

Subject **The Rensselaer Union**
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To The Rensselaer Community <community-announcements@lists.rpi.edu>
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Rensselaer

September 20, 2017

To: The Rensselaer Community
From: LeNorman J. Strong, Interim Vice President, Student Life
Re: The Rensselaer Union

During the past few days there have been a few articles in various media describing the processes underway for the selection of a new director for the Rensselaer Union. As you know, ours is one of the oldest student union organizations in the United States with a celebrated 127 years of student leadership and governance since its founding in 1890. I am writing to let you know that we support the Rensselaer Union, its student leadership, and the importance of its work. We respect and want to preserve student governance of the Union. On Monday, I attended the Student Senate meeting and reaffirmed our commitment to work collaboratively with student leadership and to support their efforts to respond to issues important to life on campus for students.

President Shirley Ann Jackson has been, and remains, firmly committed to student engagement as a vital aspect of the Rensselaer student experience. Dr. Jackson established the student experience as a cornerstone priority when she became President of Rensselaer; she has not wavered in her commitment. We all recognize and appreciate that we have a student union that is founded upon 127 years of student leadership, collaboration, and a partnership between student leaders and our academic and administrative staff. We support those principles which aim to strengthen our partnership, not diminish it.

I want to underscore my personal commitment to student governance and to the partnership we have with student leaders. It is this fundamental partnership

between students and administrative staff that enables us to build success upon success. As a former student union director myself, having served more than 21 years as a director on campuses such as Cornell and George Washington University, I know and believe that the Union and its student leadership are important elements of a great student experience. Based on my executive leadership role supporting the historic Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Student Union at the University of California Berkeley, and now as Interim Vice President for Student Life at Rensselaer, I am confident we are employing the best student life practices in higher education today. I look forward to our working together to ensure a Rensselaer culture of collaboration, partnership, and student engagement that enhances our campus experience.