

## RPI Student Protesters Respond to Potential Administration Takeover

**TROY, N.Y. - April 5, 2016 - [PRLog](#)** -- Students behind the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute "Save Our Union" movement continue to oppose the administrative changes that have been undermining their student union organization for several years. In response to the President's Spring Town Meeting, which took place last Wednesday in the midst of a protest that drew an estimated 1,000 students and faculty members, they released a [rebuttal](#) highlighting the perceived major points and their responses.

This comes in the aftermath of a [recent](#) Department of Education requirement that RPI post a bond after failing a review of income, debt, and assets—a move its president, Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson, called "an unfortunate thing, which is putting Rensselaer in a basket with some, you know, for-profit institutions." Declining to further discuss student concerns about the Union, Jackson opted to pass the concerns directly to Rensselaer's Board of Trustees, which is expected to take some action shortly. Nearly 800 alumni, lead by dozens of former leaders of the Union, have signed a [letter](#) protesting any unilateral action.

Students at RPI, however, are also concerned about things other than Rensselaer's financial state. Unease for the diminishing autonomy of the student-run Rensselaer Union followed administrative actions that removed student input from the rules that govern them, took away their say in athletics funding, deprived them of appointing the Union's director, and generally removed them from the operations of their building and input on campus policy. Students and alumni say that these events seem to reflect a nationwide trend of college management becoming ever more authoritarian and intolerant of critical speech, with little regard for independent action or thinking from students or faculty.

In an effort to stave off the Institute administration's unwanted advances, students hung several thousand posters around campus to protest the actions of Vice President of Student Life Dr. Frank Ross and released an extensive [statement](#) accusing him of deception, dishonesty, and censorship in conducting student affairs. In addition to postering, students mass-distributed a [letter](#) overnight to the faculty, making their case and asking for ongoing support to preserve shared governance. Due to widespread fears of retaliation, only a handful of faculty attended the Faculty Senate meeting scheduled for the next day.

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About the Rensselaer Union

The Rensselaer Union recently celebrated its 125th anniversary as a student-run union after being founded in 1890. It is one of one of the few student-run unions in America and provides study facilities, dining areas, and meeting rooms for nearly 200 clubs and organizations. It is funded entirely by a tax and budget that student representatives draft and approve each year. For more information about the Union and student governance issues, please visit <http://union.rpi.edu> and <http://www.savetheunion.xyz>, respectively.

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