



MOTION

Rensselaer Union 55th Student Senate

Date: September 9, 2024 | Motion #4

WHEREAS College campuses across the nation face substantial issues of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and sexual assault¹;

WHEREAS The Institute's 2023 Annual Security and Fire Safety Report states that nine forcible Sex Offenses occurred on or adjacent to campus in 2022 (the most recent year reported). Six of these offenses were rape, and five of those six occurred in on-campus residential facilities²;

WHEREAS The Institute requires all students to complete training regarding federal and campus Title IX policy and procedures, sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, consent, bystander intervention, and related resources, as mandated by federal and state laws³;

WHEREAS The aforementioned trainings are exclusively offered through online modules;

WHEREAS the Student Health Center and the Counseling Center developed Rensselaer's Bystander Intervention Training in 2013 to address six common areas of risky behavior among college students: substance abuse, hazing, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, mental health emergencies, and physical emergencies⁴;

WHEREAS The Student Health Center collaborated with the Division of Student Life in 2018 to develop a Bystander Intervention Peer Education Program to train undergraduate students on the aforementioned six risky behaviors in addition to "diversity/equity/inclusion, campus policies and procedures, on- and off-campus resources, and facilitation skills", which focused "on developing the skills to actively recognize and safely intervene where high-risk behaviors are present"⁴;

WHEREAS Trainings through the Bystander Intervention Peer Education Program have not occurred since the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020;

¹ <https://www.aauw.org/resources/research/crossing-the-line-sexual-harassment-at-school/>

² <https://rpi.app.box.com/s/vui8s3z7i8uz4oiyvscg7f2nekvd8>

³ <https://info.rpi.edu/dean-students/09/01/2021/required-sexual-misconduct-prevention-training-module>

⁴ <https://info.rpi.edu/sites/default/files/Rensselaer%20Biennial%20Report%20Jan.%202018%20-%20Jan.%202020.pdf>

WHEREAS For student clubs and organizations to receive bystander intervention training, they currently must take the initiative to email the Student Health Center's Office of Health Promotions to request it⁵;

WHEREAS New York State Education Law §6447(6), which went into effect July 1, 2016, states that all colleges and universities must require that, in addition to completing the training that is required for all students⁶, "each student leader and officer of student organizations recognized by or registered with the institution, as well as those seeking recognition by the institution, complete training on domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, or sexual assault prevention prior to receiving recognition or registration"⁷;

WHEREAS Bystander Intervention Training and Title IX training used to be required for "all officers of organizations classified by the Union" and "all officers of a newly forming organization, according to *Rensselaer Union Guidelines and Procedures*, § 7.4, March 2022. Topics of the Bystander Intervention Training included "domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, sexual assault prevention", and Title IX Training topics included "how Rensselaer responds to allegations of the preceding." Should a Union recognized or affiliated organization fail to attend either of the two required trainings, their funds were frozen (if Union funded) and they were barred from using Union meeting spaces and other Union resources⁸;

WHEREAS The most recent version of the *Rensselaer Union Guidelines and Procedures*, updated by the Rensselaer Union Executive Board in December 2023, does not include any mention of the Bystander Intervention Training requirement or the Title IX Training requirement that were included in the previous versions⁹;

WHEREAS The 54th Student Senate made recommendations to the Institute in November 2023 regarding student reports of "a campus climate¹⁰ that is prone to unsafe situations and sexual misconduct" and a lack of adequate training, requesting that Title IX training for incoming students be conducted in person and requesting additional bystander intervention training for student leaders¹¹;

⁵ <https://studenthealth.rpi.edu/list-services/office-health-promotion>

⁶ <https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/article-129-b-guidance.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/EDN/6447>

⁸ <https://rpi.box.com/s/f7o2o4m02qqaqi5ydx8v33m5stt3pzn>

⁹ <https://rpi.box.com/s/lf6gtcvea59rbsd1ofys4ny1keevdwsn>

¹⁰ <https://rpi.app.box.com/v/CampusClimateSurveySummary>

¹¹ https://docs.google.com/document/d/1B757V66Cso_LiJEddewslwOJROd3oiBhW90liyv2RA

WHEREAS The Student Senate believes that, beyond the legal requirement, the additional bystander intervention and Title IX training for student leaders will positively affect the membership of the Union, creating a safer environment on campus;

WHEREAS The Student Senate is empowered as the legislative branch of the Union, with power of initiative over all areas that affect the Union and the ability to set policy;

It shall hereby be the policy of the Rensselaer Student Union that:

SECTION 1. All student leaders are required to attend additional Title IX and bystander intervention training on an annual basis.

SECTION 2. Student leaders shall be defined as:

- (a) Leadership of all Union organizations defined in the Rensselaer Union Constitution.
 - (i) At a minimum, this shall include all officer positions defined by the organization in their bylaws or in the Rensselaer Union Constitution. Union organizations may elect to include additional members in this definition, should it be relevant to their role.
- (b) Leadership of Union Clubs.
 - (i) The Rensselaer Union Executive Board shall be the sole body responsible for:
 - 1. Determining the definition of leadership of Union clubs – accounting for relevant sections of Union and Institute policy, state and federal law –, which shall be applicable only to this policy.
 - 2. Communicating this requirement to Union club leadership;
 - 3. Tracking this requirement; and
 - 4. Determining when completion of this requirement has been met.
- (c) This definition shall only be used for the purpose of this policy and shall not be applied elsewhere in the Union.

SECTION 3. Additional Title IX and bystander intervention training shall be defined as Title IX and bystander intervention training offered by the Institute to the student body besides that which is already required for all students.

- (a) At a minimum, this training shall include domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, or sexual assault prevention, as is mandated by New York state law.
 - (i) This training shall strive to address the topics that were previously offered during bystander intervention training for student leaders, which includes substance abuse; hazing; sexual misconduct and harassment; Title IX policies and procedures; intimate partner violence; mental health emergencies; physical emergencies; diversity, equity, and inclusion; campus policies and procedures; on and off campus resources; and facilitation skills to actively recognize and safely intervene in high risk situations.⁴
- (b) At the beginning of each academic year, the Director of the Union, their assistants, representatives of the Rensselaer Union Executive Board, and representatives of the Student Senate shall collaborate to identify and coordinate such a training program with the Institute.
 - (i) If no such training can be successfully identified, then sections (1) and (2) of this policy shall not apply for the academic year.
 - 1. In this case, the Director of the Union, their assistants, representatives of the Rensselaer Union Executive Board, and representatives of the Student Senate shall endeavor to make such training available for the following year.
- (c) This definition shall only be used for the purpose of this policy and shall not be applied elsewhere in the Union.

SECTION 4. No Union organization shall impose any penalties if student leaders fail to meet these requirements during the 2024-2025 academic year.

SECTION 5. This policy may be cited as the “Rensselaer Student Union 2024 Title IX and Bystander Intervention Requirement”, or “Union Title IX and Bystander Intervention Requirement”.

So MOVED BY

The Student Life Committee

Passed 6-0-1 on September 9, 2024

VOTE

12-00-00

PASSES | FAILS

And Presented By

Ria Massoni

Student Life Committee Chair

