DURING THE SPRING TOWN MEETING, JACKSON ADDRESSES a list of student concerns from a flyer distributed by Save the Union.

Brookelyn Parslow
Senior Reporter

“I’LL BE HAPPY TO ANSWER QUESTIONS, BUT WHAT I thought we would do is, since I know a number of you received this flyer—we thought we would just walk through these questions and give you answers to them,” said President Shirley Ann Jackson during the Spring Town Meeting at the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center on March 22.

Jackson was referencing a flyer that was distributed by two members of Save the Union to them, “I was informed by [President of the Union] Matt [Rand] that the candidate had the questions. This was referenced by two alumni, Arno; Dean of Student Living and Learning Responsibilities, and Judicial Affairs Michael Powell addressed the first point on the flyer, which asserted that the “administration [gave] the Board’s interview questions.”

Several students were distributing flyers and buttons. The students distributing flyers and buttons. The students were not asked to leave. The students were seen intermittently standing and talking with the students distributing flyers and buttons. The students were not asked to leave.

Vice President for Human Resources Curtis Johnson explained that “[their] current lighting fixtures were purchased close to 30 years ago, and are no longer the standard in lighting they once were.” This purchase is part of an ongoing process to improve their stage lighting and the level of service they are able to provide to clubs. In addition to the estimated $825 rental van for members not flying, $10,000 would cover aircraft rental fees, conference fees, hotels, and a rental van for members not flying. The rest of the $6,000 not covered by travel contingencies will come from their existing allocated budget for this competition. The Board approved the reallocation unanimously 13-0-0. The policy can be found at poly.rpi.edu/conflict. According to the official document, the policy defines what a “conflict of interest” is to the Board, and describes the procedures to be followed when a conflict is presented. A motion to pass the Conflict of Interest Policy was unanimous 13-0-0. The policy can be found at poly.rpi.edu/conflict.

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

This is the culmination of procedures and policies the Board has been following that do not exist in an official document. The policy defines what a “conflict of interest” is to the Board, and describes the procedures to be followed when a conflict is presented. A motion to pass the Conflict of Interest Policy was unanimous 13-0-0. The policy can be found at poly.rpi.edu/conflict.
Town Meeting: Capital campaign raises $25 million since launch in October

Cumulative $425 million raised toward $1 billion goal since end of previous campaign in 2008

From Page 1

I don’t know where the candidate received the questions from, whether he wrote them down or whatever. So, I decided that we would reconstitute the search, so that’s what we’re doing,” shared Powell. The reconstituted search will begin “within the next two weeks or so.”

According to Aggar, students will be “in-timately involved in the process, and their input will be weighed heavily on our ultimate decision.”

“Let me just reiterate about searches, all of our searches here. We’ve been very successful. And to participate in these searches is not a right—it’s a privilege. And, given that privilege, we do expect individuals to act accordingly in representing this institution. And we went through a process to work with the student leadership; I’m gonna change that process of how we do business,” Powell later continued.

Powell then invited the audience to a meet-ing with the Student Senate and the Executive Board on Monday, March 26 to discuss that process, because “we’re not going to tolerate what we’ve been through the last time.”

Vice President for Strategic Communications and External Relations Richie Hunter addressed the situation in which students distributing material outside of a hockey game were asked to leave by a Public Safety officer who claimed that RPI had “eminent domain” over a sidewalk. According to Hunter, when students distributing material outside of a hockey game were asked to leave, a Public Safety officer incorrectly used the phrase “eminent domain.”

“The bottom line is, and the officer may have made a mistake in his phraseology, but the property on which the students were handing out the materials was Rensselaer-owned campus property,” further elaborated General Counsel and Secretary Craig A. Cook.

Cook explained that these policies, and their consistent enforcement help keep solicitation by outside organizations, such as credit card companies or the National Rifle Association, off campus.

Vice President for Institute Advancement Graig Eastin spoke to the flyer’s point about his decision to forward Professor Chris Bystroff’s email, which attributed the decrease in alumni donations to racism and sexism, to the alumni mailing list. Eastin expressed that the email was already being discussed in a “broad domain area,” and that forwarding it was “not to make an opinion.”

Hunter stressed that the opinions expressed in the email are not the official position of the Institute, and that the Institute is supportive of freedom of expression. When asked again about his decision to send the email and include “Important to get the truth out there” as the subject line, Eastin said, “Knowing the factors that I know, if they were the same today, I would do the same thing. And, so, that is where it is.”

On the points raised about the capital campaign in the flyer, Eastin said, “an insti-tution is either in two states: in a campaign or preparing for a campaign. And so, yes, we actually are in a campaign and we actually have raised over $400 million. And we’re moving towards over $425 million. And so, we are in a campaign, and we started counting the campaign at the end of the last campaign. And that’s what every institution does.”

The previous capital campaign concluded on October 1, 2008, and the most recent capi-tal campaign was launched on October 13, 2017.

The final point on the Save the Union flyer lists “many noticeable chang-es” to the Rensselaer Union, including that the Student Senate “lost its ability to approve changes to the Student Handbook,” and “the student body no longer meets Dr. Jackson with the same frequency as they [sic] once did.”

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TWO MEMBERS OF SAVE THE UNION DISTRIBUTE flyers outside of EMPAC containing what they consider to be important updates since the Fall Town Meeting.

He stressed that students, such as mem-bers of the Student Senate, are involved in that process, but that there will not be a codified process that would “put in place a bureaucracy that would delay any kind of changes necessary for us to comply with state or federal policies or laws.”

“Would I like to spend more time meeting with students? Absolutely. But, if you want to ask, you know, where my focus is—if I can create an Off Campus Commons, if I can create a Safe Ride service, if I can increase the financial aid budget, if we can still keep hiring instructional staff, if we can improve student housing, you know, we’ve done a multi-year renovation of the [Quadrangle Complex], and so forth—then, those are the things that are my greatest responsibility,” shared Jackson, in response to the flyer’s claims about her frequency of meeting with students.

Jackson later elaborated, “It is simply an untruth to try to propagate that I do not meet with students, and I don’t want to use a stronger word, but it is important that all of us tell the whole truth. And I really care deeply about our students, I care deeply about the full Rensselaer community. The Board [of Trustees], and I said this in more than one form, asked me to come here to effect transformative change, I’ve come to do that, and that is what has been happening. There were many things that had to be ad-dressed when I got here. Not all of those deci-sions are popular. But in the end, one makes the decisions that one has to make. And I’ve com-mitted and I’ve stayed here for 19 years, in spite of things that have shown up in the media, both internal to the university and external—some of which has been pretty egregious. But, I’m committed to what I do. And I love the people here. And that’s my statement.”

See TOWN MEETING. Page 3.
Faculty Senate rep now student-elected

Nicholas Luczak
Senior Reporter

The Student Senate held its second to last meeting on Wednesday. The Senate planned to wrap up the year by presenting a finished senator guide, announcing the annual Lupus Walk, and approving a motion which aimed to outline the election and appointment of a student representative on the Faculty Senate.

At the conclusion of the committee reports, the Senate moved on to special orders of the day. Senator Steven Sperazza ’18 started off this portion of the meeting by presenting his committee’s new senator guide.

The purpose of the senator guide is to allow for a smooth transition for newly elected members of the Senate, as well as to have a reference for key senator responsibilities. The guide aimed to be as “agnostic as possible,” so as to prevent any reader opinions from reducing the efficacy of the guide. The guide was delineated into key components, giving an introduction of the first steps a senator should take after being elected, a brief overview of how Student Senate works, an outline of the project writing process, tips on how to be an effective debater, an overview of Robert’s Rules, and some suggestions on how to work with administrators in a professional manner. The guide was well-received by senators, as the process of creating a senator guide is one that can initially offer some challenges. After Senator Sperazza’s presentation, Project Lead Naya Arroyo presented their progress on the second annual Lupus Walk. The presentation began with some context as to why the event is so important. Hill explained that about 1.5 million Americans are affected by the autoimmune disease lupus—a majority of whom are women of color—and that there is currently no outright cure. Arroyo went on to say that, “For 17 years, the Walk with Us to Cure Lupus program has raised over $28 million for lupus research,” and that they hoped to contribute to that effect.

The second annual Lupus Walk—which will be held on April 21—will start on the ’86 Field and make a loop through Troy, including Sage College campus, and will eventually return to the ’86 Field for a comfortable hour-long, two-mile walk. After the walk, the ’86 Field will feature food from Troy Waterfront Farmers Market favorites such as Muddy Trail Jerky Co, Muddaddy Flats, and O’Malley’s Oven. The event will also offer lawn games, tables for eating, speakers with music, and raffle drawings. Last year’s walk had an attendance of about 30 people, but because of improvements in the efficacy of advertising this year, Hill and Arroyo hope to see an uptick in this year’s attendance.

After the well-received and highly praised presentation of the Lupus Walk, the Senate then moved to new business, where they considered a new motion concerning the appointment of a faculty member representing the student body on the Faculty Senate. The position was traditionally filled whenever the grand marshal chose someone that they felt would do a good job, or someone who had been recommended by the previous representative. Grand Marshal Justin Ettine ’18 expressed that it would be beneficial to leave this decision up to the student body, who he believes would do a better job of selecting a popular faculty member than any single grand marshal. Senator Sperazza made his opinion on the motion clear when he said, “This seems appropriate, this seems well written, I think this is a good idea.” The motion was passed unanimously 18-0-0.

The 48th Student Senate will hold its last meeting of its term on Wednesday, March 28 in the Shelnutt Gallery.

Town Meeting: Global issues addressed

From Page 2

Prior to reviewing the flyer and yielding questions from the audience, Jackson shared updates on Rensselaer’s incoming freshman class and the approved operating budget for the next fiscal year.

“Our superb academic programs prepare Rensselaer students to lead, and I congratulate our faculty, students, and administrators, and staff for the degree to which these programs are now being lauded by many different sources,” expressed Jackson.

These sources included rankings by College Choice, DesignIntelligence, the TFE Times, and College Factual. Notably, the Information Technology and Web Science program was ranked first by College Choice, and The Princeton Review ranked Rensselaer 19th in the nation for “Best Career Placement” in its 2018 annual guide.

“Our ability to anticipate what emerging disciplines are likely to prove most important is one reason why demand for a Rensselaer education has never been higher,” said Jackson.

Applications for the upcoming freshman class totalled 20,375—a five percent increase from last year’s record-breaking number. “Even more telling is the fact that for an enormous number of students, Rensselaer is their very first choice. So they decide to apply for early decision, which is binding if we accept them. And we received the most early decisions applications and confirmations in our history. 30 percent of the incoming class of freshmen will have been admitted through early decision,” Jackson later continued.

The Board of Trustees approved an operating budget of $439.5 million for the upcoming fiscal year; tuition for both undergraduate and graduate students will increase by three percent to total $52,550, remaining in line with other universities. Room and board will increase by two percent, and the financial aid budget will increase by 5.3 percent. Jackson also announced that the 212th commencement ceremony will take place on Friday, May 18 in the EMPAC Concert Hall. Honorary degrees will be given to Herbie Hancock, Mary Jo White, Eric Lander, and Alicia Bohler Davis.

Get ready to exercise your voting rights!
Keep an eye out for endorsements in our GM Week issue next Monday.

EASTIN ANSWERS questions about the campaign.
NEED OFF CAMPUS STUDENT HOUSING?

Are you:

Outgoing?

Have great social media skills?

Excel at building relationships?

BECOME A BRAND AMBASSADOR WITH US!

Fifteenth Street Housing is seeking two students to be our Brand Ambassadors for 5-10 hours a week. We want you to help promote our student housing units and assist in marketing efforts for the organization.

Complete details here: fifteenthstreethousing.com/ambassador
DILBERT
by Scott Adams

Serving the Rensselaer community since 1885

TOP TEN LIST
Political Scandals

10. Donald Trump
9. NSA surveillance
8. Postergate 8
7. Squirrels
6. Cambridge Analytica
5. EMPAC
4. Pizzagate
3. Ted Cruz ate my son
2. 2015 GM Week Mason jars
1. Student-run Union

WORD FIND
by Weston Brousseau

If you have any funny jokes, send them to comics@poly.rpi.edu and they may be featured in The Poly next week!
Advice for springtime

As the temperatures slowly increase and the snow on the ground diminishes, it finally seems that winter is over. After a cold and snowy winter, spring has finally arrived. Soon, the warmer temperatures will give us more opportunities to spend time outdoors. The season of spring is the perfect time to go outside and enjoy nature. However, there are certain things to remember during this time.

One of the main things to consider during springtime is the possibility of allergies. As the trees and flowers begin to bloom, people who are sensitive to pollen can experience symptoms such as sneezing, itching, and runny nose. It is important to use medications such as antihistamines and decongestants to alleviate these symptoms.

Another consideration is the weather. Spring can be unpredictable, with sudden changes in temperature and precipitation. It is important to be prepared for these changes by wearing appropriate clothing and carrying an umbrella.

Finally, spring is a great time to engage in outdoor activities, such as hiking. Within an hour drive of the capital region, there are many trails to choose from. However, if you choose to go hiking, you should make sure to wear the proper attire. Sometimes, the weather can be foggy or rainy, so it is important to wear waterproof clothing.

In conclusion, spring is a beautiful season with many opportunities for outdoor activities. However, it is important to be prepared for the possible challenges that come with it. By being aware of these considerations, you can enjoy the beauty of spring while staying healthy and safe.
GM reflects on past year, thanks all who helped

RPI, I am stunned at how quickly the year has flown by! Today is the last Top Hat column to you all as your 152nd grand marshal.

One year ago, I made a promise to each one of you—no matter the circumstances, I would stand up for the rights, and advocate for the interests, of our student body. This commitment encompassed general student concerns, Greek life, the Union, underrepresented minorities, and any other group of students on campus. Reflecting on the past year, I am proud to have stood by that promise and delivered on it.

By all accounts, this year has proven to be a rewarding—albeit challenging—year. Student Government and the administration worked hand in hand to further the student experience, and I am excited to continue serving as a strong advocate for a student-run Union.

So I ask, instead of cutting off the student voice, do you continue to communicate with the Union? Do you continue donating your time, your thoughts, and your ideas? And if you do, how can you improve the experience of those students you are supporting?

RPI is a student-run university. The Union is a part of the Institute, and vice versa. We are a single, indivisible unit, working in unison to promote frequent, quick interactions between the Student Government and students. Additionally, the communications strategy and expanded social media presence has increased the amount of people we can reach, which has provided new opportunities for the constituents the Union has been able to serve.

My main goal of always improving and better understanding your thoughts, ideas, concerns, and comments to the Student Government. Your opinions form the foundation of all of our efforts, and we are able to better serve when hearing from you.

Until my term ends on Friday, April 6, please reach out to me at gm@rpi.edu to share your thoughts, ideas, concerns, and comments to the Student Government. Your opinions form the foundation of all of our efforts, and we are able to better serve when hearing from you.

To my fellow Top Hats, thank you for the invaluable advice and guidance you have provided me with this year. I am very thankful to have had this opportunity to serve alongside each and every one of you. I am excited to see where this year takes me, and I am expected to see where you all accomplish in the future, and it has been an honor to serve alongside each and every one of you.

I wish you all the best in your future endeavors. Continue reading updates from student government, and keep expecting more if you do not believe you are being communicated with. I hope this column has provided you with what you need! Today marks my final Top Hat column to you all as your 152nd grand marshal, and I wish you all for making your voices heard. Thank you for standing for what you believe in. Thank you for questioning with the goal of always improving and better understanding. Thank you for creating the RPI experience I will forever cherish and reflect upon as I move on into new phases of life.

I have one last request for all of you as I turn over the hat—please continue to stay informed and involved. Continue reading updates from student government, and keep expecting more if you do not believe you are being communicated with. I hope this column has provided you with what you need! Today marks my final Top Hat column to you all as your 152nd grand marshal, and I wish you all for making your voices heard. Thank you for standing for what you believe in. Thank you for questioning with the goal of always improving and better understanding. Thank you for creating the RPI experience I will forever cherish and reflect upon as I move on into new phases of life.

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Using high tech in circular economies

Anahit Hovhannisyan
Senior Reviewer

Driven by interests in humanities and science, Professor Ron Eglash conducts research surrounding “generative justice,” a research framework he has created. Having worked with both indigenous cultures around the world and urban artisans, Eglash observed value in “unalienated” forms, a term coined by Karl Marx. Eglash highlights a problem concentrated around appointing value to a power-bearing figure or corporation and designating it the task of redistribution, rather than distributing value from bottom to top. Thus, he aims to answer, “How do we use high tech to reinstitute circular economic forms?” Now, what is a circular economic form? The concept is defined by three forms of value: labor value, ecological value, and unalienated expressive value. Labor value, as introduced by Marx, is the method of valuing a product simply by the amount of labor used to create it. Ecological value is the value of a product based on its contribution to benefiting the environment. An example of this is organic agriculture. Lastly, expressive value is value generated from the happiness of the individual producing it; it is the value of associating the creator or culture with the product. The “circular” factor has to do with recycling each form of value back into the system.

Based in Rensselaer’s Department of Science and Technology Studies department, Eglash and his team found one of their best examples in African adinkra cloth production. Ashanti people of Ghana produce adinkra cloth to wear for special occasions or ceremonies. The abstract symbols found on the cloth are inspired by observations in nature, and hold significant meaning to Ashanti people. Not only that, but they show logarithmic spirals from horns, plants, and other growth patterns. This cloth is made by hand using stamps and ink, sourced from materials around them. The ink is made from Badie tree, which is boiled in water and thickened. The leftover fibers are planted and used to grow mushrooms. In addition, areas where this tree bark is extracted are protected against deforestation. This process meets all three forms of value previously described. “While I cannot generalize to all adinkra artisans,” said Eglash, “at least the particular group we were with took visible pleasure in their labor: everything from hand carving stamps to weaving the cloth carried a sense of pride and purpose.”

With this experience, Eglash sought out artisans to explore the ways in which high tech can improve value circulation without alienation. Working alongside RPI Professor Audrey Bennett, he has helped locals develop systems to encourage condom use, mitigating AIDS, and supporting reproductive freedom. Solar energy will be introduced this year to replace wood fires in ink production. Eglash and his team have also created Culturally Situated Design Tools. This program is designed to highlight the math and computation behind indigenous traditions, such as adinkra cloth, and teach such patterns to students in STEM. It has been applied to controlled studies in upstate New York. Adinkra cloth is just one of many examples of how we can merge high tech with existing forms of unalienated value to create a liberated circular economy. Eglash and his team are continuously working to spread “generative justice” around the world.

Vance Joy’s Nation of Two offers listeners relaxing, somber sound

James Gabriel Keogh, better known as Vance Joy, is an Australian singer and songwriter. He is well-known for his 2013 single, “Riptide.” Like most people, this song was my first introduction to Joy. I very much enjoyed his soothing, yet husky voice combined with his storytelling lyrics. In 2014, Joy released his first debut studio album, Dream Your Life Away, which featured the already popular tune “Riptide,” and received much praise for his up-and-coming solo career. In the following years, fans anticipated the release of new music, leading up to Nation of Two.

This album highlights Joy’s artistic strengths through the combination of his voice and lyrical choices. While most of his songs are sweet, soft, and generally full of pain, the first song in the album, “Call If You Need Me,” is noteworthy, mainly for its lyrics. This song describes the difficulties attached to moving on, and facing life’s problems. Joy emphasizes that he’s only a call away, and will be there for support. This sweet message is paired well with guitar strumming, creating a comforting melody. Other songs, like “Lay It On Me” and “We’re Going Home,” also feature background guitar riffs.

Personally, I enjoyed “Saturday Sun”—the fourth song in the album—the most. This track is appealing to me, because it features upbeat background music with ukulele, and thoroughly represents the versatility and range of Joy’s voice. In the song, he is able to sing with a deeper voice, and suddenly reach high pitches as the music changes. Vance Joy is definitely my first pick artist when I’m in the mood for a slow, flowing album. Many of his songs sound similar to each other, and, for that reason, prove to be a great playlist for when I’m doing homework or relaxing.

Altogether, if you are looking to relax or are in a somber mood, this is the album for you. Joy graces his audience with a variety of songs that preach the importance of love, and how sometimes it’s hard to move on by yourself; he emphasizes that people need support, and asking for help or comfort doesn’t make you weak, but rather makes you human.

I would highly recommend Nation of Two, for it probably has something for everyone. We all need a reminder here and there that we need to be loved, and Vance Joy provides that with his alluring voice.