

The By-laws of the Rensselaer Union Student Senate

As revised March 5th, 2014

Article I: Organization

1. The name of this organization shall be the Rensselaer Union Student Senate, hereinafter referred to as the Student Senate or the Senate.
2. The Student Senate gains its authority from the Rensselaer Union Constitution.
3. The Student Senate shall pass legislation commensurate with its duties as defined by the Rensselaer Union Constitution, and as specified in these By-Laws.

Article II: Membership

1. A Senator shall be defined as any person who has voting rights in the Senate, as defined by the Rensselaer Union Constitution.
2. Senate membership shall consist of the Grand Marshal, and Senators as defined by the Rensselaer Union Constitution.

Article III: Officers

1. The Grand Marshal is the presiding officer of the Senate.
2. All Officers of the Senate shall be nominated by the Grand Marshal and confirmed by a 2/3 vote of the Senate.
3. The Grand Marshal assumes the duties of any unfilled officer position, with the exception of the Rules and Elections Committee Chair.
4. It shall be the responsibility of the Vice Chair to:
 - a. Publicize meeting times.
 - b. Meet regularly with the Grand Marshal to discuss Senate issues.
 - c. Act as the substitute for the Grand Marshal at any meetings that the Grand Marshal cannot attend. At such a meeting the Vice Chair shall not count towards quorum and may only vote to break a tie.
 - d. Become familiar with the work of all the Senate committees.
 - e. Coordinate annual documentation folders with committee chairmen to ensure continuity between years.
5. It shall be the responsibility of the Secretary to:
 - a. Take meeting attendance and minutes.
 - b. Distribute minutes, committee reports, motions, and other printed material to the members of the Student Senate.
6. The Treasurer shall be responsible for:
 - a. Managing funds allocated to the Student Senate as directed by the Grand Marshal or the Student Senate.
 - b. Preparing the annual budget of the Student Senate, subject to the approval of the Grand Marshal.
 - c. Approving transactions conducted by the Senate or any of its Committees. The Grand Marshal may overrule any decision pertaining to such transactions.
7. The Parliamentarian shall be responsible for:
 - a. Advising the Chair on matters of parliamentary procedure.
 - b. Maintaining an orderly meeting, abiding by rules of decorum.
 - c. Maintaining an accurate record of all legislation brought before the Senate.
8. The Student Senate representative on the Executive Board shall be known as the Senate-Executive Board Liaison. They shall be responsible for:
 - a. Expressing the Senate's opinions to the Executive Board and the Executive Board's opinions to the Senate.
 - b. Reviewing all legislation pertinent to Union fiscal policy and student fees.
9. The Chair of the Rules and Elections Committee shall be an officer of the Senate. The Chair may not necessarily be a Senator, but shall regularly attend Senate meetings.

Article IV: Duties of Office

1. Undergraduate Senators shall be expected to either chair one Senate committee or sit on at least two Senate committees. Graduate Senators shall be expected to either chair one Senate Committee or sit on at least one Senate committee.
2. Senators shall be responsible to dutifully attend all Senate Meetings, unless they obtain an excuse from the Grand Marshal.
3. Senators shall be expected to maintain satisfactory attendance in the council that they represent. Satisfactory attendance shall be defined by each council's By-Laws.
4. Failure to meet any of the duties of office shall subject the offending Senator to the removal process as outlined in Article IX of these By-Laws.

Article V: Meetings

1. The Student Senate shall meet at least twice a month during normal academic periods.
2. The time and place of the meetings shall be at the discretion of the Grand Marshal.
3. All meetings of the Student Senate shall be open to the public.
4. The Senate may, by a 2/3 vote, close a meeting. Within a closed meeting the following guidelines must be met:
 - a. All motions, resolutions, and votes, passed during the closed meeting must be made public immediately after the meeting is opened.
 - b. The Senate may invite non-Senate members to remain by a majority vote.
5. The voting membership of the Student Senate consists of all Senator positions that are held by an eligible person as defined in the Rensselaer Union Constitution and these By-laws.
6. A quorum shall consist of 2/3 of the voting membership of the Student Senate.
7. The Student Senate shall use the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order as their parliamentary authority for any procedures not specified in these By-laws.
8. Meetings may be called by one-quarter of the voting membership of the Senate or by the Grand Marshal. The requesting Senators may name a Senator other than the Grand Marshal to run the meeting. The Grand Marshal must be notified of any meeting. The person running that meeting is responsible for informing all Senators at least twenty-four hours prior to the meeting as to the date, time, place, and purpose of the meeting. Normal procedures for running this meeting must be followed.

Article VI: Legislation

1. Legislation may be introduced for consideration by the Senate in any meeting through the following ways:
 - a. As a proposal, report, or recommendation of a standing committee or subcommittee.
 - b. As a proposal from the Graduate Council or the Undergraduate Council.
 - c. As a proposal from the Interfraternity Council, the Panhellenic Council or the Independent Council.
 - d. As a proposal sponsored by two or more Senators.
2. All proposed legislation must be submitted to the Grand Marshal who will, when appropriate, assign the legislation to the applicable committee for study and recommendation. In some cases this will occur on the Senate floor to ensure proper consideration within committee first and to allow business to proceed.
3. Legislation shall be submitted to the Grand Marshal no later than one week prior to the meeting during which it is to be motioned and discussed. Legislation that is proposed by two or more Senators may be submitted and discussed within the same meeting.
4. The Student Senate By-Laws shall not be suspended unless such an action has been approved by a 2/3 vote at the meeting prior.
5. The Student Senate may not unilaterally repeal a by-law of another body.
6. Where not provided for in the Union Constitution, it shall require a majority vote of to approve a constitution or set of by-laws submitted to it by another body.
7. The Student Senate shall keep a record of all legislation that comes into consideration. To ensure accurate record keeping and to provide context for posterity, the Senate shall include any supplementary materials that are relevant to the recorded legislation.

Article VII: Rules for Voting and Debate

1. Senators are the only members of the Student Senate that have the right to vote on any official business of the Senate.
2. During meetings, Officers of the Senate and Committee Chairs have the right to the following:
 - a. Speak in any debate on a main motion, subsidiary motion, or any other debatable motion.
 - b. Make any privileged motion.
 - c. They may not second a privileged motion or vote on its passage.
 - d. Make a Point of Order or Request for Information.
3. The Grand Marshal may rule any motion out of order. The Grand Marshal's decision may be overruled by a 2/3 vote of the Senate.
4. The Grand Marshal may vote to break a tie; the Grand Marshal is permitted to abstain. If a tie remains, the motion fails.
5. All voting shall be by a show of hands, unless the Grand Marshal, or any Officer, Senator, or Committee Chair requests a roll call.
 - a. In a show of hands, the Grand Marshal will first request the number in favor, then the number opposed. The Grand Marshal will then announce the vote, and whether the motion has passed, unless there is a tie vote, in which case the Grand Marshal may announce their vote and then the outcome.
 - b. If a roll call vote is requested, the Secretary will read the names of the Senators alphabetically by surname.
 - c. Each Senator may vote "yes", "no", or "pass" in which case their name will be read again after the first completion of the roll call. At this time the Senator must vote, or they must abstain from the vote.
 - d. The roll call may not be determined, nor any result announced, until all the Senators present have voted or abstained.
6. A Senator must abstain from a vote on approval of minutes if the Senator was not present at that meeting.

Article VIII: Removals

1. Good cause for removal, as provided in Article IX, Section 2 of the Rensselaer Union Constitution, shall be defined as follows:
 - a. Two or more unexcused absences from meetings of the Student Senate.
 - b. The failure of a member of the Student Senate to conscientiously fulfill the duties of office, as defined in Article V of these By-Laws.
2. Senators with more than three unexcused absences from a committee of which they are a member may be removed from the committee. An absence may be excused by the Committee Chair, whose decision may be appealed to the Grand Marshal.
3. No removal vote shall be taken unless an impeachment vote has been passed by a majority vote at the previous meeting. An impeachment vote may be brought forth at the request of the organization which the Senator represents, or at the request of two or more Senators.

Article IX: Committees

1. The Chair of each Student Senate standing committee except the Rules and Elections Committee shall be nominated by the Grand Marshal and confirmed by a majority vote. Committee chairs serve at the pleasure of the Grand Marshal. A Vice Chair may be selected by the Chair with the counsel of the Grand Marshal.
2. Committee membership shall be open to all members of the Rensselaer Union.
 - a. Any committee member who is not a member of the Senate must be approved by the Committee Chair before receiving membership in the committee.
 - b. Members of a Committee serve at the pleasure of the Committee Chair and of the Grand Marshal, and may be removed at any time for good cause.
 - c. Good cause for removal includes, but is not limited to, neglecting the duties of membership, failure to adhere to the rules of order during meetings, or failure to adhere to these bylaws when conducting business in the name of the committee.
 - i. Members are expected to dutifully attend meetings of the committee and complete committee assignments within reasonable deadlines.
3. All committees shall be empowered to create subcommittees as necessary to aid them in performing their functions. The committee chair shall be an ex-officio member of any such created or existing subcommittee.
4. All committees shall meet twice per month during regular academic periods to work on projects, investigate pending legislation, and to consider proposals for new legislation. Attendance shall be recorded at all committee meetings and submitted to the Grand Marshal. All committee chairs shall report on any open projects within their committees' purview at each Senate meeting.
5. Each committee chair shall be held accountable for their committee's performance.
6. During meetings, each Committee shall follow rules of order determined at the discretion of its Chair. Such rules of order shall be made public immediately following their adoption and before any official committee business may commence.

7. The Rules and Elections Committee:

- a. Consists of a maximum of ten members:
 - i. The Chair, one representative from each of the Graduate Council, Undergraduate Council, Executive Board, Judicial Board, Interfraternity Council, Panhellenic Council, and the Independent Council, one member-at-large appointed by the Chair, and one member-at-large from the voting membership of the Student Senate appointed by the Grand Marshal.
 - ii. Each of these groups shall appoint its own representative by the end of the second full week of the fall semester. Should any of the memberships, with the exception of the chair, not be appointed by the required time or be vacant for more than three weeks, the chair shall have the option of appointing a member-at-large. The group responsible for appointing a person to that membership shall forfeit its right to do so until the following semester.
 - iii. All members must be Activity Fee paying students. All members, with the exception of the chair, shall serve through the end of the spring semester or until replaced, whichever comes first. The chair shall serve until replaced.
 - iv. Quorum for the Rules and Elections Committee shall be 2/3 of the total membership rounded up to the nearest person. The Rules and Elections Committee shall not meet unless a Senator is appointed to the committee.
 - v. A member of the Rules and Elections Committee who is a candidate for Grand Marshal, President of the Union or joins a political party or is a candidate assistant, as defined by the Student Senate or the Rules and Elections Committee, will automatically be removed from the Rules and Elections Committee.
- b. Its duties shall include the following:
 - i. The Committee shall be responsible for reviewing and approving the language of all constitutional amendments that come before the Senate for approval.
 - ii. It shall keep a register of all by-laws and constitutions of student organizations.
 - iii. It shall investigate and report on the constitutional implications of all pending legislation.
 - iv. It shall be responsible for properly publicizing, conducting and supervising all elections for officers and representatives of the governing bodies of the Union. It shall submit a report of the election results to the Student Senate following the election.
 - v. It shall, at the discretion of the Student Senate, supervise or investigate any other campus election.
 - vi. It shall, at the discretion of the Student Senate investigate and report on any campus student government election.
 - vii. It shall draft and submit to the Student Senate for approval rules for the conduct of the elections and their publicity.
 - viii. It shall prepare and submit to the Judicial Board and Senate reports on all contested elections, which it investigates.
- c. Shall have the following standing subcommittee:
 - i. The Grand Marshal Week Committee shall be responsible for the planning and implementation of all activities that are not directly connected with elections during Grand Marshal Week.
- d. The Chair shall appoint a vice chair from the voting membership of the committee. Duties of the Vice Chair shall include assisting the Chair in the day-to-day administration of the committee. In the event that the Chair is absent or unable to run a meeting the Vice Chair shall have the authority to chair a meeting. At such a meeting, quorum shall be 2/3 the voting membership, less the Vice Chair. The Vice Chair shall not have a vote at any meeting that they chair. In the event of the resignation or extended absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall assume the duties of the Chair, until the Chair is able to resume their duties, or until a new chair has been selected by the next elected Senate, following Grand Marshal Week elections.

8. The Student Government Communications Committee shall be a standing committee of the Student Senate and the Executive Board. It shall be responsible for promoting the initiatives and activities of the Student Senate and Executive Board.

- a. Its Chair shall serve at the pleasure of the Grand Marshal and the President of the Union, and shall meet with the Grand Marshal, the President of the Union, or their representatives at least twice a month to maintain cohesion and communication between their respective bodies.
- b. Its Chair may act as the spokesperson for the Senate and Executive Board at the discretion of the Grand Marshal and the President of the Union, responsible for press releases and other communication with media outlets.
- c. Its membership shall include at least one member of the Senate and at least one member of the Executive Board.
- d. It shall make use of a variety of communication media to publicize the initiatives and activities of the Senate and the Executive Board.
 - i. To this end, it shall coordinate with other Senate Committees to promote current projects and initiatives.
 - ii. It shall provide the student body with accurate information on the activities, initiatives, and projects of the Senate.
- e. It shall make efforts to ascertain the concerns of students, and the opinions of students regarding matters under discussion in the Senate and the Executive Board.
 - i. It may solicit student concerns and opinions through public relations initiatives.
 - ii. It shall inform other Committees of student concerns pertaining to the purview of each Committee.
- f. It shall foster, among the student body, informed discussion of issues currently facing the Senate and the Executive Board.
 - i. It shall, when necessary, create and distribute informational media in conjunction with its ongoing public relations initiatives.
 - ii. It shall create and maintain platforms for student inquiry into the activities of the Senate and the Executive Board.
 - iii. It may coordinate publication of electronic media with the Web Technologies Committee when necessary.
 - iv. It shall attempt to create an open dialogue between the student body and the Institute Administration through meetings and public relations events.
- g. It shall promote cohesion among members and Committees of the Senate and the Executive Board.
 - i. To this end, it shall promote and facilitate internal communications of the Senate and the Executive Board.

9. The Academic Affairs Committee shall be responsible for initiatives and legislation pertinent to academic curricula, academic advising, post-graduate success, the Registrar's office, and student-faculty relations.

- a. It shall assess the state of Rensselaer academic courses.
 - i. To this end, it shall coordinate with the Senate Communications Group during outreach programs to ascertain student opinions and concerns regarding academics.
 - ii. It shall work with relevant organizations within the Institute to identify areas for improvement regarding academics.
- b. It shall attempt to maintain a diverse membership that represents various academic departments.
 - i. It shall attempt to include graduate and undergraduate representation on the committee.

- ii. It shall inform the Senate and the student body of any changes in academics at the Institute.
10. The Union Annual Report Committee shall be a standing committee of the Student Senate and Union Executive Board.
 - a. It shall be chaired by the Senate-Executive Board Liaison.
 - b. It shall work to produce the Union Annual Report, which will detail the Union Activity Fee for both graduate and undergraduate students; this report will be presented to the Student Senate for approval.
 - c. Its membership shall consist of the Director of the Union, as a nonvoting member; the Business Administrator, as a nonvoting member; the President of the Union as a non-voting ex-officio member; at least one graduate member of the Student Body; and at least one undergraduate member of the Student Body.
 11. The Facilities and Services Committee shall be responsible for initiatives and legislation pertinent to the facilities and services of the Institute, notably those under the Administration Division.
 - a. It shall take steps to gather information on the state of services and facilities.
 - i. To this end, it shall coordinate with the Senate Communications Group during outreach programs to ascertain student opinions and concerns on the state of services and facilities.
 - ii. It shall, when necessary, address these concerns and coordinate its efforts with proper Institute personnel.
 - iii. It shall, from time to time, inspect the overall state of facilities and services and report its findings to the Senate.
 - b. It shall take steps to remedy student concerns regarding facilities and services.
 - i. To this end, it shall be responsible for contacting proper Institute personnel to discuss practical solutions to issues regarding facilities and services.
 - ii. It shall attempt to implement these solutions, with the support of the Institute and the Senate.
 12. The Student Life Committee shall be responsible for initiatives and legislation pertinent to the Office of Student Life portfolio.
 - a. It shall advise the administration on issues related to student life, and work with them in addressing these issues.
 - b. It shall work and collaborate with, the administration and other organizations to initiate new programs that improve the experience of students.
 - c. It shall address issues pertaining to student rights and responsibilities as they arise.
 - d. It shall sustain and improve relations between the community at large and Rensselaer.
 - e. It shall provide students with opportunities to interact with the Troy community.
 13. The Senate Web Technologies Committee shall be responsible for promoting and implementing the initiatives of the Rensselaer Student Senate.
 - a. It shall deliver information concerning the Senate's current projects, its members, and past projects.
 - b. It shall contribute to Union homepage development efforts and ensure other student government websites are updated and consistent with the needs of the student body.
 - c. Shall be responsible for historical cataloging of documents and information for a digital Senate archive.
 - d. Shall be chaired by the Senate's Chief Information Officer.

. Article X: Appointments

1. The Grand Marshal shall make any appointments not specified by these or the by-laws of other respective boards.
2. Appointments made by the Grand Marshal must be reported to the Senate at its next scheduled meeting, or will be automatically nullified.

Article XI: Amendments

1. The procedure to amend the By-Laws shall be as follows:
 - a. All proposed amendments to the Student Senate Bylaws must be proposed in their entirety and passed by a 2/3 vote of the Senate.
 - b. The Rules and Elections Committee Chair shall advise the Senate on the consistency of any proposed amendment with the Union Constitution and any other governing documents.
2. The Senate By-Laws shall be amended as necessary so as not to be in conflict with outside laws, the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Corporate Charter, the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute By-Laws, the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Student Bill of Rights, the Rensselaer Union Constitution, and decisions of the Board of Trustees of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.
3. These bylaws shall be modified to reflect an approved amendment by either:
 - a. Inserting new clauses into these bylaws at their appropriate places, or
 - b. Removing clauses from these bylaws.

Article XII: Succession

1. If the Grand Marshal is removed from office, has an extended leave of absence, or is otherwise unable to fulfill the duties or requirements of office, then the Vice Chair shall assume the duties of the Grand Marshal as Acting Chair of the Senate.
2. The Acting Chair of the Senate assumes the duties of Grand Marshal until such a time that a meeting of the Senate can be called. The first and only order of business of such a meeting shall be the selection of a new Grand Marshal.
3. All nominations for the position of Grand Marshal must be motioned and seconded by the members of the Senate. The nomination processes shall be overseen by the Chair of the Judicial Board.
 - a. All nominees must be Senators as defined in these Bylaws.

4. In the case of multiple nominees, an appointment for Grand Marshal shall be selected by a series of simple majority votes.
 - a. If there are two nominees, a vote shall be taken, and the nominee with a simple majority shall be named the appointment for Grand Marshal.
 - b. If there are three or more nominees, a series of votes shall be taken.
 - i. In each vote, the nominee with the least number of votes shall be removed from consideration, and only the remaining nominees shall be considered in the next vote.
 - ii. This series of votes shall continue until a single nominee remains, and that nominee shall be named the appointment for Grand Marshal.
5. The nominee who is named the appointment for Grand Marshal must be approved by a $2/3$ majority vote of the Senate. If the appointment is not approved by a $2/3$ majority vote of the Senate, a new process of nominations begins.
6. Once a new Grand Marshal has been named, the Acting Chair of the Senate shall relinquish the responsibilities of office to the new Grand Marshal.
7. The new Grand Marshal may appoint new officers of the Senate and committee chairs.