STUDENT SENATE

UAR approved in special meeting

Jack Wellhofer
Senior Reporter

The Student Senate held an emergency meeting last Sunday to vote on the Union Annual Report for fiscal year 2019, a document detailing the Rensselaer Union’s budget and the Activity Fee the Union will charge students. The original vote was set to be held on Wednesday, February 7, but the Senate meeting was canceled due to snow. The UAR was due to Interim Vice President for Student Life Le Norman Strong the following morning. Once the UAR is approved by Strong, it is sent along to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Once enough senators crammed into the Phalanx Room to meet quorum requirements, Grand Marshal Justin Etzine ’18 opened the meeting just after 5 pm with one item on the agenda. Union Annual Report Committee Chairperson Joe Venusto ’19 began the meeting by giving a brief presentation on the UAR.

After the presentation, Sidney Kochman ’19 questioned why the document was due tomorrow and why the Senate did not have more time to review its 52-page contents. The UAR was passed out of committee at 6:17 pm the night before, and went out to senators at 2:19 am on Sunday morning. At the beginning of the meeting, Etzine asked if anyone had not had the chance to read the document. Only one senator, graduate student Heidi Niskanen, a new senator attending her first meeting, had not had the opportunity to read the document. The Senate was given five minutes to skim the document before proceeding. Etzine took partial blame for the delay, saying he was unaware of the Institute’s mandated deadline but that he would “work through the night” to make changes and have the Senate approve them. “At worst, I will march to the Troy Building and plead with Le Norman Strong,” said Etzine.

Graduate student Steve Sperazza told the Senate he did not see any issues with the document. Graduate student Anthony Ashley spoke approvingly of the clarification provided on how the Activity Fee was derived, and that good decisions were made in regards to it.

After the three had spoken, no further discussion was brought up. The queue was closed and the UAR went to vote, passing 17-0-1, not twenty minutes after the meeting opened. Those familiar with the UAR were surprised by its quick approval. The document had passed out of the UAR Committee 9-7, over controversy on whether or not to include the Rensselaer Union arches on the cover of the document. The vote occurred in a UAR committee Facebook group message. Some UAR Committee members felt that doing so would too closely align student government with Save the Union, who use the former Union logo as a means to identify their cause. The new logo, with the signature hats of the grand marshal and the president of the Union, was implemented in Spring 2014.

The full UAR can be found at poly.rpi.edu/UARFY19.

THE STUDENT SENATE GATHERS in the Phalanx Room to vote on a document detailing the Union’s finances.

Policy prohibiting recording passed

Jonathan Calcedo
Senior Reporter

The Executive Board meeting on Thursday saw the RPI Students for the Exploration and Development of Space seek Union recognition, the adoption of an amended Rensselaer Union Executive Board Special Rules of Order, and a review and approval of the Rensselaer Union Room Reservation and Events Policy.

Vice President of the Union Rasika Ekhalikar ’18 served as the chair in the absence of President of the Union Matt Rand ’19.

The Board reviewed proposed changes to the Rensselaer Union Executive Board Special Rules of Order, presented by Policies Committee Chairperson Anissa Choiniere ’20.

The rules were extended to apply to “attendees of Executive Board meetings.” A clause was added that specified that all interested parties of a motion will be asked to leave the room at the president’s request. Following the vote on the motion, “the parties with a conflict of interest will be invited back into the room where the President will tell them the results of the motion.”

Choiniere also outlined the addition of a section regarding audio and video recordings, and livestreaming. The section permits the members and attendees to create recordings of open portions of meetings, provided that the recording is made known to everyone present at the beginning of the recording, and immediately stops at the request of the president of the Union. The section also permits the president to “request that all copies of an audio or video recording be deleted in front of the President if there is reason to believe the recording captured sensitive or confidential information.”

At the time of publication, Choiniere had not responded to questions about what the consequences of violating the policy will be.

“The Executive Board does not condone livestreaming meetings of any kind. The Executive Board or its members will not actively take part in or allow livestreaming meetings,” continues the section. According to the document, the policies were adopted to ensure the privacy of any party presenting “sensitive financial or personal information” and to allow the Board to “freely express its opinions without interruption from biased parties.”

The rules were passed with a vote of 15-1-1. The document can be found in its entirety at poly.rpi.edu/policies.

Business Operations Committee Chairperson Kay Sun ’19 presented a new document—the Rensselaer Union Room Reservation and Events Policy. As Sun explained, the new policy largely outlines information protocols that were already in place and followed, but organized them into an
E-Board: Room reservation policy passed, new space-related club Union affiliated

From Page 1

an official document. She further mentioned continued work on ensuring clubs can reserve the rooms they need, and working on prioritization in the issues among clubs. The full policy can also be found at poly.rpi.edu/roompolicy.

The Board opened the floor to members of the RPI Students for the Exploration and Development of Space. Director of the Mueller Center Steve Allard mentioned that the organization was previously recognized by the Union, but lost membership before the current sanctioning policy was put in place.

Concerns were raised over RIPISEDS’ similarity to existing recognized clubs of the same domain, notably with the Rensselaer Astrophysical Society. Some members of the Board suggested approving them contingent upon merging with RAS, but that was struck down on the notion that it isn’t the Board’s place to force one recognized organization to merge with another. A motion to recognize RIPISEDS passed with a vote of 14-0-2.

In the director’s report, Allard mentioned that Fresh Check Day will take place on February 28 from 11 am to 2 pm in the lobby of the Mueller Center. He shared that he and Associate Director for Union Operations Joe Campo are exploring the possibility of turning the Mueller Center Lounge into a study space for students. Allard also elaborated on future improvements to the Mueller Center fitness equipment, and the performance of the center’s fitness classes.

At the time of publication, the meeting minutes from the February 1 meeting of the Executive Board were not published to the Board’s minutes archive at poly.rpi.edu/s/emin; according to Article 3, Section 4, subsection A of the Executive Board Bylaws, the secretary of the Executive Board, Ida Etemadi ’19, is responsible for ensuring “that minutes, public committee reports, and motions be made public and available to members of the Union no later than one week after the date of such minutes, reports, or motions.”

The Executive Board meets in the Shelnutt Gallery of the Rensselaer Union on Thursdays at 8 pm.
TOP TEN LIST

10. Rat
9. Horse
8. Squirrel
7. Three-Legged
6. Luge
5. Speed-Skating
4. Skiing
3. 5k
2. 100m Dash
1. NASCAR

Words can be found forwards, backwards, up, down, and in both diagonals.

Winter Olympic Sports

Alpine Skiing
Biathlon
Bobsliegh
Curling
Figure Skating
Ice Hockey
Luge
Skeleton
Snowboarding

PLP Application for Fall 2018 & Spring 2019 is open to all undergraduate sophomore or junior students. Please submit the following materials in person at the Archer Center located in Academy Hall or scan and email to archercenter@rpi.edu by March 9, 2018:

- Resume
- Cover letter
- Completed faculty/professional reference form
- List of campus involvement activities

For more information, contact Christine Allard at bondc@rpi.edu

PLP Info Night: February 21nd 6:00-7:00pm Academy Hall, Suite 2232

**PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM**

- Fall or spring semester, two-hour, co-curricular seminar series.
- Practice becoming a strong, resilient person who can translate that to a professional workplace.
- Students engage with corporate professionals, alumni/ae and community partners.
- Topics include communication, workplace ethics, understanding corporate culture, leadership, effective decision making, networking and negotiating, and managing change and more.
- No grades, no homework and no tests.
- Mondays from 6-8 PM in the Student Union.
**Without a valentine today? Just know The Poly will always be yours.**
Black Panther anticipated for soundtrack

Serge Piskun  
Senior Reviewer

LET ME START THIS OFF BY SAYING THIS ISN’T YOUR AVERAGE album review. Black Panther: The Album Music from and Inspired By, also known as Black Panther: The Album, is no ordinary soundtrack. With the film’s score handled by Ludwig Göransson, the soundtrack album was given to someone else. Instead of melodic, moodsetting tracks, it is filled with actual singles created, and curated, by Kendrick Lamar. Yes, you heard that right. Kendrick Lamar.

That reason alone makes this the first soundtrack album I’ve actually listened to, and as a result, made me even more hyped for Black Panther’s February 15 release date. The album is filled with captivating tracks, all serving a different meaning and all, hopefully, foreshadowing key plot developments in the movie.

The first track, “Black Panther,” feels like a stereotypical, yet refined, pre-credits song. It’s very minimalistic: a lonely piano, several scattered drums, and background noise accompany Kendrick Lamar as he raps about becoming a king, and how he needs to remember the people he’s representing. It isn’t a bad song, but it is immediately eclipsed by the second track on the album, “All the Stars,” featuring SZA.

As the album’s lead single, and as the movie’s promotional song, “All the Stars” had a lot of milestones to hit. It needed to be memorable, catchy even. It needed to have a radio-friendly beat, to have simple yet powerful lyrics, and to set the tone of the movie it represents. I think Kendrick Lamar and SZA really hit the mark, and went above and beyond in creating this tune. It’s super catchy, and has an interesting yet not too far-fetched background sound. What makes it even more interesting is that the chorus references Black Panther lore: “This may be the night that my dreams might let me know / All the stars are closer…” is a homage to Black Panther’s power: he can communicate with previous Black Panther spirits, the stars, and with the Panther God, Bast, in his dreams. I thought that was a pretty neat easter egg, which only further proves how dedicated Kendrick Lamar was when he made this album.

A bit further in the album is a song that I’m surprised isn’t receiving any airtime on the radio. “The Ways,” which is sung by Khalid, with support from Swae Lee of Rae Sremmurd and Kendrick Lamar, is a lighthearted, modern love song. Its lyrics are simple, but what really sets it apart is the intricate backing. With a prominent hi-hat drum line and plucky, industrial notes, it is even more catchy than “All The Stars.” Khalid’s voice is smooth, and singing about young love is his forte. Swae Lee provides a differing, yet similarly smooth, voice in his chorus that blends seamlessly with Khalid’s and extends the mood throughout the entire song. I can see this being the love interest introduction song of Black Panther, possibly paired with some slow-motion shots and a stunning background. Skipping a bit more, we come to the end of the album, where Kendrick Lamar chooses to place his duet with The Weeknd, titled “Pray For Me.” This song sounds like the perfect blend of Starboy and DAMN; The Weeknd’s stadium sound paired nicely with Kendrick’s evocative rapping flow. It’s a good place to end the album, and I can see this highlighting the end of the movie and a seamless transition to the credits. It’s on the shorter end, but I think it’s a fitting way to end this journey.

Kendrick Lamar went above and beyond in the production of Black Panther: The Album. With guest features like the aforementioned SZA and The Weeknd, along with Travis Scott, Future, and Anderson .Paak, this album is a certified banger. If the movie is anything like this, I’m prepared to be blown away.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SATURATION II  
BROCKHAMPTON
Recommended by: Brookelyn Parslow

Cura  
Keys N Krates
Recommended by: Sidney Kochman

Earn your MBA or Specialized Master in your 5th year!

Join us as the Lally School of Management hosts Information Sessions for current Rensselaer students. During this event, you can learn more about Lally MBA and five specialized M.S. business programs, and how you can earn your Master degree in your fifth year!

EngMBA + SciMBA Info Sessions:  
Freshmen only
2/27, 12-1 pm, RU 3511, Union
2/28, 10-11 am, RU 3511, Union
To register, visit: apply.rpi.edu/register/mba

Co-Term Info Sessions:  
All students welcome
2/27, 12-1 pm, RU 3502, Union
2/28, 10-11 pm, RU 3502, Union
To register, visit: apply.rpi.edu/register/coterm
Lack of discussion around UAR concerning

I was initially going to write a short piece about our recent lack of a sports section—stay tuned to this space. I wrote the article for that—but then I went to the emergency meeting of the Student Senate on Tuesday. The Senate voted on the Union Annual Report for fiscal year 2019, which is a document that outlines the months-long budgeting process of the Executive Board and its decisions with the student government.

For full disclosure, I was a member of the Executive Board until I resigned on Tuesday, and I was also a member of the Union. As a former member, I believe the lack of discussion around such an important document worries me. The meeting lasted just over 20 minutes, and only three members (myself included) were present. I think the UAR Committee was irresponsible—they worked tirelessly to prepare the document, along with the help of many wonderful people in the Union Administration. It is not fair to these people.

The UAR is a big document that outlines the months-long budgeting process of the Executive Board and its decisions with the student government. For all this, as the film of the demonstration of student leaders and went from conception to reality, the Senate received it at 2:19 am on the day of the emergency meeting due to unforeseen constraints, but the UAR passed the Senate 17-0-1. Throughout my time in student government and writing about the Senate, I have seen many pointless abstentions; but, if there were Senators in that room who didn’t read the UAR, this f i n a l l y would have been an appropriate time to abstain. Now, onto our recent lack of a sports section! The Poly seems perpetually understaffed, and this past year was no exception. It’s not just that we don’t want to print sports; we simply do not have interested writers. It wasn’t fair to the people on The Poly to force the section week after week. However, if you are already interested in sports writing, definitely reach out by emailing sports@poly.rpi.edu or stopping by our office during any of our meeting times. We would love to have you.

Cement: material of past, present, future

There have been many important inventions and engineering breakthroughs throughout the years. But, what comes to mind as one of the most important to humanity? Cement is probably one of your top answers. By volume, the only thing that humans consume more than water is cement. Cement clearly has had a large impact on history and continues to have a large role in our everyday lives.

Believe it or not, cement has been used for many centuries. The first people to use it on a large scale were the Romans. As early as around 100 AD, they were using large buildings such as the Pantheon in Rome. The recipe for cement is simple to understand. The general way to make it is to mix together small particles, such as sand, with slightly larger particles, such as pebbles, and add water. A paste is needed to set the mixture, and the Romans used lime and volcanic rock. Putting all this together makes concrete, the fundamental component for many of the buildings we see today.

It is interesting to note that between this time and the 1700s, this recipe for concrete had been lost. It was rediscovered again by a British engineer named John Smeaton. He was able to mix clay and lime to successfully build a lighthouse on the southern shore of England. The rediscovery was key to a race to come up with better combinations and improve the existing mixture. Currently, there are different types of cement that serve different purposes. The most important aspect of cement is its ability to hold a structure together. Because of this, buildings have been able to get taller and support more people. Rapid production and use of cement has allowed some nations to advance quicker than others. The top three nations with the highest usage are China, India, and the United States. It is easy to see the impact of cement and the technological advancements built using cement. As early as around 100 AD, they were using large buildings such as the Pantheon in Rome. The recipe for cement is simple to understand. The general way to make it is to mix together small particles, such as sand, with slightly larger particles, such as pebbles, and add water. A paste is needed to set the mixture, and the Romans used lime and volcanic rock. Putting all this together makes concrete, the fundamental component for many of the buildings we see today.

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One event that I poured over, in time in the archives at Folsom Library, was called for just the previous night at a meeting of student leaders and went from conception to reality. The momentum for the protest, however, was a pivotal years in my maturing as an adult, and I...
**TOP HAT**

**HELLO, RPI!**

The Curling Team reached one of the top rankings in the country at its national competition, and several sports teams made history with exceptional regional and national competition performances. The Multicultural Leadership Council organized a number of events and programs on diversity and inclusion for the benefit of the entire community. And this only scratches the surface of the achievements outlined.

So, if you could not tell so far, I highly encourage you to check out the UAR, which can be found at poly.rpi.edu/UARFY19.

In other Student Senate news, the proposed handbook for Grand Marshal Week 2018 elections will be reviewed and voted on this Wednesday. The preliminary draft of the handbook continues many of the existing policies and rules for ensuring the fairness and openness of our student government elections. One of the more notable changes is the addition of provisions against external funding and influences into our elections and platforms. Your representatives should be representing you, not other motives.

If you’re interested in seeing what we do, feel welcome to stop by one of our meetings, which happen weekly on Wednesdays at 8 pm in the Rensselaer Union Shelnutt Gallery. And always, if you have any questions, comments, concerns, or ideas, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at gm@rpi.edu!

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

**Transformation?**

Dr. Jackson,

I received your letter requesting a donation to the Rensselaer Annual Fund. In it, you indicate that you have “transformed” the Institute and wish to carry this transformation through into broader society.

I must agree with your premise of transformation. The Institute is an entirely different university today than it was a few short decades ago. The Institute has systematically concentrated and centralized power in the Board of Trustees and the Office of the Provost. It has overridden the will of the Faculty Senate and the Executive Board of the purportedly student-run Union. In so doing, it has disregarded the needs and desires of both the faculty and the student body.

In the process, the Institute has also undermined numerous bylaws, constitutional provisions, and other internal policies, in both letter and spirit. It has shown utter contempt for its own rules, as meticulously documented by the American Association of University Professors in 2010. More recently, and more troublingly, the Institute has suppressed the speech of its students to such a degree that the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education felt the need to send the Institute three separate letters accusing it of the same, all within a single semester.

The Institute has every legal right to transform itself in this fashion. What is legal need not be ethical. I have no desire to see these patterns replicated outside the Institute’s walls, and therefore feel no need to make a donation at this time.

Sincerely,

Kevin Norris
Class of 2014

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**Poly Snapshots**

**The Question:**

Where is your favorite place to eat in Troy?

-Evans Esperance

“Sushi King. Their sea-food fried rice tastes like mine.”

Destiny Taylor

“Dinosaur BBQ; I love mac & cheese.”

Gurgeet Singh

“AEO/MMECL ‘20

“Dinosaur BBQ because of the hoisin sesame chicken wings.”

Jonathan Siryk

MECL ‘20

“All of the above.”

Fausto Calderon

CHEG ‘20

“Chicken Joe’s because the owner is from my home town and the food is just like ours.”

Julianna Ciarimbonte

DSIS/MECL ‘20

“The Whistling Kettle because of their delicious berry crepes.”

Santiago Davila

CHEG ‘20

“All of the above.”

Sebastian Garcia

MECL ‘18

“Halal Palace.”

**Photos and interviews by Crystal Vejar**

Serving the Rensselaer community since 1885
“They’re part of a $97 billion industry, whose revenues in the [United States] alone exceeds baseball, basketball, and football combined,” said Patrick Keilty, referencing the pornography industry in his talk, “Pornography’s Graphical Interface,” at the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center on Thursday.

Keilty, a researcher from the University of Toronto, guided a full room through the intricacies of the seemingly bad designs of pornography websites. These designs, however, are strategically designed to keep visitors engrossed, with the goal of increased time-on-site and revenue.

Most people are familiar with stereotypicalporn web-site design. There’s an excess of information—images, text, banner advertisements, and GIFs are packed on the page. Keilty explained that these websites are strategically designed to “give you what you want in excess” with an overflow of stimulation that keeps the viewer in a “trance-like flow”—watching, clicking, and ultimately bringing in money through advertisements.

Keilty projected screenshots and videos of his scrolling through popular porn sites and compared their similar designs. He would mouse over still images and they would start moving, which intentionally gave the viewer a glimpse of the unknown, encouraging them to click on the video and continue further down the rabbit hole that is modern digital porn.

Everything is calculated based on troves of data collected about mouse movements, interactions, and bounce rates; there is very little about a porn website that is accidental. He also spoke about MindGeek, a company which has virtually monopolized the porn industry and claims to distribute 80 percent of all online pornographic streaming content. Have you ever heard of PornHub, RedTube, YouPorn, Brazzers, or XVideos? That’s just a fraction of what falls under the MindGeek umbrella.

However, MindGeek insists on identifying as a “tech” company, and there is very little about pornography on its website, Twitter account, or other social media. While it certainly has the technology to be a “tech” company—its expertise in data mining and development of interfaces, algorithms, and analytics software shows just that—its ability to ignore the politics of the porn industry seems hypocritical to many.

For this reason, MindGeek has few issues interacting with banks. Yet, the source of its clicks and income—adult film actors—can have their bank accounts closed or loan applications denied just because of their profession. Keilty’s talk was one that I never expected to see in EMPAC; it was a wonderful, thought-provoking addition to the schedule of events that will forever change how I look at porn. I am left wondering; what would pornography websites look like in something other than a capitalist landscape?

If you missed it, I would highly recommend checking out a similar talk he did at Cornell, called “Strategic Desires,” at poly.rpi.edu/s/keilty.