



January 30, 2018

To the RPI Community:

A recent email from Professor Chris Bystroff, responding to the press coverage of renewrensselaer.org, was distributed to the faculty and forwarded to all alumni by Vice President for Institute Advancement Graig Eastin.

In the email, Prof. Bystroff dismissed the concerns raised by members of the RPI community and directly accused alumni of racism, sexism, and even heightism.

Students and alumni have asked the Jackson Administration to engage in open, honest, and productive dialogue. Instead, the Institute's most recent action was to pass along a message accusing alumni and students of racism, sexism, and heightism. We are deeply disappointed in the assertions shared in this email. Let us be blunt: race, sex, and height have not been and are not factors in any of the concerns raised by Save the Union and our colleagues at Renew Rensselaer. Furthermore, the issues we are raising extend well beyond the Office of the President. Our concerns revolve around the mismanagement of the Institute, the actions taken to usurp control of the Student Union, the aggressive crackdown on student free speech, and the campus culture of fear. We are deeply concerned about actions taken by multiple members of the administration and the Board of Trustees.

For many years, students and alumni have reached out to the administration and Trustees to address their concerns. Recently, alumni like Renew Rensselaer met with the Board on multiple occasions, only to have their concerns rebuffed. Rather than working with alumni, the administration, by sharing Prof. Bystroff's email, has chosen to villainize its alumni donors for voicing their opposition.

Prof. Bystroff was absolutely correct on one point. We should address our concerns within the RPI community. Instead of insulting those who disagree with us, we continue to welcome, and hope for, the opportunity to engage in useful dialogue with any faculty, staff, alumni, students, administrators, and Trustees.

Sincerely,
Save the Union