**ELECTIONS**

‘Smells rotten’: Administrators meet with Elections Commission

Sidney Kochman
Brooklyn Parslow
Senior Reporters

The Elections Commission was summoned to a meeting with Vice President for Student Life LeNornam Strong, Vice President for Information Services and Technology and Chief Information Officer John Kolb ’79, General Counsel and Secretary of the Institute Craig Cook, and Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students Travis Appar via an email sent on Sunday. The meeting occurred yesterday at 5 pm.

“I’ve received a number of complaints and concerns about the elections process,” began Strong. He then listed the complaints, which included that the voting system was reopened and accessed by a Union systems administrator that was a registered candidate assistant, among other issues. A number of administrators also expressed concerns about the integrity of the elections and whether the newly-elected student leadership is tainted by the appearance of issues in the process.

After relaying these concerns and stressing the importance of evaluating the legitimacy of the election with the Union systems administrator access issue specifically in mind, the administrators present left the Commission alone to discuss their intended course of action.

The Commission appeared reluctant to take any measures to restore confidence in the integrity of the process, punting the responsibility to other bodies, such as the Student Senate and the Union Systems Administrators.

In response to the Commission’s hesitation to acknowledge the implications of the voting system being accessed, Kolb asked, “In some respects, Justice has been tainted. Right? Oh, he was involved with the voting system, and was telling you guys what to do because he was the GM, while he was running for PU. So, of course he’s going to get elected as PU because he had the advantage that nobody else had. Doesn’t that sound like a problem for student government?”

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**ELECTIONS**

Strong questions election validity

Brookelyn Parslow
Senior Reporter

“Last night I met with the 2018 Elections Commission to discuss the reported issues. Given the lack of integrity in the election process, the [Elections] Commission is now determining whether any of the election results should be invalidated,” wrote Interim Vice President for Student Life LeNornam Strong in an email to the Rensselaer community.

The email detailed the importance of integrity, especially as it applies to the errors made during Grand Marshal Week 2018 elections. These included the voting system’s temporary shutdown to fix errors on the ballot and that the voting system was shown to be “compromised” by forensic data.

According to Strong, “the voting system was then reopened and accessed by multiple students at multiple times during the day while voting was underway” and that some of these students were “connected to candidates standing for election.”

In the meeting with the Elections Commission that was referenced in the email, Strong further stated that one of the students that accessed the system was a Union systems administrator that was also a registered assistant for a campaign. He also stated that a candidate was present when the system was accessed.

David Raab ’19 is the lead Union systems administrator and was a candidate assistant for both Grand Marshal Stef Warren ’18 and President of the Union Justin Etzine ’18, and Rasika Ekhilakhar ’18 is a Union systems administrator and was a candidate assistant for Ida Etemadi ’19 before she recused herself from Etemadi’s campaign on general election day.

In an email to Caraway on the day of the election at 6:07 pm, Raab asked Caraway to “not ask [him] any further questions or ask [him] to do any work with regard to the Rensselaer Union Voting Suite going forward.” He added, “at no point, would any of this work have had any effect whatsoever on how votes are tabulated and stored.”

Raab then outlined all of his previous amendments and troubleshooting the unknown errors preventing the submission of ballots. This interaction occurred under the supervision of the vice chairman of the Judicial Board,” he added.

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Brookelyn Parslow/The Polytechnic

**INTERIM VP FOR STUDENT LIFE LENORMAN STRONG MET with the Elections Commission on April 15, 10 days after the general election.**
Meeting: This election ‘smells rotten’

Strong expressed that he intended to send an email to the Rensselaer community addressing these issues, but wanted to hear the Commission’s conclusions first. The Commission expressed that they intended to reach out to the systems administrators as soon as possible, and would prefer to give students the opportunity to investigate and respond. At the time of publication, the lead Union systems administrator, Raab, had not been contacted by the Commission.

The idea of requiring an organization’s director of communications to submit a policy change, the motion would have been to approve the Executive Board before further progress could be made. Strong mentioned, in preliminary talks, EMPCU curators and staff staff were fully aware, there were a number of issues with the elections. The Poly community since 1885

Serving the Rensselaer community since 1885

Club, Active Minds, Union-affiliated
CONCERT REVIEW

Wednesday, April 18, 2018

Maria Kozdroy
Senior Reviewer

I had been waiting for this concert since April 2016, the month that The Chainsmokers came to RPI. After being extremely disappointed that there wasn’t going to be a concert for my junior year, I became super excited about who might come perform my senior year. I waited months for the final decision to be announced after taking the UPAC concerts survey. The reveal of blackbear came in late February; I turned to whomever was next to me at that moment and said, “Who is blackbear?” It seems I wasn’t the only one who hadn’t heard of him.

At the door the night of the concert, a friend asked how many tickets were left, and astonishingly, only a little over 900 out of 2,000 tickets were sold. The low ticket sales probably didn’t have to do with UPAC Concerts advertising, as they promoted the concert on many platforms, or the access to tickets, as they gave many opportunities to purchase tickets rather, the problem was picking an artist that not enough people were interested in. On the day of the concert, I wasn’t planning on going after giving a listen to his music, as it wasn’t really my genre. However, a few of my friends messaged me saying they had an extra ticket, so I decided to go. I got there just in time for the second opener’s (Asob Black!) last song. I was there in the pack waiting for what seemed like forever. I thought to myself, “what is the delay, isn’t blackbear a solo singer?” Finally, after replacing half the sound system and bringing out his own sound crew, he came out with a whole band; I did not see that coming!

I migrated behind the crowd of people and stood there, confused. The bass was high and I could barely understand what he was singing, the crowd was low energy, and there weren’t many people singing along. People started leaving after his first song. I made my way to the seats in the Field House and sat with some friends. Unfortunately, many of us agreed that the lights and the drummer, as well as the free light-up bracelet, were the best part of the show. It seemed that lackbear went up on the stage with an attitude of “I’m too cool for this;” his cockiness stood out the whole show. Overall, this show was not for me. I’ve been talking with friends, and an alternative band next year would be nice!
Art should be challenging

Nicholas Luczak
Senior Reviewer

“Welcome to my dollhouse.” Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center Director Johannes Goebel held an event addressing many common questions about the subject of art. The attendees were engaged by asking why art exists, why we care about art, what qualifies as art, and how art changes from one era to another. In all of it—first by creating the parallel between his opinions and a dollhouse, and then by presenting his “dollhouse.”

The main idea that I got from the conversation was that art must, above all else, challenge the viewer. A good example of this, for me, is the piece Fountain, a piece of art which was produced by Marcel Duchamp. The sculpture was simply a urinal which was signed “R. Mutt.” Why would I consider this a piece of art? Anyone could argue that putting a signature on a urinal is by no means artistic, and requires zero to no skill to do. Fountain is art because it was done to challenge the narrative of what society considers art. It was something new that challenged what society considers art. It was done to challenge the narrative of what society considers art.

This conversation really helped answer some questions that I had about art, and I gained a deeper understanding of its role. It is clear to me that Goebel has succeeded in creating an environment which encourages growth and discovery by executing his work at EMPAC. I highly recommend that students try to expand their horizons and gain new perspectives by utilizing the great opportunity that EMPAC offers, as that is what helps us grow more than anything else.

If you would like to watch a recording of the conversation, the video can be found at poly.rpi.edu/artalk.

On-campus event

Paul Harding does Q&A

Jacob Kaplan
Senior Reviewer

The awards for the annual McKinney Writing Contest were given out last Thursday. Students and faculty gathered in the Center for Biotechnology and Interdisciplinary Studies auditorium. Three professors from RPI’s Department of Communication and Media—Professor Merrill Whittam, Professor Barbara Lewis, and Professor Shira Dentz—kicked off the event by thanking organizers, sponsors, and contestants. Dente introduced the guest speaker, Pulitzer prizewinner and author of ‘Tinkers,’ Paul Harding. Whittam read the names of the winners in each category. The contest had four categories: poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and electronic media, in undergraduate and graduate divisions for each category. For each category and division, there were first, second, and third place prizes, as well as Honorable Mentions.

The names of the winners have not been posted yet, but will be available on the Department of Communication and Media’s website soon. Harding talked about his experience as a writer, and read the introduction to his upcoming book about an island community, started by an escaped slave and his Irish wife, that is decimated by a hurricane. His rich prose describing the flood and winds captivated the audience for over half an hour. Then, he answered questions from the audience. When asked about his influences, he talked about the writers of the transcendentalist movement like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. He recounted his struggles getting Tinkers, which he started writing in the 90s, published, and his unexpected Pulitzer prize. After its completion, it was rejected by over a dozen publishers. Harding almost gave up and let the manuscript sit for five years before finding a small not-well-known publisher called the Bellevue Literary Press.

Sales were small but steady. Bellevue nominated the book for a Pulitzer, and fifteen years after it was written, Tinkers won. Harding spoke about his 15-month book tour. He was well-prepared for the tour after being a rock band drummer in college. He talked about the importance of humility and dignity for writers, saying, “There’s nothing worse than a writer who acts like they deserve the award they won; except a writer who acts like they don’t deserve it.” He asked many drafters he goes through while writing a book he answered, “It’s constant. I changed some words in the introduction I just read a few minutes before I came on stage.” When asked about the language in his work, he admitted he is a word geek who loves reading the dictionary and discovering new words. “I love seeing how many different ways I can describe one thing without being repetitive,” he said. When there were no more questions, Harding thanked everyone. afterward, Harding took pictures with the winners of the McKinney contest and signed autographs in the lobby.

I got a used copy of Tinkers signed. I told Harding that, of all the writers I’ve heard speak, he was the only one that sounded like he actually enjoyed writing. He laughed and said, “You have to love what you do.”

Movie recommendations

Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle

Recommended by: Tyler Carney

I, Tintin

Recommended by: Nicholas Luczak

Recommended by: Nicholas Luczak

Isle of Dogs

Recommended by: Nicholas Luczak

Debut album provides powerful messages

Pragati Pant
Senior Reviewer

Cardi B debuts her studio album, Invasion of Privacy, on April 6. A fairly new face, the singer has been gaining much recognition for her bold voice and fearless songs. Like many others, I too have found myself entranced by Cardi B’s energetic music. This album features many well-known singers, including Migos, Chance the Rapper, and 21 Savage, among others. Each singer brings their own twist, and when combined with Cardi B, the music is enjoyable and powerful.

Bekalas Almanzar, better known by her stage name, Cardi B, is an upcoming rapper within the American music industry. With a rough young adulthood, Cardi B has had a lot of experience on the streets, which she sings of in her songs. While most of the songs in Invasion of Privacy are enjoyable, my favorite song is “I Like It.” This single charted highly for a while, and is now part of her first solo album, Invasion of Privacy.

While most of the songs in Invasion of Privacy are enjoyable, my favorite song is “I Like It.” This is the seventh track in the album, and recently has worked its way up onto Spotify’s Top 100 playlist. Right from the start, the beat hooked me. Along with Hispanic-influenced background music, the song features Puerto Rican Latin reggaeton singer Bad Bunny and Colombian reggaeton singer J Balvin. Cardi B’s voice is already powerful, so any featured singers only add to the spark, creating an energetic environment.

Another song that stands out is “Best Life,” which is slow, unlike much of Invasion of Privacy. This is the sixth track in the album, featuring the well-known American artist Chance the Rapper. Throughout the song, both singers describe how they’re living their best lives despite what others may think. As aspiring as Cardi B’s breakthrough is, she definitely deserves to celebrate the fame she has achieved.

Many others, including Invasion of Privacy shows off the talented Cardi B with help from various features. If you aren’t familiar with her music, definitely check out her! This album is also perfect for you if you’re looking for something fun and energizing to listen to. I was surprised by how much I ended up enjoying the songs, and have a much deeper appreciation for Cardi B as a result.

MOVIE RECOMMENDATIONS

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ON-CAMPUS EVENT

Paul Harding does Q&A

Jacob Kaplan
Senior Reviewer

April 25th is the Pass/No Credit deadline. Make sure to submit your form on time to the Registrar’s office!
A CUY FROM MY CAPSTONE GROUP AND I had a little competition in the Union this past week. We were trying to determine who had the better vision by reading various clubs’ signs posted around the third floor. He ended up winning. The difference between us was that I had LASIK surgery this past summer, while he has been colorblind, no contacts or glasses.

I sit at about 20/15 vision, while he has 20/10. I told him he won because the person who wins a talent show must have a lower eye implant. Being able to see in pitch black, seeing objects from miles away as if they are right in front of you, and seeing differing wavelengths, the possibilities are endless. While something that advanced is quite far away, the early stages of this technology can be seen with current robotic prosthetics and cochlear implants. It is easy to imagine them surpassing the natural human body.

I have no doubt that this technology will eventually come to fruition, but as with anything, there is a downside. The danger that looms over everything that has a piece of code in it is coding. To go back to the eye example, if your eyes are hacked, you are not only blind, but imagine trying to go to sleep with the hacker blasting a sun-blinding white light signal. It would be torture.

It would be a difficult decision to get rid of my eyes for digital ones. Fortunately—or unfortunately depending on your own viewpoint—this technology is still many decades out. By then I will be old with probably terrible eyesight, and at that point I think making the switch would be a lot easier.

Grand marshal discusses short, long-term goals

Everyone! With the semester quickly coming to a close, and the weather finally starting to warm up, it’s time to have a productive few weeks and end the year strong! I ran for grand marshal on a platform that stressed a few short-term goals which I fully intend to complete within the last push of the semester. Some of these goals include improving the availability of Senate officer applications, and the implementation of preferred names.

Believe that it’s extremely important to establish an equal distribution of opportunities for Student Government positions. In order to create a Student Senate which advocates for all aspects of student life, it is important to have officers and who are involved in a wide variety of activities, both on and off campus. I have worked toward this goal by ensuring that applications for the positions are readily available and reach a larger demographic of students.

With applications being sent to all members of the Union, I believe that we have solicited a larger population of students than we have in past years. I am excited to appoint the 49th Student Senate Cabinet members, and look forward to introducing you to all of them! I fully intend to build upon past efforts and collaborate with the Registrar to finalize the implementation of preferred names across campus in the beginning of the fall semester. I believe that this project has the potential to positively benefit a large portion of the RPI community, and is disheartening to see this project stand idle for so long. Last week, I reached out to the Registrar in hopes of furthering the conversation and progressing the project forward. I hope to have a meeting setup by the end of this week.

In addition to these short-term goals, I have also kept long-term goals in mind. My top priority as grand marshal will be advocating for the restoration of our student-run Union, and I plan to do so during every day of my term. This will need to be a unified effort from the grand marshal and the president of the Union, and Justin and I have already come to the conclusion that we see eye to eye on this issue. The benefits of a student-run Union are evident in RPI’s history of well-versed, extremely successful alumni. Having a student-run Union is an experience that I have cherished throughout most of my time here at RPI, and I plan to work relentlessly to ensure that future students will be able to experience this as well.

The first week or so of serving as grand marshal has been a bit of a whirlwind, and I wouldn’t trade it for the world. I am, and will always be, honored to serve as your 153rd grand marshal, and to follow in the footsteps of some truly remarkable people. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me at gm@rpi.edu!