

# Editorial

Wednesday, July 13, 2015

## Calendar inconveniences

This year, classes began on Monday, January 26, for the Spring 2015 semester, one week later than classes usually start. This slightly longer winter break caused all following weeks in the academic year to be pushed forward as well. For example, the Fall 2015 semester will now begin on the very last day of August and the coming winter break will begin two days before Christmas. As a result, it will be much shorter, making work difficult for students that must over the short winter vacation. Additionally, the later spring finals week forces some students to start internships or work immediately after their last exam.

*The Poly* believes that this scheduling is not efficient or consistent with scheduling in past years. We wonder why RPI moved the academic calendar forward when similar schools maintained the second or third weeks of January as their starting dates for the spring semester. Worcester Polytechnic Institute began its spring semester on Thursday, January 15; Carnegie Mellon on Monday, January 12; and Lehigh University on Monday, January 19. This one week schedule change in the academic calendar has caused headaches for students and staff alike.

## StuGov Transparency

Over the past few terms, student leaders across many organizations have worked hard to create a more transparent student union. *The Poly* began covering Executive Board meetings regularly, the Student Senate and the E-Board both began using social media frequently to keep students informed, and initiatives like the RPI Petitions service were created to empower students to take a more active role in the Rensselaer Union and student government.

Since the Union does continue to function during the summer months and though its members are dispersed across the country, the Executive Board still needs to hold meetings. With the bookstore situation that unfolded in May, the current E-Board has worked towards a more transparent operation, utilizing social media such as reddit, Facebook, and the Rensselaer Union website. Additionally, open motions have been uploaded to the E-Board dropbox. To this end, *The Poly* encourages timely updates prior to and after significant decisions are made, in order to keep Student Activity Fee paying students informed.

## EDITORIAL NOTEBOOKS

# Five tips for starting at RPI

Hi 2019! If you're reading this, you're probably going through one of the exciting segments of Student Orientation, or maybe even NRB! Regardless, welcome to RPI! I know that myself and all of the current students are very excited to meet you all! I'd like to take this time to provide you with some advice that I think will help you all out over the upcoming year. Take this from a former freshman that had quite an interesting year. From meeting incredible people and taking part in amazing student activities to joining the exciting roller coaster of the Student Senate and unintentionally landing up in the midst of a spring election crisis, I think it's safe to say my year wasn't average. So, here are my five tips that I believe will help you make this year your best yet!

Don't be afraid to say hi to anyone and everyone. College, especially freshman year, is one of the few venues of life in which almost everyone is new to his or her surroundings and to each other, and, therefore, it is completely acceptable to say hi to those around you, even if you weren't introduced to each other before. Who knows, the person sitting next to you in class or the dining hall or even that club meeting may become one of your best friends, but you won't know unless you start with a 'hi'!

It's okay to be the 'Over-involved Freshman.' It's no doubt that time management is one of the most important skills you need to know (or learn) for college—class

responsibilities and homework can be a big burden alone, so extracurriculars should be included in time not needed for studying. But, with that in mind, it's not the end of the world to join multiple



**Justin Etzine**  
Contributing Editor

clubs at the start of the year. With about 250 student organizations at RPI and about a dozen new ones being formed every year, attending meetings of many different groups is a great way to 'window shop' clubs and find those that best fit your interests and personality! Just make sure that,

when your classes get tough, you pick the ones you're most interested in and focus the majority of your time on what matters most: schoolwork.

Stuck on a thought or idea? Go for a walk. With hours of back to back homework, projects, meetings, classes, and/or studying, you will eventually hit a mental roadblock and won't be able to keep focusing. Or, maybe after a long day, you may feel stressed or annoyed with something. One of the best ways to deal with either of these issues is to take a walk through campus. We're lucky to be living full-time on an incredibly photogenic campus, even during the middle of winter, and it's in our best interests to take advantage of that. The change of scenery, weather, and the movement will all play into helping you feel better and getting you back to being as productive, or lack thereof, as you need to be!

Don't let anyone rain on your parade. People you meet at RPI,

and at any point in life, may have different life experiences that may give them a different outlook on any given situation. Sometimes, sadly, some individuals will have a more negative view on a topic than you do, and that is totally alright. But, if you're feeling confident or excited about a class, a project, an extracurricular, or any upcoming event or opportunity, don't let anyone convince you otherwise. Often times, the best way to get the most out of an experience is to approach it with realistic positivity and to do your best to enjoy all of your time at RPI.

Take advice with a grain of salt. This last piece of advice ties similarly with the previous one in that, once again, people may have had different experiences that can impact the advice and guidance they will give to their peers. This goes for items as small as laptop choices to as large as picking majors and finding a company that best fits you. Remember that, even though all advice can be useful in some form, it's also important to keep your intuition at hand because, ultimately, you are the one who knows what's best for yourself.

So, with that in mind, feel free to take this entire editorial with a grain of salt! Try these pieces of advice if you'd like and, who knows, maybe you'll be the one writing an advice article to the Class of 2020 in a year's time! Best of luck with your first few months; enjoy everything that RPI offers during SO and NRB, and I look forward to meeting you all come August!

## the polytechnic

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# Jumping into new experiences

HERE'S A QUICK STORY I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU. I was nervous to leave home to come to RPI, but one week later after arriving on August 19, 2014, I found myself getting mustard poured on my head during the annual weR SLIMED event. Soon enough, I joined the club weR: The Spirit of Rensselaer Society. Additionally, one day of Navigating Rensselaer & Beyond, I spent the entire day playing volleyball outdoors near the Robinson Pool, and within the first month I joined the Club Volleyball Team.

One night, I even decided to walk into the newspaper office after hearing about it at the activities fair. In high school, I think I wrote two or three articles, now I'm writing for *The Poly* much more. You will receive a bunch of emails from clubs regarding meeting times; don't feel overwhelmed, pick and choose a few, and check those out first. Then decide whether you want to continue going or not, as simple as that.

Incoming freshman, explore RPI, especially during NRB. There are so many clubs here. Continue what you loved during high school, and also try new things. And don't forget, you're here to study hard

and learn a lot. Do well in your classes. You may be given a chance to do some research, ranging over a variety of fields. I did well in my introductory Science, Technology, and Society class first semester and had

the opportunity to join a team of researchers on an ethnographic project during my second semester. I plan on returning to it this upcoming semester.

And freshmen, there is an upcoming career fair in September. Don't feel like you are pressured to go. You're only a freshman, adjust to school first. A summer internship will eventually find you, if you would like one.

Lastly, there are many opportunities outside the classroom. During the weekends, go to hall events (which I highly suggest joining your hall council early on), check out our solar system at the observatory Saturday nights, and most importantly, socialize.

Overall, it's okay to be nervous and afraid to leave what you've known your entire life. But you'll quickly adjust and laugh about that pre-college anxiety once you get going. And don't forget to call back home once in a while. Enjoy the rest of your summer and GET PUMPED RPI, 2019!



**Maria Kozdroy**  
Ed/Op Editor

## Join *The Poly*!