

U 2018 U

# GM WEEK



★ the polytechnic ★

# GRAND MARSHAL

## WHAT MAKES YOU THE BEST FIT TO LEAD THE STUDENT BODY?

NANCY BUSH

I am someone who believes that one person can make a difference. I have also been able to see that first hand on the Rensselaer campus. Since becoming a Class of 2019 senator my freshman year I have sat on and/or been on seven committees (Business operations of the E-Board included) and am always so proud of the way our students turn their passions into reality. This semester alone I have worked with a student who has a mission to bring larger scale composting to campus and my committee helped to draft a proposal to the Administrative division in order to make it a reality. They have put so much work in personally to help their peers be introduced to an amazing service and I believe that that is what student government is all about.

I am best fit to lead the student body, and am therefore running for Grand Marshal because I understand that it is the passion of students who drive our progress, yet I am very aware of the issues facing students and the divide between our student government and the general student body population. I am apart of many groups on campus that are uninformed on what we have been up to or who have concerns, but do not know that they can do something about them. As the Facilities and Services Chairwoman I have tried to recruit people for my committee that may not otherwise have joined student government in order to inform a larger population on our processes and progress that is being made constantly by students on this campus. From this effort I have been able to cultivate a committee of 16 students (at any given time) who have accomplished an impressive list of projects over two semesters and many of them were brand new to Student Government.

I also understand that with the rigor of the coursework here at Rensselaer, most students have trouble fitting time into their schedules to seek out student government intervention or insight. I believe that the Senate has been doing a great job this year to close that gap by revamping the Student Government Communications Committee, which has done an amazing job of informing the student body. I believe we can go even further by continuing to fine tune the livestreaming of our meetings and by editing the content into smaller “highlight” videos for students who want to know the important motions discussed in the meetings, but who don’t have a whole hour or two to watch the live stream in full. I believe all of these qualities will lead me to be a successful leader of the student body.

THE MOOSE DIBASIO

I feel that I embody the relaxed approach that the average student takes with regards to student government. I am really only here to have a good time, and to make sure that the other students have fun during this election season. That said, should I be elected as Grand Marshal, I will do my best to bring the feelings of the students to the administration, and advocate for the change that the students want. Considering the fact that I have been running my campaign dressed up as a moose, I think that it is clearly evident that I have no problem taking radical stances and telling it like it is. While I think that very few people might take me seriously, I am in fact very serious about some of my policies, and I think that I could right some of the wrongs that the administration has committed against the students.

STEF WARNER

I am running to be your next Grand Marshal because I wholeheartedly believe that I am the best fit to lead the student body based on three major tenets. As a student in the School of Architecture who holds several student government positions, good time management is an invaluable and necessary skill. I have been able to properly manage my school work and student government involvement and I am confident that I will be able to use this same skill to manage each meeting and event that is required of the Grand Marshal.

In addition to time management, I believe that my passion for working and helping the student body proves my fitness to

lead. As both an Independent Senator and Chairwoman of the Student Government Communications Committee, I have had the pleasure of connecting directly with members of the student body through face to face interaction as well as indirectly through the many outreach projects run through the committee. As Grand Marshal, I will be able to use these same techniques to stay in constant connection with the student body.

Finally, I believe that the professionalism I present during Senate GBMs, committee meetings, meetings with administrators, and everyday interactions with my peers makes me the best fit to lead the student body. I always handle issues that arise with a level head, speak to others respectfully, and never hold grudges when I have a differing opinion with a peer - all important actions when serving in the role of Grand Marshal.

## WHAT QUALIFIES YOU TO HOLD THE POSITION OF GRAND MARSHAL?

NANCY BUSH

I have held a Student government position for the three years that I have been at Rensselaer. Beginning as a Class of 2019 Senator my freshman year, I have also become very active in my Class Council and a few E-Board operations as well, widening my scope within Student Government. As a freshman I served on the Student Life and Facilities and Services Committees. I became a larger player in the plan to bring water bottle stations to campus, selling over 100 water bottles for the fundraiser to various greek houses and clubs on campus. As a sophomore, I remained a member of my two previous committees, but then expanded my efforts to join the Rules and Elections, Business Operations, and Community Relations committees. While this was a definite increase in membership from my previous year as a Senator, I enjoyed being a part of so many amazing projects that were diverse and exciting across the spectrum of these project groups. By joining the Rules and Elections committee, I was able to understand the immense task of editing and approving the GM Week and Freshman Handbooks as well as running elections and keeping track of violations as they occurred. I was able to catch a glimpse of the Community Relations Committee and the great ideas they were forming in their first full year as a committee since being reinstated and was able to work on a food truck project that would have been able to connect Troy with the students at Rensselaer. The committee that gave me the most insight however was the Business Operations Committee. Although senators are not required to join E-Board Committees or even keep up with their projects, I believe that they should. I learned an incredible amount surrounding the Union facilities and how a committee of my peers manages every vendor and physical entity the Union has to offer. This perspective helped me when creating my own project ideas and goals as I now had a deeper understanding of how the other side thinks.

Currently, as a junior, I have concentrated myself as the Facilities and Services Committee Chairperson. We have expanded the membership from five students to a consistent 14-20 members who have been working in four subcommittee groups for the past two semesters. The dedicated students working with me have accomplished some amazing work including creating an extremely effective campus safety report or “Light Walk Report” that was used to fix lights and other areas of issue on campus, creating a report on underutilized study spaces on campus and how to maximize student study areas, writing a comprehensive composting proposal for campus food areas, successfully creating a WeRGold campaign to expand water bottle filling stations on campus to include popular freshman dorms, working with transportation services to reroute the unfavored bus schedules and worked with public safety on becoming more approachable in the forms of creating social media and holding biannual student-officer events. I believe that both my tenure within the Student Government and the large scope with which I have experienced it has given me the experience to become an effective Grand Marshal.

THE MOOSE DIBASIO

I will be honest here, if you are looking for student government experience at RPI, I have none. That said, I try to view my lack of experience as an asset. I view myself as a sort of anti-establishment candidate, ready to take up the issues that some people in student government have been ignoring. I also think that I will be more approachable than some past GMs.

STEF WARNER

Over the past year, I have served the student body as the Chairwoman of the Student Government Communications Committee as well as an Independent Senator. In this role, it has been my duty to connect the student government with the student body. The committee has seen a revitalization this year in achieving participation from all bodies of student government, regularly updating the students on projects and progress, and obtaining extensive feedback from the students on their interests and concerns. The committee has also grown in membership substantially with passionate students volunteering to participate. Through this responsibility, I have learned what students care most about and want to see their student government pursue for their benefit. Outside of the Student Senate, I serve as secretary and director of public relations for the Class of 2018 Council, and I have worked with the Undergraduate President and the Grand Marshal to develop the Senate-Undergraduate Council Liaison role to keep both bodies informed of activities and developments.

Contrary to popular belief, not all architecture students live in the Greene Building! Outside of student government, I am proud to be involved in a range of activities across campus. I earned a position on the RPI Softball Team as an infielder and catcher, traveling, training and practicing with a team of dedicated and passionate women. I served as secretary for the Architecture Athlete Mentoring Program. I also served as president for the RPI chapter of the American Institute of Architecture Students. I have even served as an employee in the Union, working as a photographer to capture events and activities for club, marketing, social media, and historical use.

## NAME THREE SHORT-TERM GOALS (WITHIN YOUR TERM OF OFFICE) AND THREE LONG-TERM GOALS (BEYOND YOUR TERM OF OFFICE) THAT YOU HAVE FOR THE STUDENT SENATE.

NANCY BUSH

One short term goal that I have for the Senate if elected is to promote more student diversity and involvement. One way to achieve this is by outreach done by the Student Communications Committee. The committee has recently become one of the more successful committees compared to what it had accomplished in the past and I hope to push their sphere even further. By reaching out to student groups on campus who are underrepresented in the Student Government and educating on the many different ways students can participate, we can create a more well rounded Senate. Another short term goal is to increase more general student membership and interaction with committees. Some committees in the past have struggled with low attendance and have dealt with the issue of only having Senators serve on that committee. I want to see more than that, hopefully in all committees, but in the short term just an increase from where the attendance has been. By engaging more of the general student body population we will have not only have more students to complete projects, but more students passionate about the project ideas that they bring to our committees. A third short term goal that I have if elected is to create a working relationship with administration in two capacities: one on small projects and one on more controversial matters. I believe that we have achieved that in some capacity over the course of the the current Senate tenure, but I would like to see it improved. In order to do this I plan to have the cabinet set up monthly or bimonthly meetings with administrators that they plan to work with throughout the year to create a free flow of project ideas to have an effective and efficient pathway for communication between students and administration.

One long term goal that I have for the Senate if elected is to improve the communications between Student Government bodies and their ability to work together on issues that their constituents find important. You may have noticed that I have mentioned communication multiple times not only throughout my campaign, but also within this response. This is because I believe that we have extremely capable students within our leadership, but a history of poor communication that has been passed down from former government terms. Internally this year on the Senate, we looked at how we could improve ourselves



through the Internal Reforms Committee and have become more effective than I have ever seen in my past three years as a Senator. I hope to be able to use those methods in regards to how the Senate communicates with other bodies as well. Another long term goal is the renewed Senate approval right of the Rensselaer Student Handbook of Rights and Responsibilities. In my platform on NBforGM.com, I mention a brief history of what happened in regards to the loss of the Senate approval vote and while that has been questioned by some administrators it is true. The Senate used to approve the handbook and I will work to continue the process to get it back. A last long term goal is to create a clear outline of a Union hiring process between the Executive Board and Administration regarding the hiring of a Director of the Union. This conversation arose during the Senate's discussion with Dean Apgar regarding possible constitutional amendments. The goal is to create a language that is vague enough to stand on its own in a constitution and span the test of time while also removing the ambiguity as the whether or not students should be included in the process and/or have an approval vote through the Executive Board. It was decided to move the conversation to a later Senate and I plan to continue them under the next if elected or not.

## THE MOOSE DIBASIO

Short Term:

Fix the Good Samaritan Policy and Registered Party Policy: As it currently stands, the Registered Party Policy and Good Samaritan Policy make campus less safe than it was a few years ago. The Good Samaritan Policy was recently changed so that it no longer protects organizations such as greek houses. This policy had previously been used to encourage greeks and other organizations to call ambulances if they feel the need without fearing severe repercussions. With the new policy, no such protections exist. This has the potential to dissuade various party hosts from calling an ambulance when somebody could be in serious trouble. Additionally, the Registered Party Policy has been drastically changed in the past few years. The current policy states that all guests to registered parties must bring their own drinks which are to be handed over to a third party bartender, who is to disperse them back to the guests at a rate not exceeding one drink per hour. Additionally, hosts are not allowed to transport any intoxicated people to or from their premises (ie sober drivers are not allowed). These policies are clearly unenforceable and, in the case of the ban on sober drivers, incredibly dangerous. These policies have led to the disappearance of registered parties in favor of unregistered house parties, where there are no sober monitors or sober drivers. Consequently, the risk of alcohol related incidents is much greater now than it was under the old policies. Students previously felt generally safe while attending parties, I would like to bring that safety back.

Allow greeks to live in their greek houses during summer arch: The greek are currently not going to be able to live in their greek house during their summer arch semester. This is ridiculous because according to the greek-commons agreement, the greek houses are basically treated as residence halls. This move is a clear cash grab by the administration, and an attempt by them to weaken our greek community. I think that the student government should not sit idly by while this happens, but should aggressively advocate for greek rights.

Exceptions for School of Science Students for Summer Arch: As a student in the School of Science, I think that summer arch has the potential to derail a lot majors. For many students in physics, biology, chemistry, etc. who plan on going to graduate school the summer is usually the main time where they will get research experience outside of RPI, typically through an REU grant via the NSF or something similar. The fact of the matter is that there are basically no research positions open during the regular school year for undergrads in the summer arch program. For anybody trying to go onto get a PhD, this can be a very frustrating experience because they are forced to lose a summer of outside research for basically nothing in return. While I think that Summer Arch is a terrible idea in general; I especially want to advocate for easier exceptions to the students that it hurts the most.

Long Term:

Have continued cost of living adjustments for graduate students: As recently as a few years ago our graduate students qualified for Medicaid. I would like the student government to be more active in protecting our graduate students in general and making sure that they are paid a fair wage.

Save the union: Hopefully, we can eventually regain ultimate control of the student union and not have to be in fear of Shirley seizing power more than she already has. This can possibly be accomplished some day through a combination of discussion, advocacy, and protests.

Get RPI students to be more active: One of the reasons that Shirley was able to seize power from the student union was the unfortunate fact that most students simply do not care. While I disagree with the causes of many student protests at other universities over trivial issues, I think that the students of RPI have something worth fighting for in the student union and could employ some protest tactics used at other universities.

Over time, I think the culture of the university can change to the point where the administration cannot simply treat the students and faculty like pushovers.

## STEF WARNER

In the short-term, I aim to establish an equal distribution of opportunities for Student Government positions by ensuring applications for positions are more readily available and reach a larger demographic of students. Additionally, I will build upon past efforts and collaborate with the Registrar to finalize the implementation of preferred names across campus by the conclusion of the fall semester. Finally, I hope to advocate for the rollback of the off-campus jurisdiction policy in the Handbook to remove unnecessary oversight over matters not pertaining to the Institute campus or student life and to pursue the removal of mandatory minimum sanctions from the Handbook to allow for appeal boards the ability to make judgments on a case-by-case basis instead of being bound to a bare minimum judgment.

In the long-term, my top priority as Grand Marshal will be advocating for the restoration of our student-run Union. This will need to be a unified effort from the Grand Marshal and the President of the Union. I hope to pursue the hiring of a new Director of the Union by following a proper process, including the approval of the Executive Board. I also hope to pursue the reinstatement of the rights provided by the Rensselaer Union Constitution for a student-run Union to be possible. Another goal I will work towards relates to the opioid epidemic sadly affecting our region; for this, I hope to advocate and collaborate with the Institute, city, and state officials on the creation of drug and alcohol amnesty policies for students who proactively seek out rehabilitation and recovery resources. Finally, I will advocate for the addition of positions on the Board of Trustees for recent alumni to provide the Board with different perspectives on the campus in recent years.

For other goals I plan to pursue, my platform can be found at [StefForGM.com!](#)

IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT DO YOU FEEL ARE THE ROLES OF THE GRAND MARSHAL AND THE SENATE?

## NANCY BUSH

To put it simply, the Senate is a bridge between students, faculty and administrators. They are the collection of elected students that work for and with their constituents to ensure that the voices of the student body are heard on an academic and administrative level. Because they are a body of elected officials, the Senate has the unique ability to pass motions which can be seen as being the belief of the majority of the student body on the Rensselaer campus. No other body has the ability to do so, making them a special group of officials within Student Government. This is also why it is imperative that they frequently listen and reach out to their constituents to ensure that they are valuing the opinions of those who are passionate about issues and change on campus.

The Grand Marshal is the face of that group of students, making the position equally unique. They have the incredible task of being the voice for the entire student body, both undergraduates and graduates. This is why they must be able to create good working relationships with the students on campus, the entire administration and the faculty. Due to the daunting nature of the job, the Grand Marshal must be someone who is sure of themselves and able to communicate effectively with others. They should also be a friendly face who all members of the community can reach out to about anything, the good and the bad.

## THE MOOSE DIBASIO

The job of the GM and the Senate is to advocate for the student rights and to act as liaisons between the administration and the student body.

## STEF WARNER

The role of the Grand Marshal is to lead the Student Senate, which is the representative and legislative body of Student Government. In this facet of the role of Grand Marshal, the GM must work with and assist the members of the senate, including senators and committee chairs, in projects and initiatives. The Student Senate is responsible for representing the interests of the student body through projects to improve aspects of campus life, addressing student rights policies, and to put legislation into action. As a collective, the Student Senate represents every, and all members of the Union; their concerns, their safety, and their

experience here at RPI.

To elaborate on the role of the Grand Marshal; the GM represents the student body as the chief representative of the Union. This responsibility not only extends to the student - senate relationship, but also the administration - senate relationship. The Grand Marshal must speak on behalf of the entirety of the student body, so it is vital that the GM keeps consistent and thorough communication open with the students, faculty, and the administration.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE INCUMBENT GRAND MARSHAL'S STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES? WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO IMPROVE UPON THEM IF YOU ARE ELECTED?

## NANCY BUSH

I believe that the past Grand Marshal has the ability to be able to create a passionate Student Government member out of anybody. They are able to advocate for and educate students on the inner workings of Student Government and usually convince them that they would enjoy their time within it. I believe that that quality attributed to the success of many of the Senate committees this year as students were passionate and excited to be working on the ideas that they presented. I have always admired that quality of the past Grand Marshal and I hope to be able to build upon the great foundation that they are leaving behind from the 48th Student Senate.

One weakness that the past GM had was that they were sometimes unable to remove themselves from important conversations brought to the Senate floor. For example, at one point this year the Grand Marshal stepped aside from leading the meeting during a discussion of a motion so that they would be able to voice their opinion on the floor. While I respect that that was their right to do so, I believe that the action was merely a way to sidestep the expectations of their position in order to have their opinions expressed. As a Grand Marshal, even during contentious motions within the Senate, I believe one should be able to stay calm and understanding of the discussions that their Senate is engaging in. Although I have listed this as a fault, I believe that this can be attached to the immense passion that they had for Student Government as a whole. In some situations there are just better ways to express those passions.

## THE MOOSE DIBASIO

Considering the fact that the current GM is actively pursuing a J-Board case against me, my opinion of him is not particularly high. If elected as GM, I would absolutely not interfere in any elections and would allow the elections committee to do their job and allow them to pursue any sanctions if they so desire. Additionally, I would be much more active in my support of the Save the Union movement than our current GM.

## STEF WARNER

The incumbent Grand Marshal has several qualities that make him an effective leader. Justin has time and again been firm when working with the administration as he speaks and acts on behalf of the student body when it comes to controversial matters such as the administration's oversteps with the beloved student-run Union and the concerning treatment of student rights, particularly with regards to free speech.

While I believe Justin has done an admirable job as Grand Marshal, one of his more notable weaknesses is that at times, he lets the stress of the position get to him. This visibly takes an emotional toll and makes it more difficult to approach a situation, should this be the case. Having had the opportunity to observe Justin closely this past year, I definitely learned from his strengths and will capitalize on the strong position into which he's rebuilt the office of Grand Marshal, not only remaining hyper-vigilant of the current state of affairs and maintaining any ground students have gained, but aiming to make strides of my own to protect student rights, foster communication with the administration, and restore the Union to its former student-run status. Additionally, understanding how stressful the position of Grand Marshal can be at times, I hope to minimize activities outside of daily life, school, and student government so as to lessen the stress I experience to make me a more productive representative. As my platform of inclusivity suggests, I plan to involve other students in student government and will always be willing to listen to advice on how I may improve, and I will do my best to delegate wherever appropriate, as I want to empower others to help bring about the change we want to see at RPI. I expect all of these things will help me cope with the stresses of the office.



WHAT DOES THE STUDENT\*  
SENATOR RELATIONSHIP LOOK  
LIKE? WHAT SHOULD IT LOOK  
LIKE?

NANCY BUSH

The current Student-Senator relationship looks like a small group of students on campus coming to their Senators with issues and project ideas. Their Senator then does all that they can to help that student by either encouraging them to join a committee or working with the Grand Marshal to create a solution or plan. I believe that that is what that relationship should look like, but I would like the group of students who do engage to be much, much larger. When students do engage with the Senate, they are usually introduced to a new environment where they can address their concerns with those who are best equipped to help them, and if they aren't, who can make a plan of action for the future. On the other side, Senators should be frequently polling and engaging with their constituents to ensure that they know they are a resource in that capacity. While the Senate survey and other means of feedback have improved under this past Senate, I would like to further encourage Senators to ask and engage more with their respective constituents to ensure that we are doing all that we can for the student body.

THE MOOSE DIBASIO

The senators should generally be advocates for students and willing to listen to their concerns. The senators should try to remedy student concerns to the best of their ability. I believe that this is the relationship at the moment and that it should continue to be like this.

STEF WARNER

I believe that the student-senator relationship has improved steadily over the last year. Prior to this year, interactions between the student body and the senators often were infrequent, with the exception of the few surveys sent out each year to solicit student feedback. The Student Government Communications Committee has expanded means of communication, both on the receiving and the sending end.

That said, I believe that this trend toward better communication needs to continue, and grow from what it is now. I also believe that all members of the Student Senate and Senate committees should be reaching out for feedback as frequently as possible, while also opening an easy means of communication for students to give unsolicited feedback and voice concerns.

WHAT DOES THE STUDENT\*  
ADMINISTRATION RELATIONSHIP  
LOOK LIKE? WHAT SHOULD IT  
LOOK LIKE?

NANCY BUSH

The current Senate-Administrative relationship is much stronger today than it has been in the past. The Administration has been reaching out to the Senate more frequently regarding larger issues facing campus and the Senate has been meeting more frequently with both top and lower tiered administrators in order to accomplish their project plans and turn them into a reality for students. This can also be seen through the number of Administrators that the Senate has invited to their meetings to conduct conversations surrounding campus initiatives and student concerns. There has been more value on respect and commitment from both parties and I believe that has created a positive environment for the future. The Senate-Administrative relationship should look this way. It should be about mutual respect and effective communication so as to advocate the most efficiently for the student body. When that respect deteriorates, so does the willingness to work through more controversial issues together and eventually a lack of willingness to work together at all.

THE MOOSE DIBASIO

Currently, the senator-administration relationship is fairly adversarial. However, this reflects the dealing of most groups with the administration; faculty, students, and alumni for example. In the future the relationship should be more cooperative, but I do not see that happening any time soon.

STEF WARNER

Unfortunately, the senator-administration relationship appears to have stagnated. At this point, the relationship is civil, but at times, uncomfortable. More bluntly, the students have lost trust in the administrators. Students continue attempts to communicate openly and honestly with the administration, but few of these efforts have been fruitful. In order to improve this, basic collegiate values like truthful dialog must be restored. However, genuine attempts continue to be made on the part of students. There was an effort by the current Student Senate to connect committee chairs with their respective administrator counterpart. This relationship needs to improve in order to progress the Institute forward as a whole. Much of the time, it seems the administration lacks accountability for their words and actions. As Senators, we are accountable to the student body. If we don't act in their interest, our constituents can recall or replace us in the next elections cycle.

An ideal senator-administration relationship would involve frequent, genuine, and honest communication regardless of the situations and discussions that occur. This is not something that exists at RPI presently.

HOW WOULD YOU HANDLE  
A CRISIS INVOLVING THE  
STUDENT BODY, LIKE THE ISSUES  
SURROUNDING THE HIRING OF  
AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
STUDENT ACTIVITIES, IF SUCH  
AN ISSUE AROSE DURING YOUR  
TERM?

NANCY BUSH

If such a crisis surrounding the Union arose during my term, I would immediately get in touch with the Administrators connected to such event and attempt to both explain the issues seen from the student perspective, but also discuss from their perspective as to from where this idea or action arose from. After that, or if the Administrators did not respond within a timely manner, I would reach out to students to explain the situation in full to ensure that they were informed. Depending on the severity of the offense, I may include my opinion on the issue, but would generally rather have students make a decision for themselves. I would also ask that any students who have further concerns or questions to please reach out to me. I would be as available as possible for the student body by being in my office when I did not have class or other commitments so that any and all students with an opinion on the matter would have their opportunity to discuss them with me. If the Administrators pushed back against student issues facing the concerns, I would continue the conversation with them and also begin to consider entertaining an official motion of the Senate, giving a stance on behalf of the student body regarding the matter.

THE MOOSE DIBASIO

I would immediately call for a senate meeting to pass a resolution opposing any such aggressive acts by the administration. I would also to rally the students so that they know what is happening and why they should be concerned about it. I would be open to talks with the administration, however given recent circumstances I doubt that they would be to receptive.

STEF WARNER

Regardless of the crisis, I would approach it with a level head and the student body's interests and concerns would always be my top priority. I believe it is much more important to fully understand the situation at hand than to immediately act. In the case of the executive director of student activities, I believe the greatest fault of student government was inaction when the issue came to light. In the first 24 hours, my initial actions would be learning as much as possible about the issue, gathering student opinion, and consulting with other members of student government, trusted faculty, and former Grand Marshals to develop a plan of action. I would then strive to keep the community informed and work to effectively communicate concerns to the appropriate, involved parties.

WHAT QUALITIES SHOULD A  
LEADER HAVE? HOW DOES THE  
GRAND MARSHAL DIFFER FROM  
A SENATOR? HOW ARE YOU A  
LEADER?

NANCY BUSH

A leader should be kind, approachable, fair, knowledgeable, available, honest and when need be, direct. A leader should be well rounded in these respects and be able to know what a situation calls for as they are handling them. The Grand Marshal differs from a Senator in the way that they should be able to not only exemplify those qualities, but teach them to others. They should be able to lead by example and encourage all students to be the change that they want to see on the Rensselaer campus. As a non-voting member, the Grand Marshal should be able to lead fairly and without judgment in order to lead their Senate, but not constantly turn the conversation towards their own beliefs. I believe that my many involvements on campus as a Senator, Ultimate Frisbee Club Captain, i-Persist Mentor, Committee Chairperson within my Class Council and a few others have given me the tools to be a leader. Each of these experiences are very different in terms of leadership qualities that they must possess, which I believe has given me a more well rounded ability to lead. I always aim to be approachable, fair, available and kind. But I am also not afraid to be direct. Throughout my tenure as a Senator I have polished my fault of sometimes being "too honest" to being honest and respectable. I also am constantly trying to improve myself and will never stop working on bettering myself as not only a leader, but as a human being. That is why I believe I am a leader fit to lead as Grand Marshal of the Union.

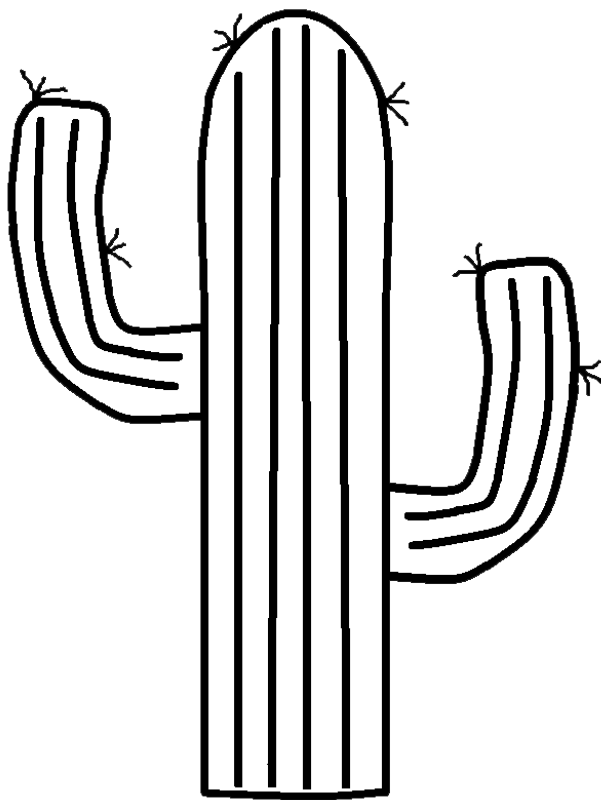
THE MOOSE DIBASIO

A leader should be bold, ready to act, and not afraid to make his voice heard. The GM must be somewhat more assertive than the senators in their dealing with the administration.

STEF WARNER

Leadership is not a role that is given or received, it is the unspoken recognition of diligence. To be a leader, you need to motivate others to follow. During my time at RPI, I have worked to demonstrate leadership in all areas of my involvement, and I have no intention of changing this regardless of the election's outcome.

Perhaps the greatest duty bestowed upon the Grand Marshal is the responsibility to speak on behalf of the entire student body. This cannot be taken lightly, and a Grand Marshal must not only understand the opinions and beliefs of their constituents, but effectively convey such opinions and beliefs.





# PRESIDENT OF THE UNION

## WHY DO YOU WANT TO BE PRESIDENT OF THE UNION?

JUSTIN ETZINE

I have had the privilege of serving the student body for the past four years in a variety of capacities, but my top priority has remained steadfast throughout my time at RPI: ensuring we leave our alma mater a better place for our current and future peers. I am running to be President of the Union out of a motivation to leave behind a Union which provides the same, continued, unique opportunities that have made our time at RPI so special.

According to dozens of students and alumni with whom I have spoken, these are some of the most trying of times in our Union’s history. I have worked to put our students—and our Union—first in every aspect of my term as Grand Marshal. The student body and Student Government have seen a landmark year across the board: passionate students have made their voices heard, regular communication between Student Government and its constituency has been restored, a record number of peers opted to share their opinions with the Student Senate, and students overwhelmingly reiterated their commitment to a student-run future for our Union.

IDA ETEMADI

Our Union community has made itself evident as a key pillar of Student Life at RPI. Students come to the Union and find places to express their ideas and collaborate, to study, to exercise, to grab a meal, and to spend time with friends, whether in a club program, while working on a group project, or just chatting until three in the morning. Even outside of the Student Union building, our Union community is still strong and adds to RPI’s student experience in a way that extends past graduation. Over my years on the E-Board, I have loved serving students and clubs, and would love to continue to dedicate my undergraduate career to helping student groups grow and develop. My goal as President of the Union is to create a more organized and stable Union through increased efficiency and transparency of the Executive Board, increased communication both between the E-Board and the institute administration, as well as the other bodies of Student Government, and increased access to club resources and club knowledge for a sustainable future based in the continuance of successful student groups and their respective strong student leaders, the true leaders in our Union and move forward together with a strong self-governed Union.

## WHAT QUALIFIES YOU TO BE PRESIDENT OF THE UNION?

JUSTIN ETZINE

While it is true that I am not a member of the Executive Board, over the past four years, I have participated in more E-Board meetings than I can count. I have also served as a member of two E-Board committees in past years, although I am prohibited by the Union Constitution from sitting on these committees while serving as GM. I have also had the privilege of working with and observing current President of the Union Matt Rand throughout this year, and I had the opportunity to spectate parts of the club budgeting process this year and work heavily on the FY 2019 Union Annual Report.

I have also experienced the other side of the Executive Board–club relationship in my past roles as a club officer. During my freshman year, I lead a general interest club through the new club recognition process, and the club continues to thrive three years later. I have previously served as a managing editor for The Polytechnic, business manager for RPI TV, and other roles in leading clubs and managing their finances that have all allowed me to interact closely with the Executive Board from an external perspective. I believe my broad experiences—both within Student Government and across our campus—bring something unique to the PU role that will benefit the Executive Board, the Union, and the student body at large. At the end of the day,

I believe it is up to the student body to decide who is qualified for the positions, and, if my classmates believe in my qualifications, I encourage them to vote for me.

IDA ETEMADI

In times when there are ongoing discussions with the administration, the Union needs to be operating at full efficiency. For the past two years, I have served as a Club/ICA Representative for the service organizations and various special interest and hobby clubs, going through the complete budgeting process, presenting club budgets, dedicating entire weekends to sitting with budgeting groups and analyzing budgets, and helping clubs through the proposal making process. This year, I served as both Secretary and as a Committee Chair. I am the Committee Chair of the Marketing, Advertising, and Publicity (MAP) Committee which was redefined and revived as a key contributor to Union operation, tasked with maintaining a cohesive Union brand, creating a new Union logo in collaboration with the Student Government Communications Committee and many talented students on campus who came forward to join the Union Logo Design Team, and increasing student participation in Union social media. Aside from MAP Committee, I served on the Business Operations Committee, handling facilities upgrades and communicating with businesses in the Union, the Club Operations Committee, guiding new clubs to start in the Union, affiliated or recognized, and the Union Annual Report (UAR) Committee, compiling yearly finances and explaining the year overall. I have also had the privilege of attending the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) Conferences for the past two years, learning about the differences and similarities between our Union and its counterparts in the UK, Ireland, and the United States. The Union needs to be stronger than ever next year, and all of these experiences have prepared me for this position. I know the operations of the Union in and out and how to accomplish goals and address concerns brought to me by the students I have spoken to, and hope to bring that into the next year, so we can take on the newer issues and concerns placed onto the Union regarding the hiring of the Director and the overall status of the Union immediately as my term would begin.

## NAME THREE SHORT-TERM GOALS (WITHIN YOUR TERM IN OFFICE) AND THREE LONG-TERM GOALS (BEYOND YOUR TERM OF OFFICE) THAT YOU HAVE FOR THE EXECUTIVE BOARD.

JUSTIN ETZINE

For my term as President of the Union, my platform revolves around a few major priorities that I will pursue, and all of those foci have both short- and long-term objectives that I believe will benefit the Union and the Executive Board for years to come. These priorities are building upon areas where operations can be improved, pursuing greater diversity in Executive Board involvement, expanding—wherever possible—the resources provided to our clubs and their leaders, ensuring our operations are held accountable across the board, and identifying and traversing a path to restore our Union’s student-run status.

In the short term, I hope to collaborate with returning Executive Board members in auditing and modifying procedures to ensure the Executive Board’s meetings and operations are thorough and efficient. These procedures include increasing the prior preparation and data retrieval completed before a club presents before the Board to reduce redundant questioning, implementing a similar subcommittee structure as employed by some Student Senate committees, and restructuring the format for committee reports to allow for the Executive Board and meeting guests to stay informed about project progress and provide outside feedback and perspectives.

Though I aim to find solutions to the immediate issues preventing our Union’s historic student-run structure from being fully realized, I recognize the underlying misunderstandings of our Union and its structure by administrators will likely continue to be a major topic of concern for the student government in the coming years. For example, a short-term goal with respect to the Union’s structure is the hiring of a new Director of the Union with full student involvement and Executive Board approval. In the long-term, however, future E-Boards will need to work with this director to set expectations and ensure the Union Constitution remains a paramount authority on Union matters.

Additionally, in the long-term, I hope to have the Executive Board review the current long-term strategic plans for the Union and ensure our short-term goals and projects tie into these strategic priorities. Finally, though the debt service payments for the last large-scale Union building renovation (which occurred in 1999) will not be fully paid off until FY 2026, I believe the upcoming Executive Board and subsequent boards must begin making non-binding determinations about what the next renovation will focus on and about its general timelines. Though the members of the next E-Board will likely not be students by the time the renovations occur, they can take pride in laying the preparatory groundwork for such upgrades.

IDA ETEMADI

My short term goals include:

- increasing transparency through the establishment of Decision Briefings to further communicate with clubs and give reasoning behind decisions made in response to E-Board Proposals
- finishing the process of the hiring of the Director of the Union through the continuance of the Human Resources Interview Committee and consistent communication with the Office of Student Life and Human Resources
- creating an online comprehensive and searchable Union calendar with open meetings and events, featuring times, locations, and categories, with an easy to use submissions page for club officers to increase Union support and publicity of campus events

My long term goals are to:

- create and maintain a consistent relationship and build mutual respect with institute administrators through regular meetings featuring members of Student Government, as well as interested members of the Union
- finalize current facilities updates and approve updates to be completed by future Boards with a strong emphasis on student input and student participation to ensure that the Union is always serving the needs of students to the extent possible
- develop regular meetings with Committee Chairs of both the E-Board and the Senate to build understanding, collaboration, and cohesiveness between bodies

## IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT DO YOU FEEL ARE THE ROLES OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNION AND THE UNION EXECUTIVE BOARD?

JUSTIN ETZINE

The President of the Union and the Executive Board are responsible for financial and operational decision-making for the Rensselaer Union. In managing the business affairs of the Union, the Executive Board prepares and approves the next fiscal year budget for the Union, the funding for which stems from a Union Activity Fee paid by each member of the Union. The Executive Board interfaces with the many clubs and organizations in the Union, and they work to ensure the interests of these organizations and the student body are sufficiently and accurately represented in decisions that are beneficial for the Union. The Board is also responsible for creating club classifications and managing “the business affairs of any and all facilities operated by the Rensselaer Union,” as quoted from the Union Constitution . The President of the Union presides over the Executive Board and serves alongside the Grand Marshal as a representative of student interests in leading the Union.

Each year, students tax themselves over \$300 to provide the Union with the funding needed to operate the facilities and programming that members of the Union enjoy. Similarly to how citizens of a government have the right to know where and how their taxes paid are being used, the members of the Union have the right to know how their Union Activity Fee is being used. As the Executive Board makes decisions for the Union on behalf of the student body, this ability for students to be informed at all times is incredibly important.



## IDA ETEMADI

The E-Board budgets and manages the Rensselaer Union, determining the use of the activity fee, approving and deciding on the classifications of new clubs, maintaining the brand, voting on hirings, handling facilities, and communicating with businesses in the Union to continue addressing the needs of students and improving student life at RPI. The role of the President of the Union is to moderate discussion and debate during meetings, as well as organize and lead the budgeting cycle in respect to the entire Union budget. The President of the Union also contributes to setting the topics of focus for the year and helping committees do the same.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE INCUMBENT PRESIDENT OF THE UNIONS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES? WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO IMPROVE UPON THEM IF YOU WERE ELECTED?**

**JUSTIN ETZINE**

I am fortunate in that, during my tenure as GM, I have been able to get to know Matt well. I believe we have been able to learn from each other on a number of occasions to better fulfill the duties of our respective roles.

As PU, I hope to perpetuate one of Matt’s most important strengths: his frequency of communication with Union administrative staff. He has held consistent meetings with all areas of Union operations throughout the duration of the year, and I believe these meetings are exceedingly vital for the constructive relationships between the administrative staff, the Executive Board, and the membership of the Union.

An area I plan to improve upon is balancing the roles of presiding officer of the Executive Board and elected official of the student body. I believe that there is value in standing with the decisions of the organization as the chair, but I think it is also important to consider the interests of the student body as they pertain to these decisions. If there is a discrepancy between the interests of the E-Board and the greater student population, I believe the E-Board must reflect on this discrepancy, evaluate where student concerns and interests are, and use this reflection to assist in making choices that are most beneficial for our Union.

## IDA ETEMADI

The current President of the Union, Matt Rand, has done an excellent job at facilitating E-Board meetings and remaining impartial, allowing meetings to go by efficiently, even when meetings would be over three hours long. I greatly respect his ability to remain professional and communicate with administrators throughout the year, especially during the lengthy Director of the Union hiring process. However, during this process, there was low communication with committee chairs from the President of the Union, which I would like to improve upon next year through attending the monthly meetings with the Vice President and the Committee Chairs to not only communicate any new updates, but also remain knowledgeable on what the committees are taking on. If elected, I would also like to continue goal setting with committee chairs, but also hold a mid-year checkpoint meeting to ensure goals are being met and committees are staying focused.

**WHAT DOES THE CLUB★ EXECUTIVE BOARD REPRESENTATIVE RELATIONSHIP LOOK LIKE? WHAT SHOULD IT LOOK LIKE?**

**JUSTIN ETZINE**

With almost 300 student organizations within our Union, it would not be realistic to involve every single one with membership on the Executive Board. Nevertheless, the E-Board’s role and decisions often relate to organizations, their officers, and

their members, and the E-Board’s representatives are expected to maintain and cultivate two-way communication with their respective clubs’ officers. The relationship between E-Board representatives and their clubs must be a symbiotic one. I use this word not as a popular buzzword, but in reference to its definition to describe a “mutually beneficial relationship.” The E-Board representatives utilize this relationship to inform their understanding of student interests and their clubs’ priorities. The clubs utilize this relationship to share their priorities, upcoming plans, and events, and they depend on the representatives to guide them in working with the Executive Board. To maximize the benefit on both ends, I believe Executive Board representatives should be meeting regularly with their assigned clubs and the relevant Student Activities Resource Persons. These meetings should be occurring throughout the year, not just during the budgeting season, so the clubs feel comfortable approaching their representatives when needed and the representatives understand their respective clubs and happenings.

**IDA ETEMADI**

Executive Board representatives introduce themselves to their clubs at the beginning of each year to establish contact if there are any unexpected needs or concerns of a club in the beginning of the Fall semester. Then, Executive Board representatives contact clubs when budgeting is coming up, normally a month in advance, to help with any changes being made in the club’s budget and to explain the budgeting process. Next year, if elected, I would place more emphasis on understanding operations and attending club programs to help facilitate that and further help with assessing their needs. I would also like to add an aspect to the Executive Board representative and club relationship by instituting Decision Briefings which will allow for clubs to fully understand why the E-Board made decisions differently than what may be requested in a proposal. This job would be tasked to the club’s Executive Board Representative.

**HOW WOULD YOU EVALUATE THE CURRENT UNION BUDGET SITUATION? WHAT DO YOU FORESEE AS FUTURE BUDGET CONCERNS?**

**JUSTIN ETZINE**

Each year, the Union’s budget balances the interests of students and their organizations with the resources and needs of the Union’s facilities and other operations. Clubs and organizations with funding status approved by the Executive Board propose and justify budgets for their respective organizations, which are reviewed and ultimately decided upon by the Executive Board. The E-Board works closely with the Union administrative staff throughout this process to understand context and otherwise benefit from their expertise in the process.

As for future budgetary concerns, I believe we will be having productive conversations between the E-Board, the Student Senate, the Graduate Council, and the Union administrative staff regarding the relative amounts undergraduate and graduate students pay for the Union Activity Fee. This issue has been brought forward by members of the Graduate Council this semester, and they believe a reduction in the amount of the Union Activity Fee for graduate students is warranted, citing concerns with the utilization of the Union by graduate students and a resulting disproportionate fee for graduate students.

I recognize the validity of concerns raised by the Graduate Council, and I believe it requires additional analysis and the collection of opinions from graduate students. As Grand Marshal, I committed to holding frequent meetings with the PU, the Graduate Council leadership, and the Union’s business administrator to discuss the concerns thoroughly and determine the ideal division of cost between undergraduate and graduate students. As President of the Union, I will continue to prioritize these conversations, and I will work with the next Grand Marshal and the Student Senate to determine this division before the FY20 budgeting process. I also commit to ensuring I pass on this priority to ensure that the student body is paying a proportional and fair amount.

Finally, with its first full implementation occurring in the summer after my term, I believe the Summer Arch program will necessitate changes to how we calculate budgets available for each semester. I discuss this issue in more depth in the question regarding the rollout of Summer Arch.

## IDA ETEMADI

Budgeting went very smoothly this year and it was not challenging to remain at our desired value once all clubs had been budgeted for. The increase in students along with the increase in the activity fee added to our budget. However, we are facing several other unexpected challenges in Union finances. Many clubs rely on WeR Gold contributions for funding for trips and new equipment, but contributions have seen a decrease this year following the previous actions made by the administration, requiring the clubs and the Union to look for ways to fill in this gap, usually leading to more independent fundraising and new proposal requests made to the E-Board. The Union must also accommodate for The Arch program to continue providing programs and contributing to student life over the summer through increases in funding and trial programs. Student wage increases are also a part of the budget, and wages are slowly increasing to take into account the minimum wage increase to \$15 over the next several years.

**WHAT IS YOUR PLAN FOR DEALING WITH THE CHANGES THAT WILL ACCOMPANY THE ROLLOUT OF SUMMER ARCH?**

**JUSTIN ETZINE**

The Summer Arch program will undoubtedly change the Union’s operations and programming. With 2019 and beyond expected to have approximately 1,000 juniors on campus each summer, more programs will be held throughout the summer, and more clubs and organizations will continue operating during the summer.

As mentioned previously, the Summer Arch will also impact Union budgeting, as students will be contributing their Union Activity Fee during the summer semester and not during their following “away” semester. Currently, students pay the Union Activity in half installments for the fall and spring semester. Students who remain on campus for the summer currently pay a separate, smaller fee to cover summer programming and activities. As the initiative will reclassify the summer session as a normal academic period, the split of funding will need to be re-evaluated to ensure that program participants are able to fully enjoy and participate in everything the Union has to offer throughout the year.

For procedural changes, I will ask that the Club Operations Committee work with clubs and organizations in preparing their club constitutions to account for the summer semester and to ensure that the organizations can be active with leaders on campus during the summer, if they so choose. The changes in procedure would also need to account for juniors leaving for either the fall or spring semester, as juniors frequently take on leadership roles for clubs and organizations.

The specifics for how these changes will occur are still unclear, but I will prioritize working with the Executive Board, the Club Operations Committee, and the Policies Committee to ensure changes in budgeting, policies, and procedures are for the students’ and their organizations’ benefit as we reach the full program rollout.

**IDA ETEMADI**

The Executive Board representatives need to begin discussions on club operations during the summer with the clubs they represent. Included in this discussion is determining if the club will operate at all over the summer, how many officers would stay to ensure the continuance of the club over the summer, what programs the club would hold, and how much funding is needed to support requested programs. I would work with Executive Board representatives to make sure this information is gathered from clubs every year, so it is taken into account during budgeting. As President of the Union, I would also like the Business Operations Committee to investigate extending the hours of operation for businesses in the Union over the summer to serve the students who stay here for The Arch.





HOW DO YOU INTEND TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO FULLY UTILIZE THE RESOURCES OF THE UNION?

JUSTIN ETZINE

Just as Google says the best way to achieve a higher ranking on their search engine is to “have good content,” I believe the best way to encourage students to utilize all facets of their Union is to have good programming. We are fortunate in that we have a huge variety—and I mean huge—of activities, interests, events, and beliefs for all students to consume, and we have an extremely competent group of club officers and Union administrators to ensure everything runs smoothly.

That said, it upsets me when I learn about Union-sponsored events that do not get the attendance they deserve. I believe involvement in the Union follows a positive feedback loop; that is, more good programming will lead to higher involvement, higher involvement will lead to greater interest, and greater interest will lead to more good programming. In this way, our Union thrives; clubs grow and can take on greater ideas and projects, and each student finds their niche.

This includes programming outside of the Union building itself. Events run by the Student Union should be heavily advertised as such. Along those lines, I think our programming committees can work with groups across campus to secure new and exciting events like video games nights on EMPAC’s giant projection screens, a wider range of open skate nights at the Houston Field House, and outdoor events during the warmer months of the year on the many open green spaces across our campus, to name a few. By continuing to diversify and expand the Union’s programming, more students will be able to benefit and participate.

IDA ETEMADI

One of the primary ways I intend to increase the utilization of Union resources is through updates and ease of use of the Union website, including the implementation of a comprehensive Union calendar. This year, the Marketing, Advertising, and Publicity Committee compiled the information of many of the services available in the Union that can be compiled into a pamphlet as a guide to the Union. This pamphlet can be distributed on Accepted Students Day, Orientation, and NRB, as well as displayed in different locations around the Union for use. I also intend on having E-Board representatives communicate with their clubs to explain how to get events publicized on Union social media, and to continue to encourage clubs to use their Poly credits.

# UNDERGRADUATE PRESIDENT

IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT DO YOU FEEL ARE THE ROLES OF THE UNDERGRADUATE PRESIDENT, THE UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL, AND THE CLASS COUNCILS?

JOEY LYONS

The role of the Undergraduate President is to run the Undergraduate Council and to help support each Class Council in their activities. The Undergraduate President is also responsible for informing the incoming Class President and Vice President on how the Undergraduate Council runs and the role and responsibilities of their Class Council. The role of the Undergraduate Council is to not only approve budgets for class activities, but to also provide continuity amongst the classes so that ideas and traditions are passed on. The UC also helps inspire Class Councils and helps inform the Presidents and Vice Presidents of other student government activities. The role of the Class Councils is to make events that create comradery amongst the class and provide symbols of the class like the class logo, class quote, class tree, class rings, etc.

LIST YOUR CAMPUS ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT, POSITIONS HELD, AND AWARDS RECEIVED.

JOEY LYONS

Outside of student government, my campus activities include: Varsity Women’s Soccer, Varsity Track and Field, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Women’s Mentorship Program and Sole Survivors.

WHY DO YOU WANT TO BE UNDERGRADUATE PRESIDENT?

JOEY LYONS

I’m running for Undergraduate President because I hope to expand upon the current and previous Undergraduate Presidents’ efforts to support and promote collaboration between the class councils. Student government has given me a means to positively impact my fellow classmates and find ways to connect with them. In this role, I hope to continue finding these connections and help other students celebrate with their classmates by encouraging our councils to hold meaningful events to build strong relationships amongst class members.

LIST YOUR CAMPUS ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT, POSITIONS HELD, AND AWARDS RECEIVED.

JOEY LYONS

My three short-term goals are:

1. Find summer arch (The Arch) solutions for the Class of 2020 and Class of 2021
2. Ensure each council has at least one event per semester
3. Help increase communication between councils and their respective class

My three long-term goals are:

1. Have a protocol for the rising Junior Class so that they can have a continuous council and activities
2. Have a database of ideas for events so that future classes can be inspired and add their own ideas and feedback, along with information on how they went about doing this and who they contacted
3. Have a 4-year template plan which shows what the Council should be doing each year

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE INCUMBENT UNDERGRADUATE PRESIDENT’S STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES? WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO IMPROVE UPON THEM IF YOU WERE ELECTED?

JOEY LYONS

The strengths of the incumbent Undergraduate President include her organization, efficiency, and smoothness that meetings are run with. Her weaknesses include the lack of support received when the Class Presidents lost access to their class email lists and performing all of the unfilled roles of the UC herself. I would improve upon this by advocating for the Presidents and their Councils by contacting the correct parties immediately once an issue arose. I would also make sure to have every position filled and if unable to do so, I would ensure that I performed each unfilled role adequately.

<b>PRIMARY DEBATES</b> McNeil Room 5–7 pm	<b>DEBATES</b> McNeil Room 7–9 pm	<b>GM/PU ROAST</b> McNeil Room 8–9:30 pm
<b>PRIMARY VOTING</b> Commons, DCC, Union 9 am–7 pm	<b>VOTING</b> Commons, DCC, Union 9 am–7 pm	<b>VETERANS LOUNGE GRAND OPENING</b> McNeil Room 3–4 pm
<b>PROVOST BBQ</b> Commons Field 11 am–3 pm	<b>LOGO REVEAL PARTY</b> McNeil Room 4–6 pm	<b>GM WEEK FINALE!</b> Field House 7–11 pm



# CANDIDATE PROFILES

## GRAND MARSHAL



NANCY BUSH



STEF WARNER

## PRESIDENT OF THE UNION



JUSTIN ETZINE



IDA ETEMADI



THE MOOSE DIBASIO

## UNDERGRADUATE PRESIDENT



JOEY LYONS

## CLASS OF 2019

### President

Vignesh Babu

Kinsley Rowan

### Vice President

Colin Williamson

### Senator

Chris Tang

Samantha Meyerson

Andrew D'Aoust

Mary Clare Crochiere

### Representative

Samantha Spano

Stephanie Tan

## ALUMNI

### President

Ellie Mees

### Vice President

Trishala Chaudhary

Hannah Merrow

### Secretary

Steve Sperazza

### Treasurer

Erica Lane

## INDEPENDENT & GREEK

### Independent Senator

Anthony Dai

### Greek Senator

Tomas Provencher

## CLASS OF 2020

### President

Sruja Machani

### Vice President

Steven Cano

### Senator

Jayshon Adams

Meagan Lettko

Chris Duffy

### Representative

Emily Blundo

Alexis Castrellon

Gabriella Fantell

Ariana Gerdis

Milena Gonzalez

Clarisse Baes

Jeanine Moreau

## GRADUATE

### Senator

The Moose DiBasio

Heidi Niskanen

Lauren Gandy

Kinshuk Panda

### Representative

Ezra Teboul

Benjamin Abramowitz

Anthony Ashley

Amanda Youmans

## CLASS OF 2021

### President

Evan Lazaro

### Vice President

Zachary Taylor

### Senator

Jonathan Bao



Advait Narayan

Much of what I have worked on as a senator so far has been in advocating for policy to maintain or improve student representation. Students have been losing their voice on this campus recently. I will continue to devote my time to continue to work to help the student body regain their voice.

As a freshman, I understand that there are problems with the Summer Arch program, so I will also continue work on improving the Summer Arch program. The current Freshman Class (Class of 2021) is required to participate in the Arch, so I will make sure to devote time in my term to improving this program as well. In my first term as a senator, I have been working to find 'flaws' in the program and trying to resolve the issues with the Student Life Committee and the Summer Arch Task Force, I will continue to work with these groups to ensure the Arch runs smoothly and as stress-free as possible.

### Representative

Noah Cohen

Kyle Krois

Timothy Cieslak

Ben Longchamp

Baran Baysal

Andrew Nagawiecki

Lisa Sulmasy





STUDENT SENATE



Nicholas Luczak/The Polytechnic

IN THE LAST SENATE MEETING OF THE CURRENT TERM, SENATE COMMITTEES PRESENTED on their accomplishments and on what they home to acheive in the future. (file photo)

**Darby Burns**  
*Senior Reporter*

IN THE LAST STUDENT SENATE MEETING OF THE semester, each committee, as well as the grand marshal and vice grand marshal, presented their accomplishments and processes throughout their term, and the things they hope to continue in the future. The slides that were used for the presentations will serve as a source of knowledge for future committee members.

**Academic Affairs Committee**

The purpose of the AAC is to foster discussion with students, faculty, and administration to encourage new ideas that enhance the academic experience. They also work to facilitate creative thinking, and to provide students and faculty with improved resources to create the best educational environment. Its subcommittees consist of the Undergraduate Research Subcommittee—a subcommittee dedicated to connecting professors and students for research—a subcommittee focused on potentially getting the career fair to be a school holiday and increasing representation for niche majors, a Summer Arch Task Force, and a subcommittee working to create and implement an online tutoring program.

**Facilities and Services Committee**

This year the FSC was split up into four main categories: facilities, transportation, sustainability, and public safety. Those working to improve facilities in the Union worked on a study spaces proposal, which was continued from last year, as well as a project to bring the Capital Region Bike Share to campus. Within transportation, the committee worked with quite a few people on a route proposal to shorten the East Campus Shuttle route, adjust the West Campus Shuttle route, and create an infographic to show the differences between the three safety services on campus: the SafeRide program,

the Public Safety escort system, and the late night weekend shuttle. For sustainability, it put together a composting proposal that was approved by the Senate; and are now waiting to work with next year’s hospitalities provider to implement it. It is also working to provide a more exciting Earth Week this year, and is continuing to push for more water bottle filling stations on campus. The main focus of the public safety branch of the FSC was the annual Light Walk, an event where members of the Senate walk around campus and off-campus areas to find and report safety concerns, that took place this year.

**Student Life Committee**

The goal of the SLC is to take in student feedback and channel it to appropriate committees, or work towards a solution within the committee itself. The on-campus pharmacy service is now available and the formation of a student health task force is still in progress. The student organization accountability program was modeled after the student peer alcohol monitoring program and the initial proposal has been written. The SLC is part of an ongoing conversation regarding the more controversial suggested changes to the *Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities*, and earlier in the year brought the more time sensitive suggested changes before the Senate for approval. They are also attempting to address a need for more summer storage on campus, which the next Senate will discuss.

**Student Government Communications Committee**

This year, Chairperson Stefanie Warner ’19 said that she wanted to focus on building the foundation for the committee due to issues that had existed in the past. The committee worked on the redesign of the Union logo, which was

done to have a logo entirely designed and built by the student body. The monthly report was implemented as a way to get information out to the student body in a simplified way. The SLC worked to increase student government’s social media presence significantly, through initiatives like the Student Government Spotlight and Throwback Thursday.

**Community Relations Committee**

The CRC focused on several big projects this past year. The first was working to create new student flyers—an accumulation of all the information the typical student would amass over the course of their four years here at RPI—that could make the transition much easier for freshman and transfer students. They also worked on having a lupus walk and an autism fundraiser. In addition, they worked on bringing food trucks to campus, creating a website dedicated to volunteer efforts that RPI students can attend, and developing a centralized social calendar.

**Hospitality Services Advisory Committee**

The largest project that the HSAC has been working on in is the Fresh Pantry project, which makes it possible for students to sign up for a weekly meal plan pick up service. Modeled after Blue Apron, the prepackaged, semi-prepared kits of food would be available for purchase with Flex, RAD, cash, credit, or debit. It is currently expected to roll out the first day of classes in the fall.

**Internal Reforms Committee**

The loosely defined purpose of the IFC was to look into different ways of improving the Senate. They successfully accomplished the creation of a senator guide, which is intended to serve as a go to source of information for new and returning senators. They also did senator training,

looked over the Union Constitution, and proposed five amendments. Two amendments passed through the Senate and will be voted on April 5 during GM week elections. Chairperson Steven Sperazza ’18 put together several suggestions for the improvement of the Senate, which included an increase in input from campus organizations in regard to Senate-related matters and more efficient meetings made possible by more proactive discussions. Since the IFC was an ad hoc committee, it was suggested that it exist every few years to avoid redundancy.

**Web Technologies Group**

The goal of the Web Technologies Group is to help committees advance their goals and to work on some of its own projects to help the student body. One of its main projects was the improvement of the Shuttle Tracker, which was done in conjunction with RCOS. It now shows which routes shuttles are on, displays inclement weather alert messages, has reduced data usage, includes a legend, and has a dark mode. This semester, the committee made electronic nominations for GM week elections possible. It also handles surveys—through which thousands of responses were anonymously recorded—as well as petitions.

**Union Annual Report Committee**

The UAR Committee focused on producing the *Union Annual Report*. The Union activity fee came for recommendation and was approved after discussions about its split between undergraduate and graduate students that will be taken into account in next year’s budgeting. According to Grand Marshal Justin Etzine ’18, the report went very well and received many thankful comments about its quality.



# Senate: Committees reflect on past term



Brooklyn Parslow/The Polytechnic

From **Page 1**

## Human Resources Interview Committee

The purpose of the HRIC was to vet the director of the Union candidates, conduct interviews, and provide a comprehensive recommendation to the Executive Board. Chairperson Michael Cuzzo ’17 said that the committee consisted of 16 members who met with two candidates. He said that during the process, students had several concerns, including the presence of administrators, the disruptive actions of the Division of Human Resources during the interviews, and the fact that the reporting of candidate feedback was done by HR. He addressed the incident in which one of the candidates was seen having the typed-out questions in front of him during the second interview round. He said that President of the Union Matthew Rand ’19 informed Vice President of Human Resources Curtis Powell, who maintains that the administration did not provide the questions to the candidate. Cuzzo recommended that in the future there should be more student involvement in the screening of resumes and in modifying the job description of director of the Union so that it conforms to tradition. He also suggested that there should be no administrators in the room during the group interview with students and that the committee should be re-established next term.

## Elections Commission

The Elections Commission this year worked with WebTech to introduce electronic nominations for elections. Now, candidates enter their own nominations online. It also worked on the Freshman 2017 elections—which according to Chairperson Caleb Caraway ’19 went well and experienced a large increase in voter turnout—and the GM Week 2018 elections that are currently going on.

## Vice Grand Marshal

Vice Grand Marshal Ellie Mees ’18 handled petitions this year, only one of which reached the necessary 250 signatures, to come before the Senate. It regarded bringing the Flying Chicken to campus and was charged to Senator Nancy Bush ’19. Mees discussed the Summer Arch Task Force that she put together and recommended continuing it next term. She also brought up her title change, which she said had sparked a heated debate, and explained that it was just for ease of understanding and not meant to change her responsibilities. Over her term she also held cabinet meetings—something that was previously done by the GM but was charged to her this year by Etzine. She also recommended that this continue into next term.

## Grand Marshal

Etzine reminded everyone that members of the Senate serve to represent, pursue projects to the benefit of, and advocate for the interests of their fellow students. He said that over the course of the semester there has been a lot of improvement in the Senate’s professionalism and meeting efficiency. He then took the time to discuss student involvement; talking about huge improvements in the Fall 2017 survey, which boosted an over 60 percent increase in responses compared to last year. He praised what he called record-level participation on Senate committees, the full-scale implementation of a sub-committee structure, and student government’s expanded social media presence. ♦

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

# Club inclusivity ratings approved

### Ad hoc committee rated clubs on a scale of low risk to high risk regarding their inclusivity

**Nicholas Luczak**  
*Senior Reporter*

THE STUDENT EXECUTIVE BOARD MET FOR THE LAST SESSION of its term on Thursday to wrap up the year by allocating money for Union-branded merchandise, discussing club inclusivity, and reflecting on their term together. With the rebranding of the Union logo, the Board decided that there was a need for new merchandise to celebrate and update the campus on the new symbol of the Union. There was also an in-depth discussion on the findings that an ad-hoc committee had made in regard to the inclusivity of all clubs on campus. Finally, the meeting closed with the Board thanking both involved students and administrators.

Club/ICA Representative Ida Etemadi ’19 presented the Board with options for merchandise featuring the newly-designed Union logo. This would increase the allocation of \$1,800 for the Union launch by an approximate \$200 by pulling from contingencies to pay for branded PopSockets, grocery totes, coolers, and table throws. The proposal was met with questions from members of the Board regarding the proposed quantities and cost, and how the new merchandise would be distributed. According to Etemadi, the high costs were associated with the large one-time purchase of items such as banners and table throws, but she reassured that these items would be important, as they would be useful in the foreseeable future. After deliberation over the cost effectiveness of the motion, it was passed 12-3-2.

The Board then moved on to a report given by an ad hoc committee. The committee was established after the

the Board denied Turning Point affiliation, as part of an effort to ensure that the Board was holding all clubs to the same standard of inclusivity which prevented Turning Point from becoming an affiliated club.

The committee rated clubs on a scale of low risk to high risk, with all but three clubs being determined as low risk. The three clubs which were marked as medium risk were the Alpha Delta Phi Society, Cru, and Students for Sensible Drug Policy. The committee was concerned with Alpha Delta Phi, as on other campuses they tend to resemble a fraternity more than their advertised literary club; however, the committee mentioned that after approaching the club, they made it clear that they had no intentions of going in that direction. Cru was given a medium rating based on Reddit posts which were made over two years ago. Students for Sensible Drug Policy was given a higher rating due to an inherent risk in what they aimed to discuss, and because they did not have a faculty advisor with experience in health policy to ensure inclusivity in ideology.

During the discussion of the merits of the motion, there was concern over why the committee had not approached these clubs before the meeting to get their input and provide insight into why they had been given this rating. Some members of the Board were worried that this would be seen as a disciplinary action instead of a recommendation to the clubs, considering the potential impact that such a rating might have on the recruitment of new members. There was also concern over how these

determinations were made, as there were no interviews of club members and students with regard to inclusivity. Grand Marshal Justin Etzine ’18 gave some further insight into the situation regarding Cru, explaining that the incident involved a non-student advisor posting a “borderline homophobic” comment on Reddit, and that the advisor is no longer associated with the club.

After a lengthy discussion, the queue was closed, and the members of the Board voted in favor of publishing the findings online with a 10-4-2 vote. The ad-hoc committee’s report is to be released soon, and will be available to the public on the Executive Board’s website.

After all the committees reported on the work they had done in the last year, the Board moved to thank the members of the administrative staff who had helped them make decisions and function over the last year, as well as President of the Union Matthew Rand ’18. Both ceremonial motions passed unanimously. Rand ended his final meeting of the Executive Board by thanking members of the Board, administrative staff, and the student body by saying, “It has not only been a phenomenal opportunity to work with you all, but to lead you, and I thank you for allowing me to do that [...] So thank you, thank you, thank you.”

You can vote for the next president of the Union, as well as other members of the Student Government, this week from 9 am to 7 pm in the Darrin Communications Center, Union, or Commons Dining Hall this Thursday. ♦



EDITORIAL NOTEBOOK

## Privatized military overdue for change

THE DATE IS SEPTEMBER 16, 2007. A 20-year-old Iraqi is driving his mother to her clinic in Baghdad during the height of a civil war threatening to tear the country apart. The young man finds himself driving directly towards an armored convoy of paid mercenaries with nowhere to go. The convoy opens fire on the car, killing both him and his mother, and when the white Kia sedan doesn't stop, they start firing indiscriminately. The mercenaries continue to fire into the crowd of unarmed civilians and even call in helicopter support, purportedly in self-defense. At the end of the 20-minute shooting, there were a total of 17 dead and a further 20 Iraqis injured; none of the mercenaries were hurt.

Those mercenaries were part of an organization known as Blackwater Security Company—a corporation which has since been renamed twice in an effort to distance itself from what came to be known as the Nisour Square Massacre. After a member of the convoy pled guilty in exchange for immunity, five Blackwater guards were charged with 14 counts of manslaughter, 20 counts of attempted manslaughter, and a weapons violation. But on December 31, 2009, all charges were dismissed on the grounds that the case had been improperly built on testi-

mony given in exchange for immunity.

The privatization of military personnel is a worrying trend. The use of private security companies has not only continued, but thrived. Under its new name—Xe Services, and later Academi—the private security company continued to get work, not only with the US government, but with companies like Monsanto, Chevron, Walt Disney, Deutsche Bank, and Barclays.

Even after campaigning against the use of privatized forces, under the Obama administration, the use of Xe's services doubled in size compared to the Bush administration as they moved from the conflict in Iraq to Afghanistan—and it doesn't stop there. According to USA Today, the Trump administration aims to increase the use of privatized forces in Afghanistan by a total of “5,500 private contractors, primarily former Special Operations troops, [who] would advise Afghan combat forces. The plan also includes a 90-plane private air force that would provide air support in the nearly 16-year-old war against Taliban insurgents.”

While the war in Afghanistan is very much ongoing and still a very difficult conflict to resolve, the use of privatized military forces—especially ones with such a dubious history—is not the answer. The use of private militaries allows you to fight wars without having to sacrifice the



Nicholas  
Luczak  
Contributing Editor

lives and opinions of American citizens. While that might initially sound like a good thing, I would argue that it lowers the risks associated with getting involved in conflict. Rather than going to war or even sending troops to a conflict area like Afghanistan, our government can just send private militaries to do the dirty deeds they need to get done in order to do their job without having to follow many of the rules that our military follows. After all, a military official could be held accountable, but in the event that something goes wrong, like with Blackwater, it's simply held against the corporation, which can easily rename itself and go about business like any other day.

Another issue with the use of mercenaries is that they are apolitical, and sometimes even amoral. An individual who is getting paid to do a job like this isn't loyal to anything but their paycheck, and when they aren't held accountable to the same standards as the troops in our military, morals can be, and often are, forgotten.

While conflict is always a difficult thing for any nation to deal with, I ask that you think about how our government chooses to deal with these issues. When conflict becomes as easy as signing a contract, it becomes too easy to separate yourself from the realities of the horrors of war. And when a faceless corporation is held accountable, nobody is.

EDITORIAL NOTEBOOK

## Prioritize positivity

“BE A GOOD PERSON.”

Those were the joking, parting words of Scott Peters, former roommate, and my dear friend before he left for another room. I initially laughed, as such advice is often regarded as a joke, and wished him well. However, in the days after he had left, I took some time to reflect on what he said and realized that his words mean much more than meets the eye.

The world needs more heroes. However, heros can take many forms; not everyone needs to be a Tracer or Reinhart. Ordinary people are heros in their own way. With all the violence in the world, with all the hate and killing, simple acts of kindness often go unappreciated. Helping someone cross the street, or putting away their groceries, or even something as simple as telling someone they look nice often makes someone else's day better. You don't need to save lives to make a difference! I feel like there's a fundamental decline in the amount of positivity that is present in the world. Especially here, at RPI, people are slowly losing sight of their happiness.

I understand that work is hard, that school sucks, and that tests are awful. But people sometimes let that get to them and forget that they are intrinsically good people. I see a lot of my friends consumed by negativity: unable to be happy and enjoy their lives. Take some time for yourself once in a while. Take a hike outdoors, volunteer for a charity, participate in a fundraiser, do anything that will take your time off the stresses in your life. Then, you can share your happiness with the world.

One thing I did this week was spend an hour helping at a church. I carried flowers into the main sanctuary, so that the church workers could rearrange them in beautiful arrangements. It didn't take me any time, but the smiles on their faces and the gratitude they gave me in return was well worth it. I don't really go to church, but helping people shouldn't be bounded by anything.

“Be a bad person.”

Those were the parting words of Geoffrey Rosenthal, former Features editor, and my dear friend before he left for the adult world....



Serge  
Piskun  
Copy Editor

*April 3, 2018 / 7:30 PM / EMPAC Concert Hall*

SPEAKERS FORUM PRESENTS: EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
OF THE COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

**KYLE POPE**

WHEN NOBODY TRUSTS ANYONE



KYLE POPE IS THE VOICE OF JOURNALISM. AS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AND PUBLISHER OF THE COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW, WHICH SERVES AS BOTH AN ADVOCATE AND WATCHDOG OF THE PRESS, POPE SITS ATOP THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS PERCH IN MEDIA IN WHAT IS NOW THE MOST PRECARIOUS MOMENT IN ITS HISTORY. THE PRESS HAS BEEN SWEEPED UP IN THIS SHIFT, BUT IT MUCH MORE WIDE-RANGING THAN THAT. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU AND YOUR BUSINESS, HOW FAR MIGHT IT GO, WHAT'S TO BE DONE?

SPEAKERS  
FORUM

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# GM WEEK *Finale*

Houston Field House      7:00 – 11:00 P. M.  
**FRI. APRIL 6**

**ELECTION RESULTS ANNOUNCED**

**MECHANICAL BULL,  
INFLATABLES, & MORE**



**FREE FOOD! CHICKEN TENDERS, CORNDOGS, VEGAN BUFFALO  
CHICKEN CAULIFLOWER, MOE'S, COOKIES, BROWNIES, & MORE**



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UPAC COMEDY PRESENTS:



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**LGBTQ+ ADVOCATE AND STAND UP COMEDIAN  
AS SEEN ON MEAN GIRLS, HBO AND ABC!**



**WHERE?**

**MONDAY 4/2  
MCNEIL ROOM, 9:00PM**





INTERVIEW

## Harding discusses his work, process

*Paul Harding won the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for fiction for his novel Tinkers. Tinkers follows the thought process of its narrator, George Washington Crosby, as he lays on his deathbed and reflects on the relationship with his father, Howard.*

*Prior to his writing career, Harding had served as the drummer for a rock band. After his band stopped touring, Harding took the opportunity to begin an M.F.A. program at the University of Iowa, and has since begun teaching writing at Harvard University and the University of Iowa.*

DORER: What advantage do you think a student at RPI could gain from learning to write creatively?

HARDING: I think the division of science and art is often sort of artificial. Oftentimes, scientists think creatively and they need to be able to use their imagination to conceptualize thing— particularly when it comes to sort of theoretical things like physics and all that kind of stuff. I just think that all of us are using our brains, whether we’re engineers or artists, but we all use different idioms or genres of thinking. When I get confounded by thinking in terms of narrative prose, I’ll start reading back issues of science magazines; the precision and the concreteness actually refreshes my brain and makes it look at things in a different way. I think the reverse is true for people who do science and technology and math.

DORER: Where does the actual craft of a novel

begin? How does that process begin?

HARDING: A novel is very different from a short story or a poem, partially because in longer narratives you have more space to build up meaning. The reader experiences something in almost lived time; if you’re reading something like War and Peace, it takes almost a month to read it. In terms of authoring a novel, I know I’m going to spend at least five or six years on it. For me, anyway, I don’t write really heavily plotted novels. I use my background as a drummer or a musician and I think of it as improvisation and then one day it all starts to cohere. You can’t really practice writing novels by writing short stories. You can only write one sentence at a time anyway, so in a novel you can take your time and climb into the world. You have to pace yourself.

DORER: Have you experimented with other forms of writing? Have you tried short story or poetry?

HARDING: I tried to write poetry, and this is sort of a mundane reason for why I stopped, but I didn’t know where to put the line breaks. I couldn’t figure out free verse, or anything that wasn’t garbage when I was using meter or rhyme scheme. I felt like I had an impulse to write lyric, pastoral writing, so when I started writing what turned out to be the novel *Tinkers*, I just kept writing what I thought was the lyric poetry that I interpreted as the form of the novel. I just stopped putting line breaks in and I wrote it as prose. I think *Tinkers* is sort of a strange hybrid of a book; they call it a novel but I think of it as a long, lyric poem. Every time I

try to write a short story, it just feels like it has been surgically removed from a novel. I think I just naturally write things that are very lyric, and not plot-based, and very impressionistic. As an artist, it’s your job to create something that works, and I don’t really care if they call it a poem or a novella.

DORER: What books have been influential in your writing, and what are you reading?

HARDING: The general answer is that every book I read is influential. I guess the real big writers that I’m always being influenced by are certainly the New England transcendentalists: Thoreau and Emerson and Hawthorne and Emily Dickinson and absolutely Herman Melville. Moby Dick is sort of my North Star in some ways. Increasingly the Bible, because the more of those authors you read the more you realize they base their art on the Bible. It’s not even about religions or theosophy, it’s just that the Bible serves as the headwater of western literature. And right now I’m teaching a graduate seminar on Shakespeare, so right now I’m starting my reading of Hamlet.

DORER: Given that *Tinkers* came from a small press, what do you think made the novel catch on?

HARDING: It was interesting because the small press meant that they had no budget for marketing. It didn’t sell like crazy, but it started to sell and it just kept selling at a constant enough pace. What it illuminated in a way is the word of mouth phenomenon that still exists among readers. I think maybe people liked it because it was slightly different from what they were finding from larger publishers.

DORER: *Tinkers* is a narrative based on several generations of men, and the similarities between them. How did you get the idea for the narrative, and what do you think it speaks to?

HARDING: The kind of load-bearing dramatic fantasies of the book are almost all based on family stories that my maternal grandfather told my brother and me about his family and his life growing up in northern Maine. As in the book, his father had epilepsy and was going to be sent away to an institution. He left the family when my grandfather was 12. In a way, it was kind of my way of imagining my way back into my family’s book of genesis. So, I sort of just wrote down those basic facts and imagined a fictionalized version of that. It turned out to be patrilineal simply because it was my grandfather, and his father had left. I didn’t start with the intention of saying anything about fathers and sons, but I think it sort of ended up participating in that tradition. I didn’t deliberately speak to anything. It really can be death to a good work of art to be motivated by an explanatory impulse. The danger then is that you can start writing thinly disguised psychology or sociology.

DORER: How do you feel the element of horology plays into the over-arching story of *Tinkers*, and what symbolism does it play to George and Howard?

HARDING: It’s one of those funny challenges that artists throw down at their own feet. You’re reading a book about an old man lying in bed and he’s remembering his father. It’s all about time, and memory. What more clichéd profession could you give the guy than being a clockmaker? It’s so clichéd that it’s just ridiculous. But my grandfather repaired antique clocks, and I apprenticed with him. One thing that I thought was non-negotiable in terms of the facts of the book, he had to be a clockmaker. I didn’t use clockmaking and horology as a subject on its own. I didn’t write about the symbolism of time and

clocks and horology per se. It was never one of my subjects as the author.

DORER: The language of *Tinkers* is something that a lot of people focused on, given that the language tends to hone in on the minutia of George’s perception on his deathbed. What are you hoping to convey to the reader by focusing the language of the piece?

HARDING: I don’t know if I’m trying to convey anything; language is the tool of the medium. My goal is precision. It’s precision of use and precision of meaning, and by bringing the language into that high definition of resolution, I think it reproduces in the reading something like consciousness itself. The experience of reading the language is something like just experiencing the character’s thoughts and perceptions. And I do that through just detail and precision and just appealing to the reader’s senses.

The other thing is that as an artist you want to write a story, and whatever kind of story you want to write presents very predictable pitfalls or dangers. As I was writing the book it didn’t have a plot, and it was all about an old guy lying in bed, thinking. So I realized the immediate danger is that the book is going to turn into ether; it’s just going to vaporize, it’s going to be abstract in his mind. So just another challenge I set myself was that I wanted someone to be able to flip through the book, open to any page, plunk his finger down, and find a concrete noun or verb. I wanted to figure out how to write about these abstract things in palpable, concrete terms. According to those rules, I ended up getting all this strange-looking, very dense, and highly-resolved and detailed prose that was kind of a surprise to me.

DORER: Given that *Tinkers* plays largely on the narrator’s hallucinations and how one can mix up the timelines, how did you decide on the narrative structure, and how do you think it contributed to your vision of the piece?

HARDING: I realized that it was going to be very impressionistic and associative. It was going to mimic, in highly aestheticized ways, a consciousness that was starting to break apart and detach from sequential time. So one of the things I did was I rigged the whole novel to a very linear countdown. I realized as long as I kept bringing the reader back to that countdown, then the character’s consciousness could sort of loop out and back and forward and go through all these could-de-sacs and the reader could follow them. The rest of the way I collaged and assembled together something associative. It just mimics the way this guy’s mind works.

DORER: What are you currently working on, and how would you relate it to the body of work you established with *Tinkers*?

HARDING: Right now, I’m working on a novel that’s roughly based on a set of historical facts and events that had to do with a settlement on a small island off the coast of Maine. From the late 18th century to the early 20th century, it was a racially-integrated settlement that was started by either an escaped or freed African slave, and his Irish wife. It was a small settlement, very impoverished, but it was there for 125 years. It was all inter-married black and white people, until the state of Maine evicted everybody from the island as a consequence of the intersection of the coastal tourism trade and eugenics. Almost to the week these people were evicted, the first international conference on eugenics was being held in London. Some of the islanders, rather than being summarily evicted were committed to a place called the Maine School for the Feeble Minded, and the character from *Tinkers* was supposed to be committed to the same place. ♦

A Vollmer W. Fries Lecture

### A Reading and Q&A with Novelist Paul Harding

- when:  
Thursday,  
April 12 at 8 pm
- where:  
Biotech Aud.,  
Center for  
Biotechnology &  
Interdisciplinary  
Studies Building  
at Rensselaer  
(RPI), Troy



Author of *Tinkers* (2009), winner of the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the 2010 PEN/Robert W. Bingham Prize among other honors, and *Enon: A Novel* (2014)

### and the announcement of the McKinney Writing Contest Awards

free and open to the public



DILBERT

by Scott Adams

WALLY, DO YOU REMEMBER THAT THING I ASKED YOU TO DO LAST MONTH?

NO.

WELL, THAT'S OKAY BECAUSE SOMETHING CHANGED AND I DON'T NEED IT ANYMORE.

YOU'RE WELCOME.

YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW OFTEN DOING NOTHING IS AS GOOD AS DOING SOMETHING.

I DON'T KNOW WHERE I LEFT MY PHONE. CAN YOU CALL IT?

SURE, BUT IT WILL MAKE BOTH OF US UNPRODUCTIVE INSTEAD OF JUST YOU.

AND THEN THERE WERE THREE

GAAAA!!!

WHERE IS THAT RINGING COMING FROM???

RRRRING

BEFORE I GIVE MY PROJECT STATUS REPORT, HAS ANYONE QUIT OR BEEN FIRED RECENTLY?

I FIRED TED LAST WEEK.

NOW TELL ME WHY YOUR PROJECT IS LATE.

IT WAS TED'S FAULT.

DO YOU HAVE SOME SPARE TIME TO HELP ME ON MY PROJECT?

THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS SPARE TIME.

THERE IS ONLY YOU INCONVENIENCING ME FOR YOUR OWN SELFISH BENEFIT.

YOU'RE BEING RUDE.

STOP BLAMING THE VICTIM.

WHAT DOES THE DATA TELL US TO DO?

WE ONLY HAVE BAD DATA ON THIS.

DOES THE BAD DATA SUGGEST WE SHOULD DO WHAT WE WANTED TO DO ANYWAY?

WELL, YES.

THAT'S CALLED "GOOD DATA."

THE PROPOSED SYSTEM WOULD REDUCE ACCIDENTAL EMPLOYEE DEATHS BY 20%.

WHAT IS THE RATIO OF THE VALUE OF AN EMPLOYEE'S LIFE COMPARED TO REAL PEOPLE?

I FIND YOUR QUESTION DISTURBING.

JUST TELL ME THE ANSWER, HALFLING!

Send funny jokes to [comics@poly.rpi.edu](mailto:comics@poly.rpi.edu) to have them featured in the paper next week!

XKCD

by Randall Munroe

WHEN YOU MAKE A BIG SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY, IT TAKES A WHILE TO GET IT PUBLISHED.

RIGHT?

MM HMM.

SO THERE ARE PROBABLY SEVERAL RESEARCH TEAMS OUT THERE WHO ARE SITTING ON NOBEL-PRIZE-WORTHY DISCOVERIES, BUT HAVEN'T TOLD THE REST OF US YET.

MAKES SENSE.

SOOO...WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON?

IT ISN'T ME!

I PROMISE I WON'T TELL.

SHOO! GO BOTHER SOMEONE ELSE.

RESEARCH SHOWS YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE YOUTUBE, SO WE SHOULD PRESENT NEWS STORIES AS VIDEOS INSTEAD OF TEXT!

GOOD IDEA!

THEY'LL LOVE THAT!

INSTEAD OF ARGUING WITH NEWSPAPERS ABOUT THIS, WE SHOULD JUST TELL THEM HOW MUCH YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE MAKING OUT AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

I'VE DECIDED TO SCORE ALL MY CONVERSATIONS USING CHESS WIN-LOSS NOTATION.

I DON'T KNOW OR CARE WHAT THAT MEANS.

FINE.

FINE.

$\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2}$

MONDAY PUNDAY

by Matthew Broussard

Oh no! A full moon!

mondaypunday.com

mondaypunday.com

mondaypunday.com

Want to draw comics for us? Email us at [comics@poly.rpi.edu](mailto:comics@poly.rpi.edu)!



XKCD

by Randall Munroe

WHERE TO LIVE

BASED ON YOUR TEMPERATURE PREFERENCES

CLIMATE DATA FROM WEATHERBASE.COM

HOT/HUMID SUMMERS

(MEASURED VIA HUMIDEX, WHICH COMBINES HEAT AND DEW POINT)

IF YOU HATE COLD AND HATE HEAT

QUITO BOGOTÁ ADDIS ABABA

IF YOU LOVE COLD AND HATE HEAT

DULUTH URMUMU ALBY REGINA IRKUTSK ABAKAN QIQIAHAR BLAGOVESHCHENSK

IF YOU LOVE COLD AND LOVE HEAT

MCURDO YELLOUKUFE HAILAR

IF YOU HATE COLD AND LOVE HEAT

HO CHI MINH CITY MANILA SINGAPORE JIMBABWE JAKARTO DAKAR LAGOS KINSHASA MIAMI DHAKA KARACHI DUBAI DELHI LAHORE

IF YOU LOVE COLD AND LOVE HEAT

REYKJAVIK

IF YOU HATE COLD AND HATE HEAT

QUITO BOGOTÁ ADDIS ABABA

IF YOU LOVE COLD AND HATE HEAT

DULUTH URMUMU ALBY REGINA IRKUTSK ABAKAN QIQIAHAR BLAGOVESHCHENSK

IF YOU LOVE COLD AND LOVE HEAT

MCURDO YELLOUKUFE HAILAR

Presenting:

HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS

WANT TO GO EAT FOOD TOGETHER?

WE COULD ALSO SIT TOGETHER AND TALK WITHOUT EATING. I DON'T NEED TO EAT. I MEAN, I DO NEED TO EAT. BUT IF YOU DON'T WANT TO EAT WE CAN JUST TALK. I CAN EAT LATER.

Okay

IT TURNS OUT I STILL HAVEN'T FIGURED OUT HOW TO DO THIS.

Sorry

HEY, YOU KNOW THAT ASTEROID THAT TUMBLED PAST FROM ANOTHER STAR SYSTEM? IT'S APPARENTLY REALLY LONG AND SKINNY. LIKE A RATIO OF 6:1 OR 10:1.

WEIRD. WONDER WHAT IT'S SHAPED LIKE.

WITHOUT MORE DATA, IT WOULD BE IRRESPONSIBLE TO SPECULATE FURTHER.

SO...YOU'RE GOING TO?


ABSOLUTELY.

HERE ARE SOME OBJECTS WITH A SIMILAR SHAPE RATIO: THE 1:4:9 MONOLITH FROM 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY. A STAR DESTROYER. A HUGE EGGPLANT EMOJI.

A STATUE OF WEIRD AL. AN IPHONE. XXXXX. VOLTRON. A GIANT SPACE COFFIN. BUT WHO COULD BE INSIDE? WE CAN ONLY GUESS. I'LL START: THIS IS ALL BASED ON HOW MANY DATA POINTS, AGAIN? ONE. BUT IT'S A PERFECT FIT!

In order to get your GM Week mug you must vote in both the primary and regular elections!

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AN INVITATION TO BE HONORED AT THE

VETERANS LOUNGE GRAND OPENING

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FRIDAY APRIL 6, 2018 | 3PM | MCNEIL ROOM

Short remarks and recognition of military service followed by refreshments and viewing of the new space located in Union 3314.

Serving the Rensselaer community since 1885



# ENDORSEMENTS

## GRAND MARSHAL

*The Polytechnic* endorses Nancy Bush '19 for Grand Marshal. As the highest elected student official at Rensselaer, the GM serves not only as the head of the Student Senate, but as the leader of the student body. It is her responsibility to understand and voice the concerns of the student body to the proper parties. Consequently, the GM bears a significant amount of responsibility to not only those in the Senate, but also to the entire Rensselaer community.

*The Poly* was impressed with the substance and thoughtfulness of Bush's platform, and her ability to elaborate on specific points during her interview—including when it is appropriate for her to

express opinion, her plans for making the information shared in Senate meetings more accessible, and much more.

Ultimately, it is clear that she has extensive knowledge on, and is genuinely invested in, these issues.

For the past year, Bush has served as the Facilities and Services Chairperson, wherein she tripled the committee's membership and oversaw a variety of impactful projects, such as the implementation of water bottle filling stations, increased study spaces, and the development of a composting proposal. Committees are the heart of the Senate; they are where senators and students can make changes that genuinely better the lives of stu-

dents. *The Poly* is sure that Bush's experience in, and enthusiasm for, this aspect of the Senate would transfer to the rest of the committees and their operations.

Bush has a comprehensive understanding of student-administration relationships that belies a complex perspective. Rather than denounce the entire administration due to recent concerns, she has expressed that the Union, and Student Government, must foster a better relationship in specific areas, such as with the Division of Student Life. During her time as the chairperson of FSC—a committee which relies heavily on administrative collaboration—she continued to achieve, even when relations were

tense. In doing so, we believe Bush demonstrated that she has a nuanced outlook on student-administration relations that would enable progress in this area for the upcoming year.

Members of the student body have expressed concerns about Bush's political views as expressed on social media, but *The Poly* has found no indicators that her opinions have adversely affected her ability to represent her constituencies throughout our coverage of the Student Senate.

Of the candidates, Bush has best exhibited that she has the strength and resolution required of an effective leader in these uneasy times. *The Poly* is confident that she would not bend under pressure.

# WANTED



**Nancy Bush**  
for **GM**

## PRESIDENT OF THE UNION

*The Polytechnic* endorses Justin Etzine for President of the Union. This past year, some of the Executive Board's operations have lacked both transparency and efficiency. Etzine's understanding of these issues—and his commitment to fixing them—is unquestionable.

Etzine has been involved in Student Government for his four years at Rensselaer, most recently serving as the 152nd Grand Marshal. Under Etzine, the Senate has seen impressive productivity and structure through an increased emphasis on subcommittees, a revamp of the senator training process, the creation and approval of a guide for senators, and the creation of a committee centered around analyzing the reforms that could be made to the Senate internally.

# WANTED



**Justin Etzine**  
for **PU**

Etzine's involvement and experience in Student Government is unmatched; even though some may argue that his expertise is more formally within the Senate, he has participated in Executive Board committees, attended many meetings, and even corrected the incumbent president of the Union on the Board's procedures. His understanding of E-Board operations is undeniable, and the Board could greatly benefit from similar structural changes to those implemented in the Senate.

While we would like to see new faces in our leadership, Etzine is clearly the most qualified candidate. *The Poly* is confident that, if elected, Etzine would appoint a diverse, dedicated group—which, under his guidance, would be capable of making rational and well-informed decisions—to the Executive Board.

When reflecting on the past year, fellow candidate Ida Etemadi '19 described E-Board meetings as efficient, but we disagree. *The Poly* fears that if the next president of the Union does not address operational issues—such as conformity, the focus on personal opinions in decision-making, and the lack of meeting structure—the Executive Board will remain stagnant and limit the productivity of the Union for the next year.

## INTERFRATERNITY COUNCIL

As the representatives of all Fraternities on the Rensselaer campus, the Interfraternity Council seeks student government candidates that understand the circumstances and issues pertaining to Greek Life, as well as intend to further the interests of the Greek community. After the General Body Meeting of The Interfraternity Council on March 21st, 2018, the Council delegates have voted to endorse the following candidates for the positions of Grand Marshal, President of the Union, and Undergraduate President:

Grand Marshal: **Nancy Bush**

Through Bush's experience and involvement within the Rensselaer Student Senate, the Interfraternity Council has identified Bush as the preferred candidate for Grand Marshal. Throughout her time in the Senate, Bush has shown to not only further the interests of the overall Greek community, but the overall Rensselaer community. During her tenure, Bush has served on the Student Life Committee, dedicating part of her time to the introduction of a SPAM alternative proposal. During her speech, Bush has expressed interest in the furthering of the alternative, as well as having outlined further plans for the continuance of Greek Life at Rensselaer. These plans include communication with both the Interfraternity Council and Panhellenic Council, as well as working with Greek Life moving forward with the Arch program. The Interfraternity Council is confident that Bush will prove to be effective in furthering the aims and ideals of the Rensselaer Greek Community, as well as furthering the Rensselaer community as a whole.

President of the Union: **Justin Etzine**

Through Etzine's term as Grand Marshal, he has proved to be a proponent for the Greek system at RPI, keeping

open communication with the Interfraternity Council and Panhellenic Council. Etzine has also provided the opportunity for members of the Greek community to be an active part of Student Government. Even though Etzine is not affiliated with a Greek Organization, Etzine had expressed in his speech further interest in working with the Rensselaer Greek Community, as well as continuing communications with the Interfraternity Council and Panhellenic Council. During his tenure, Etzine had the opportunity to work closely with the President of the Union, allowing Etzine the opportunity to see the inner workings of the Union Executive Board, and gain a further understanding of working for and representing the Rensselaer community as a whole. With his experience with Student Government, and his continuous efforts in furthering Greek Life at Rensselaer, the Interfraternity Council wholeheartedly supports Etzine in his campaign for President of the Union.

Undergraduate President: **Joey Lyons**

Lyons has extensive experience with the Class Councils, having previously served as the Vice President, and currently serving as the President for the Class of 2018. During her time on the Class of 2020 Council, Lyons has led the council in the production of numerous class events, such as hockey events and day trips. Through her speech, Lyons has welcomed Fraternities and Sororities to be involved in the occurrence of class events, which would prove beneficial to both Greek Life and the Rensselaer community. Through Lyons leadership, the Interfraternity Council is confident that the relationship between the Greeks and the Class Councils will flourish.

## AMENDMENT I: YES

*The Polytechnic* supports proposed Amendment I. This amendment to the membership and eligibility section of the *Union Constitution* was created to specify requirements for being an officer in student government, the composition of the Graduate Council, and membership for the Executive Board.

These amendments simply specify things which should be expected of a member of student government, make council operations smoother, and update terminology. The first section requires that the leaders of student government be a student of the school for at least one full semester, which makes sense as it is important that a candidate be already involved in the community. The section regarding graduate council membership just aims to allow the size of the graduate council to increase, which does not affect their voting power or representation and simply increases the number of people in the council so as to allow for more graduate students to participate. The section regarding the Executive Board simply removes the outdated moniker of club/ICA representative to club and organization representatives as the Board now only represents clubs and organizations.

## AMENDMENT II: NO

*The Polytechnic* does not support proposed Amendment II. The Editorial Board disagrees with the second section that would allow for the Graduate Council to make any changes it deems appropriate to its bylaws simply by a two-thirds vote of its membership. This would grant an unprecedented—and worrying—amount of power to the council.

This change is vague and uncalled for; during the Senate meeting in which it was presented, the Graduate Council could not give concrete examples of why it would need to make such urgent changes to its bylaws.

*The Poly* is not aware of any reasons why the Graduate Council should be able to forgo Senate approval, and it is troubling to think that the Senate believes it acceptable to break this precedent. The supposed check, through a presentation to the Senate in a "timely manner," is an unclear and inadequate variation of the original process.

If the changes to the Graduate Council bylaws are straightforward and important enough that the Council believes it should be able to make them independently, going through the formal process for a check should be painless. Regardless, the integrity of the process should not be compromised for what seems like mere convenience.

## UNDERGRADUATE PRESIDENT

# WANTED



**Joey Lyons**  
for **UP**

*The Polytechnic* endorses Joey Lyons '20 for Undergraduate President. See her endorsement online at [poly.rpi.edu](http://poly.rpi.edu).