did not always agree with events that were happening on campus—most notably the suspension of the Faculty Senate and the resulting tension between the faculty and administration. Regardless, I have still donated to the school because I still felt strongly that it was a great cause.

Unfortunately, the past couple of years have made me rethink my actions. As more and more stories came out about where money was being spent and the bond rating of the school, my donations became more and more targeted. I moved from giving to the Annual Fund, then to the School of Engineering and the School of Science, then to specific departments—Decision Sciences and Engineering Systems and Biology. Last year, I targeted it even more—the Newman Foundation and the RPI Union. I also included a note with the checks that they were to be cashed only on the condition that the Union remains student-run.

It is with great sadness that I can no longer donate to my alma mater. With the recent events on campus with regards to the Union and the administration, I can’t support the administration’s actions. And because I feel powerless, the only way I know how to have a direct impact is to withhold my monetary contributions. In addition, all the company matching that I typically gave to RPI will be given to a more worthy charity.

I look forward to attending the campaign launch on Friday night! It will be interesting to watch as alumni are solicited for money, of which I no longer feel compelled to contribute. I will also be attending the Patroon brunch, which I often enjoyed, and hope to be able to attend again one day. And to show solidarity for my peers, I will be wearing black the entire weekend. If our paths happen to cross during alumni weekend, I will treat you with the utmost respect, which I pray you will also bestow on those you were blessed to lead.

Sincerely,
Adrienne Peltz B.S.’07, M.S.’08

Field weekend a resounding success

DURING THE WEEKEND OF SEPTEMBER 30, THE Army Reserve Officers Training Corps Department went on its biannual Field Training Exercise at Camp Ethan Allan Training Site in Jericho, Vermont. The exercise consisted of cadets navigating through the rugged, unfamiliar Vermont terrain with nothing but a map and compass, going to the range to improve their marksmanship, and practicing their skills in squad missions. Cadets slept outside, ate field rations called Meal, Ready to Eat, and set up patrol bases to defend at night and conduct missions during the day. At the range, they learned about basic rifle marksmanship, got to zero in their M4 rifles, and shoot to qualify on the Army weapons qualification course. They also did land navigation, which consisted of plotting coordinates on a map, then finding them in the woods. For

this exercise, cadets took into consideration elevation change, bodies of water, and time constraints into their route planning, something they had been taught and gotten to practice before. This all culminated towards the squad missions. Cadets had trained up to this point to prepare for squad missions. Classes and practical exercises gave cadets the experience and confidence to perform tactical first aid, handle enemy prisoners, move as a team, and much more. The biggest takeaway for most cadets was the ability to work and function as a team. There are a variety of jobs as an officer in the United States Army, from being an infantryman to a human resources officer, but they all require that team-based mentality as a foundation.

Rhys Jacobson ’19



Courtesy of Rhys Jacobson

NOAH COHEN, AN ARMY CADET, AIMS down his sight while providing security.

Seizing student-run Union unacceptable

ALTHOUGH OUR AUDIENCE TENDS TO BE students, we wanted to bring our important message to those who truly made the Rensselaer Union what it is today: the alumni. This is the first Reunion & Homecoming in the 127-year history of the Rensselaer Union where it is no longer student-run.

In 2006, the Middle States Accreditation Committee stated in its report, “The Rensselaer Union is an unusual, if not unique, student organization. Run entirely by students, the Union is a justifiable source of pride for the Institute.” Despite the Rensselaer Union being frequently lauded as one of the last remaining student-run unions in the country, the RPI administration announced last year that they were creating a new position, the “Executive Director of Student Activities,” and were met with outrage from the student body, faculty, and alumni alike. The responsibilities for this position included the “direction”—rather than “advisement,” as has been the case in the past—of the Rensselaer Union, student government, Greek life, and campus recreation. After a successful protest at RPI President Shirley Ann Jackson’s Spring Town Meeting in April 2016 that drew over one 1,000 people, the administration announced they would abandon their plans to create the position. Jackson openly pledged that both she and the Board of Trustees “want to hear from all the members of our community to ensure that any decisions we make reflect their interests,” which amounted to nothing but a bold-faced lie as they quietly shifted the responsibilities of the defunct position to another title—the existing dean of students role, which was then modified to include “Assistant Vice President for Student Life,” as well—in a classic bait-and-switch. This decision changed the reporting structure of the Union from reporting to the Executive Board, a body of student representatives, to reporting directly to the administration.

Recently, the administration sought to fill the director of the Union position, failing to involve students until the final steps of the process and continuing to ignore their feedback regarding the job description; specifically, that candidates for director be approved by a vote of the E-Board as well as students’ assertions that the job description be modified to have the director report to the E-Board. The controversy resulted in the Board of Trustees swiftly intervening. Chairman Arthur Golden released a message whereby he repeatedly referred to the Union as a mere “lab course;” accompanying his message was a resolution passed by the Board of Trustees Executive Committee that shunned centuries of shared governance at RPI by not only leaving students out of the decision-making process, but

also affirming the Executive Committee’s blind support of the president by declaring her sole authority over the employment of the director and reporting structure, and stating the *Bylaws of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute* superseded the *Rensselaer Union Constitution* should they ever conflict.

The Trustees’ unilaterally-enacted resolution was met with a combination of great opposition and fierce criticism from the RPI community, and we submitted an application to peacefully protest during Reunion & Homecoming; this application was baselessly denied by the dean of students. Regardless, we won’t be silenced by an oppressive and overreaching administration, and we will not sit by idly while they seize our beloved student-run Union out from under us. Our resolve is stronger than ever and our hearts are true, and our mission is something the administration has repeatedly and flagrantly failed to do: reflect the interests of our community, and that is to protect and preserve the Union as student-run. Look for us everywhere at Reunion & Homecoming and join us—we’ll be peacefully demonstrating outside of the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center and the surrounding areas at 4 pm on Friday, October 13, even if they erect barricades and bring in outside security (a courtesy they wouldn’t extend us when we made our request). We’ll be wearing ribbons symbolizing the Union’s arches at every reunion event. We’ll be hanging up posters in support of our Union. We’ll be wearing black as a statement to mourn the loss of our Union’s student-run status. We are RPI.

If you’ve ever had lunch with friends in the Union, been a member of a club or played an intramural sport at RPI, attended a comedy show or concert sponsored by the activity fee, did banking in the Union or shopped at the bookstore, or participated in any of the other countless Union-related activities, events, and services now or during your time as a student, we ask you to join our ranks and fight alongside us to send a message that a student-run Union is integral not only to preserve 127 years of rich history and tradition of successful student leadership, but to create unparalleled opportunities for students in the future. The biggest impact alumni can make is by refusing to donate to the Institute until this issue is resolved and the administration relinquishes their hold on our Union, and we urge you to withhold donations in a show of solidarity. Please join us in sending a clear message to Jackson and the Board of Trustees that usurping our student-run Rensselaer Union is unacceptable.

Sincerely,
Save the Union

Do you have anything you want to write about? Contact us at poly.rpi.edu/contact.

Letters to the Editor

Discussion on current state of RPI required

TO: RPI BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHAIRMAN Arthur F. Golden:

This letter is in response to your email of September 27, providing legal reasoning and a resolution of the Board's Executive Committee regarding the Student Union brouhaha. It is unfortunate that we are writing to you via *The Poly*, but you didn't reply to our last letter, emailed to you on May 5. Sadly, this may be the only way we can get our opinion on this matter in front of RPI's Board of Trustees, the administration, and many other RPI community members.

First, your rationale for why the Board's Executive Committee thought it necessary to promulgate the resolution seems rather weak. What is so unnerving to the administration about providing student leaders with a voice when selecting the Union's director? Is someone in the administration so bent on total control that this issue has resulted in a campus whirlwind? On balance, your rationale just doesn't add up.

Second, you mentioned the Student Union of today is not what it was 50 years ago when we attended RPI. Further, you referenced the Union's budget—"in the millions"—which, for some reason, seems like Board speak for "we just don't trust the student leaders to manage that much money." Has there been a serious, recent breach of fiduciary responsibility that must be curbed? Has any student leader stolen or misappropriated funds? Given the Union's budget has been "in the millions" for many years, we are not persuaded by that explanation.

Third, your comments about providing student leaders with training on how to conduct an interview comes across as a condescending gesture, as was your reference to "lab course" and "acquisition of business skills." Do you really believe that RPI's student leaders lack a modicum of savvy and business skills? We have to interpret your

inference about deficient skills much like a "pat on the head" to these student leaders—unnecessary and unwarranted.

Fourth, you continue to tout "innovation," "evolutionary path," "upward trajectory," and "four times as many applications" in reference to how you apparently want RPI viewed by others. Nice sentiments, but this fits the continuing pattern of "good news only" from RPI's leadership. Our Renew Rensselaer team understands the key metrics, given we discussed these with you, directly, two times over the past year. RPI's trajectory over the past 10 or more years can only be described, objectively, as downward on many key metrics.

The Wall Street Journal's latest article on college rankings proves our point. RPI's financial condition is weak (S&P downgrades) and needs strengthening. Reversing that metric will take a committed effort by the entire RPI community. Yet the overall perception of RPI's day-to-day management is approaching dismal, as we hear from professors, staff (particularly Institute Advancement), many current students and alumni, and even some prior trustees who served with you. Help is available, but only with change.

We think it's high time for discussion using objective data, leading to serious thought about RPI's current condition and actions the Board of Trustees need to take to right the ship. RPI was a great institution 50 years ago; it has clearly slipped using objective metrics. We'd like to see RPI renewed and stand ready to marshal the alumni group to support that objective. But that won't happen if the Board isn't listening.

On behalf of the Renew Rensselaer team,
Peter J. Vanderzee '70

Student-run Union principles belittled

BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHAIRMAN ARTHUR GOLDEN'S LETTER OF SEPTEMBER 27 REGARDING THE HIRING of the director of the Rensselaer Union was legally educational but totally missed the mark. He has made it clear to one and all that the president has absolute and final authority over hiring at RPI, which everyone always knew to be the case for the Union director, but in the spirit of self-determination and respect, not exercised. With this, the Trustees' Executive Committee and the president reverse what is one of the long-term successes of RPI—a Union funded and managed by the students for the benefit and enrichment of the broad RPI community. Why is this happening? We don't really know, so at least share with us one good reason why over 50 years of working precedent cannot be fixed without usurping student power.

Golden demeans the success of the Union and the student body by calling it an experiment. By any measure, it is a success and his description is a convenient way to justify this heavy-handed action. (Would he feel comfortable calling the Board's governance an "experiment" over the same time period?) He doesn't display much knowledge of the Union's history and economics when he misses the fact that the budget has been in the millions for decades, and 50 years of educational inflation would multiply the budget approximately 15-fold. All of this avoids the core question: does the Board and administration support the core mission and model of student governance of the Union? If the answer is yes, and I pray that it is yes, then true leadership by the Board would entail supporting and guiding the students if there is a real issue at hand, instead of a legalistic power grab we now witness.

This is the first note I have received from Golden and his choice of subject and timing is strange. He communicates what is probably the end of one of RPI's true differentiators, and he does this literally on the eve of a major capital campaign that has many of us returning to campus. I wish he would turn his attention to the more difficult issues such as the fact that, even after a \$1.4 billion capital campaign nine years ago, the endowment has basically been flat, debt has increased dramatically, and investment returns are well below par. As experiments go, the Institute's finances appears to be a much riskier one than Union governance.

Steven Silberstein '76
Former Union Executive Board Member

Legal perspective on Golden's letter

HAVING CONSIDERED THE LETTER FROM CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND ATTORNEY GOLDEN to the RPI community, I thought I would share a few of my takeaways. I point out the chairman's profession as an attorney since the writings of attorneys tend to be different from that of a non-attorney: their words are chosen carefully.

First, towards the end of the first paragraph, Attorney Golden refers to "my, the Board's and Dr. Jackson's vision" yet, when discussing the Union specifically he states, "we spend many hours discussing ideas (mainly her ideas) for continuing the broadening and improvement of the student experience." Hmmm, so is it their vision or her vision? Is Attorney Golden trying to give credit to Jackson, covering his butt, or giving us—the reader—insight into the lack of power of the Board members, even the chairman. This seems to reinforce what others have stated, that this Board is rubber-stamping whatever Jackson puts forth. From my perspective, if the Board is not going to be proactive, bringing in new ideas and concepts from the outside, then what is their value?

Secondly, at the beginning of the third paragraph, Attorney Golden makes note that "today's Union is a much different entity than it was 50 years ago" and further indicates that the issues it now sees are far beyond "anything one could have imagined 50 years ago." Yes, that is so true. But, by the same token, couldn't the very same comment have been made 50 years ago relative to the early 1900s? In support of his position, Attorney Golden speaks of the need to ensure that the Union "comply with all applicable laws" and "act in a non-discriminatory way." Well, again, wasn't that true of the Union 50 years ago? In fact, that is true of each successive year the Union has existed as our federal and state legislatures are forever adding new laws and revising existing laws. So what's new today? Further, I have to believe the Union has an attorney: if it doesn't, it should, and one independent of RPI.

Third, at the beginning of the fourth paragraph, Attorney Golden speaks of "our vision and goals for the Union." What about the students' vision and goals of their Union? The Union is what it is because of the vision and goals of the student leaders and Executive Board that have run the Union all these years. I'd have to say they've done a great job, so why the need for a change and why is Attorney Golden's, the Board's, or Jackson's vision any better? Indeed, what is their vision? Where is the transparency?

Finally, Attorney Golden speaks of the resolution that the Board adopted "confirming the authority the president has, and has always had." All I can say is that in my law school days and in all my years of practice, I've always been taught, advised, and believed that one never exposes evidence of weakness in one's position. If the president has the authority, even if somewhat questionable, simply state so and point to where the basis is for that authority. By adopting this resolution, the Board is telling everyone that they do not believe the president has the authority or, at a minimum, that they are very unsure that she does. Regardless, even if the president did have the authority at the inception of the Union (or later by consent of the Union), the fact that the Union has operated independently from its inception over 100 years ago says that if the authority ever existed in the president, it was waived and is now lost.

Whatever path the student leadership of the Union takes, it should not amend its constitution or any other documents regarding its charter and operations to align them with RPI. Once the change is made, you and future generations will be stuck with it. The Union has funds, fight this! Go to Albany Law or elsewhere to seek help, seek donations from the RPI community, or even post a GoFundMe campaign. This is worth fighting for. Good luck.

Edward K. Welch II '77

Championing our student leadership

IT IS BEYOND CLEAR THAT THE GUIDING VISION FOR RENSSELAER'S FUTURE IS TO BECOME AN IMPACTFUL force for global change. This is why I am alarmed that the greatest transformative cornerstone of this university is recognized as anything less than the pride and the centerpiece of that vision.

I am writing, of course, about the Rensselaer Union. There is more to this saga than a miscommunication or a question of legal authority; the Union's student run nature manifests in the freedom of choice enjoyed by student leaders. The recent challenges to this principle call into question the true nature of leadership, and the fundamentals of personal growth—values core to the ongoing evolution of Rensselaer.

Individual transformation may appear in many forms, but leadership and passion must always emerge from the deepest confines of a person's will. To be transformative, to evoke the brand of leadership Rensselaer aims to create, we cannot merely expose the brilliant engineer to opportunities in their field, or give the dedicated scientist a structured curriculum to pursue. To ignite their passion, we must do more than offer world-class programs that stimulate learning, or create a measured environment for growth and exploration. The art of leadership cannot be taught in a lab; it must be hunted through the bright summits of success and the shaded valleys of failure. Leadership can only be learned by doing.

This approach has borne results; the freedom to advocate and innovate has had a tangible, irreplaceable impact on Rensselaer. Important academic programs, such as course midterm assessments, have been developed by the Student Senate. Institute policies for inclement weather, signage, sick leave, and many more have been negotiated at the initiative of student leaders. Many of our traditions, including Hockey Line, Red Army, and Big Red Freakout, were started by innovative grand marshals. Impactful business ventures—such as the upgraded Rensselaer Collegiate Store and Moe's Southwestern Grill—were the result of partnerships established and led professionally by the Executive Board.

These indelible facets of our community and our identity owe themselves to the student-run Union. Students' liberty to experiment, to challenge, and to take the lead, are the heart and soul of Rensselaer.

See VISION, Page 15

Letters to the Editor

Vision: Leadership

From **Page 14**

This is the essence of why the Union matters; this is precisely why it must remain student run. The freedom of the Executive Board to craft budgets based entirely on student ideas allows aspiring entrepreneurs to innovate and take risks, and enables potential managers to learn fiscal responsibility. The freedom of the Student Senate to advocate for changes in policy or new campus programs allows aspiring community leaders to experience high-impact political advocacy. These are raw, fundamental lessons of leadership that cannot be learned in a lab; they are enabled entirely by the expressions of free will and shared governance embodied by a student-run Union.

What can be a more powerful legacy?

Only by giving students control of their own destiny can we truly inspire the next generation of leaders to grow, thrive, and succeed. Thanks to the Union, RPI goes beyond producing engineers—it enables entrepreneurs. RPI not only encourages hard workers—it motivates self-starters. RPI doesn't just instruct students about the principles of leadership—it proudly inspires them to become leaders themselves. There is no legacy that could be greater for this school. There is no better way for Rensselaer to have an impact on the world.

Creating a structure that allows the historic student leadership of the Union to continue, while meeting the professional necessities of the Division of Human Resources, would be simple—require the Executive Board's approval on any director candidate before the

candidate is sent to the president for a final hiring decision. Clarify that the director's purpose remains true to the Constitution we enacted in 2015. It is to advise student government organizations, not to manage, instruct, or overrule them. Arrange a once-per-semester meeting between the grand marshal and the chairperson of the Board of Trustees to enable productive communication about the quality of student life. These simple steps, maintained in good faith, would form the foundation of a collaborative relationship between all stakeholders of this community.

It is my belief that true leadership is borne of our ability to empower others. By embracing this principle, RPI has so little to lose, and so much to gain. I urge President Jackson, Chairman Golden, and the Board of Trustees to come together with the students of this great school, take pride in their will to change the world, and embrace their passion for the Rensselaer community. Their ideas, much like your own, all build toward a vision of a proud Rensselaer. Let debate be the crucible that forges progress, the virtuous contest of ideas that allows this community to build towards a stronger future, together. Welcome the free voice of students, and RPI will prosper. Champion the student-run Union as a core pillar of the Rensselaer Plan, and you will find the vision of a transformative Rensselaer shines brighter than ever.

Kyle Keraga '15
149th Grand Marshal
Delta Phi, Lambda Chapter
Proud Alumnus of RPI

RPI Union's original intent contextualized

THE RECENT LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES DEALT A BLOW TO ONE of Rensselaer's finest and longest traditions. It spoke of the Trustees' and the president's vision of what the Student Union should be—it would have been nice to have asked the students for their vision.

A year after Chairman Arthur Golden graduated in 1966, students supported, in the grand marshal and president of the Union elections, the idea of dramatically increasing our student activity fee. This was done as part of that long tradition, with the sound logic that the just-completed Student Union building would need a far larger operating budget to fully realize its great potential for improving campus life. It was also done to cement the tradition that the Student Union would remain in control of these funds and the supported activities. As noted just prior to this election, "... other schools across the country have had similar unions and their unions have, in many cases, drifted out of student control by neglect and misuse. This is something that must not happen here at Rensselaer. The Union must have competent leaders aware of its potential and scope in order to ensure that students retain full control of the facility they fought so long to obtain." (*The Polytechnic*, 19 April 1967, page 13.)

To characterize the Union as just another experimental lab offered by the administration subverts what has been an essential element of RPI's soul for over one and a quarter centuries. It was the students who raised the initial funds supporting athletics in 1883 that directly led to formation of this Union. Similarly, "In 1964, ground was broken for a new Student Union at Rensselaer. Construction of the building was made possible by the students' decision to increase the student activities fee several years earlier. By 1964, the students had accumulated over a quarter of a million dollars, which enabled Rensselaer to acquire a 30-year mortgage to finance the building's \$3 million cost. As a result of continuing student support, that mortgage was burned in 1994." (Phelan, Ross, & Westerdaal; Rensselaer: Where Imagination Achieves the Impossible.)

Renew Rensselaer is a team dedicated to preserving and strengthening what has made RPI special—and to improving its governance. Our newest member is "Stephen Van Rensselaer" who secured over 4,549 signatures to "Save the Union." Why?

"The Rensselaer Union is an unusual, if not unique, student organization. Run entirely by students, the Union is a justifiable source of pride for the Institute." Jared Cohon, President of Carnegie Mellon University, in the 2006 Middle States Accreditation Report to RPI.

You will be hearing more from Renew Rensselaer soon—and how you can help.

Bill Criss '68, '69
78th President of the Union

EDITORIAL NOTEBOOK

Remedying imposter syndrome through meaningful collaboration, community

Overcoming a negative mindset, self-deprecation by getting involved in extracurriculars

"HOW DID I GET HERE?" THIS WAS THE QUESTION THAT RAN through my head every couple minutes for the first few weeks of September.

My story is a little different from most students' on campus. Coming out of high school, I did not feel ready to take the massive leap that is going away to a four year school. It didn't help that my grades were average at best. I ended up making the decision to go to community college. After two years of getting my associates degree, I found myself staring at an acceptance letter from RPI.

In this moment, everything made sense. I had worked hard toward the goal of finishing my degree, and I had done it. But something felt wrong. I felt like I had been admitted by mistake. Or that, for some reason, the admissions office had let me in as a part of some cruel joke.

This feeling of fraudulence is what I later learned to be

known as "imposter syndrome." I was convinced that I had only gotten into this school because I had somehow played the system by going to community college. I felt that, after my first rounds of tests, I would just fail and be found out as someone laughably unqualified.

This fear is something which most students can probably say they have felt at least once. Whether you're a first year transfer student, freshman, upperclassman, or even graduate student, I'm sure you can point to a time when you've questioned the legitimacy of your value by writing it off to stupid luck. This is obviously a detrimental mindset, however, it can be difficult to break.

While this may sound cliched, I believe that the most effective way to deal with imposter syndrome is to get involved in something other than schoolwork. Instead of perpetuating the self-fulfilling prophecy by constantly studying yourself to exhaustion, inevitably

ending in you having "just scraped by again," you might want to consider something that is more accessible and engaging than your classes. For me, this was joining *The Polytechnic*. Joining a club gave me the opportunity to prove to myself that I could succeed in a place that expects so much while simultaneously being easily accessible and accommodating. It also opened a door for me to start connecting with people who I would have otherwise felt alienated by. The Union soon became my second home where I would spend time studying, interspersed with a healthy amount of club activities.

While I still sometimes catch myself wondering how I got here, I no longer worry that I don't belong. The Union's ability to bring students together to work on things which they feel passionate about is truly unique from any other part of campus. Its ability to empower is why it is absolutely necessary. It ensures the mental health and cooperative nature of the student body, and provides a welcoming environment. ♦



**Nicholas
Luczak**
Copy Editor

The Poly would like to extend our sincerest thanks to everyone who contributed to the Ed/Op section this week. If you would like to submit an article, contact edop@poly.rpi.edu.

Features

Wednesday, October 11, 2017

CUPHEAD

Tyler Carney
Senior Reviewer

CUPHEAD IS EASILY THE MOST CHALLENGING GAME I have ever played.

The game starts by showing how Cuphead and his pal Mugman got themselves into their predicament—a lost bet with the Devil in his casino. After some pleading, the Devil agrees to spare their souls on the condition that they rough up some people who owe the Devil money. They agree to the Devil's terms and set out on their journey.

The main purpose of the game is to beat all the bosses. These bosses are extremely well designed. From the character design, to the animations, to the mechanics, everything is perfect. They also vary wildly in those aspects. A few examples are a big, green dragon flying through the clouds, an insane clown on a roller coaster, a couple of bouncer frogs on a casino boat, a telekinetic carrot in a field, and a shape-shifting blimp lady. Every fight is different from the last, and a completely new challenge.

And what a challenge they are. The initial impression of a new boss is, "How in the world am I ever going to beat this?" Then the deaths happen, first a few right at the start of the match, then the deaths start happening later and later until the first phase is defeated! Too bad there are usually two or three more phases left in the fight. By the time the final phase is reached, the first phase is a breeze and the second phase an enjoyable challenge, but the final phase is pure torture.

At this point comes the majority of the deaths and retries. It gets so difficult because the first two phases have to be passed perfectly in order to have any chance of surviving long enough to learn the mechanics of the last phase. With so many projectiles flying across the screen, having to dodge them and still land on a part of the map that won't instantly kill you, all while watching and listening for the next set of

attacks, but still trying to dodge the first, the deaths rack up quickly.

Finally, by some stroke of pure luck, "KNOCKOUT" rings out and pops up on the screen. A rush comes as the realization hits that, after fighting this insane clown for two hours, he has been defeated—it makes everything so worth it. I normally have to take a break after this happens to just reset myself and prepare for the next one.

I have not yet beat the game, but I am slightly scared of what is to come. It took me 80 deaths to complete the first island of five bosses, I am already at 100 deaths for the second island, and I have only defeated one of the bosses there. That is not including the hundreds of times I have restarted a battle after losing a health point early on. With a third island and a finale left, I know the difficulty is going to ramp up further to extreme levels that I am not sure I can physically beat. I am definitely looking forward to the challenge though.

A review of this game would not be complete without a discussion of its art style. It is a 1930s cartoon in a video game; nothing like it has ever been done in the gaming industry. Every character, background, and animation was hand drawn exactly as it would have been in the 30s—that means 32 drawings for a single animation. Every boss has a multitude of different mechanics and environments, which means that thousands, if not tens of thousands, of images were drawn for this game. Another important aspect of the art is the music of the game. Every piece of music was recorded using a live jazz band which, again, was based on the 1930s sound.

This game has been a breath of fresh air for me. The gameplay and art style are so unique, and it does not have a single microtransaction anywhere in it—something I cannot say about many AAA games coming out this year. For only \$20, it is a great purchase that I would recommend to anybody who likes an extreme challenge. ♦

