



RPI
—
GC

2023-24

**GRADUATE
COUNCIL**
TERM REPORT



RPI Graduate III Council

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01 Preface: Letter

Dear fellow Grads,

Counting roughly 1,100 grads, we are a quite small and heterogeneous community at RPI. Some departments have as few as a handful of students; the path to a Ph.D. is often not communication-intensive. The consequence of this experience is often a lack of peer support, resulting in: a) reduced resilience to some of the recent ‘natural disasters’ and, b) a collective short-term memory loss: much of the graduate know-how vanishes from the Institute with us as we graduate, leaving incoming generations of students to go through similar, repetitive trial/error struggles.

Within the Rensselaer Union, student representation has been focused on the undergraduate cohort; only one out of the 158 Grand Marshals was a Ph.D. student. Thus, graduate advocacy has rested primarily on the 15 Graduate Council members. Not only has it been challenging for the Council to attend to all aspects of our community properly, but it has also been fragile in that just several generations of inactivity could send us back to the Stone Age. Thus, my goals for the 2023-24 term were:

- Within the Council, create sustainable, easy-to-maintain standards of operation.
- Within the graduate community, rather than aiming for a ‘one-size-fits-all’ solution, embrace our diversity and strengthen peer support of graduate cohorts on campus, moving towards a federation as a model of government. This involves empowering Departmental Organizations in their function as microhabitats of scientific communities, which enable students to connect within their department, as well as to their faculty, alumni, students from other departments, and external experts relevant to their field.
- Within the Institute, build relationships with its leadership, administration, staff, and faculty so as to better advocate for and progress toward a more productive and healthy working environment.
- Within the Rensselaer Union, achieve a more pronounced graduate representation.

Hopefully, our report shows how much the Council has worked, unpaid, on many projects benefiting our community, while still having to do research, and in some cases also TA work. Should you see any of its members on campus, please make sure to show them that you value their time (suggested methods are either a hug or a firm handshake). With all of our progress, graduate culture remains a house of cards that easily collapses if left unattended. A healthy cultural state is possible only if multiple generations of students build on top of each other.

Is the Council worth the commitment? Being an international Ph.D. student with a family (my wife and our five children), I understand that adding another item to a graduate calendar can be daunting. However, having served in the RPI Student Government for three and a half years (two of my children were born during that period) as Graduate Senator, Graduate Council Vice-President, and President, I still wish to have joined the Council sooner. My deepest gratitude goes to my family, my advisor Jim Handler, and former Dean of Graduate Education Stanley Dunn for enduring this, and finally to my Council for being the team I will be dreaming of being part of again.

Alexander ‘Sasha’ Lutsevich
RPI Graduate Council President '23-'24



02 Graduate Council Internal

During the first stages of our term, our Council has undergone extensive internal reforms, with the goal of creating a reliable and sustainable infrastructure to use as a foundation for the future. This included revisions to:

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Using Discord, we designed a communication platform structured for efficient management of a large number of concurrent projects, outreach to graduate organizations around campus, and maintaining relationships with Graduate Council alumni. We restructured our General Body Meetings to focus on information sharing and communication of broader goals while relegating the work of individual projects to smaller dedicated working groups.

The screenshot shows the RPI Graduate Council homepage. It features a red header bar with the text "GRADUATE RESOURCES". Below this are several sections: "OFFICE OF GRADUATE EDUCATION" with a circular seal, "GRAD WIKI" with a GitHub logo, and "RESEARCH TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES SYMPOSIUM" with a photo of a modern building. A sidebar on the left lists "RPI Student Government" and "Graduate Council" under "Student Senate". At the bottom, there is a "GRAD COUNCIL CALENDAR" with a Google Calendar view for May 2024.

05/08/24 Excerpt of the GC homepage

[1] <https://sg.rpi.edu/graduate-council>

[2] https://www.instagram.com/rpi_graduate.council/

[3] https://linktr.ee/rpi_graduate.council

Projects

This database houses all information relates to projects undertaken by the Graduate Council.

Project name	Status	Dates	Completion
Olympics	Planning		0%
Budget Survey	Planning		60%

Project name	Status	Dates	Completion
GC '23-'24 Report	In Progress		0%
Union	In Progress		100%
Website	In Progress		83.3%
Logistics	In Progress		78.9%
Branding	In Progress		80%
General Activism	In Progress		0%
Literature Access	In Progress		66.7%
Long Term Memory	In Progress		100%
Grad Wiki	In Progress		0%
School Of Engineering Grad Board	In Progress		0%
Student Senate Survey	In Progress		100%
Housing Student Liaisons	In Progress		0%

05/08/24 Project database of our GC Notion account

WEB PRESENCE

We re-designed the [Graduate Council webpage](#) [1], boosting traffic to the Student Government website. It now allows students to check details of upcoming events and photos, and access the graduate event calendar. It also functions as a hub for graduate resources, like the student-compiled Grad Wiki and Research Tools & Techniques Symposium (see section 'Graduate Community'). We are now on [Instagram](#) [2], to which we post updates regularly. To publish our web assets (e.g. surveys, RSVPs), we use [Linktree](#) [3], advertised through a QR code.

PROCESSES STANDARDIZATION

Using [Notion](#) [4], we developed and optimized the logistics necessary for our operations. The scope of this effort covers email services, file management, cloud services, internal and public-facing calendars, scheduling services, and event and project management. Further, we have compiled an extensive internal Wiki documenting our SOPs. These changes make it easier for a larger Council to collaborate easily and support more complex projects.



BRANDING DESIGN

We designed new branding standards and logos that are consistent with those of RPI Strategic Communications and External Relations. These were used for digital purposes (website, posters, QR code), as well as merchandise (stickers, banners, and polo shirts for Graduate Council members to be easily identifiable at public events).



RENSSELAER UNION CONSTITUTION, GRADUATE COUNCIL BYLAWS

During the '22-'23 term, we successfully advocated for an Amendment to the Rensselaer Union Constitution, which increased the number of graduate senators in the Student Senate from six to seven. During the '23-'24 term, we increased the number of Graduate Representative seats on the Council from six to seven, respectively. Further, we revised our Bylaws to use inclusive language through 'they/them' pronouns.



02/12/24 Presentation of the 'GC President Amendment' to the Rensselaer Union Constitution at the Student Senate

[4] <https://www.notion.so/product>

03 Graduate Community

PROGRAMMING

To bring our community closer together, we hosted/sponsored numerous social events for graduate students, with free food and games.

Grad Indoor Picnic

06/17/2023

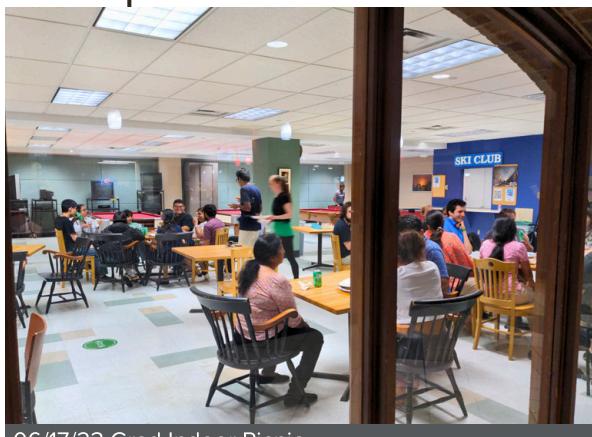
~250 attendees. Location: Union, Games Lounge & Mothers. We provided food and drinks for all. Originally planned as a Picnic on the '86 Field with outdoor games/activities, we re-located the event to indoors due to rain. An unexpected highlight was multiple impromptu musical performances by various graduate students using the pianos standing in Mothers.



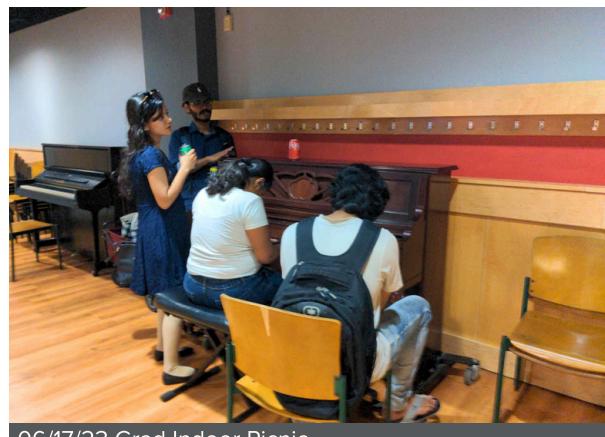
06/17/23 Grad Indoor Picnic



06/17/23 Grad Indoor Picnic



06/17/23 Grad Indoor Picnic



06/17/23 Grad Indoor Picnic

09/30/2023

Grad Union Takeover

~350 attendees. Location: Union, McNeil room. We provided food and drinks for all. This was our second attempt at an outdoor picnic on the '86 Field which was also converted to an indoor event due to bad weather.



09/30/23 Grad Union Takeover



09/30/23 Grad Union Takeover

1st Graduate Town-Hall

~250 attendees. Location: Union, McNeil Room. We provided food and drinks for all. We presented the general aims and current work of the Council to the graduate public, followed by individual introductions of each Council member and presentations of their projects. Finally, we dispersed across the room for small group conversations with attending graduate students.

01/27/2024



01/27/24 1st Graduate Town-Hall



01/27/24 1st Graduate Town-Hall

Big Red Freakout Social for Grads

02/10/2024

~350 attendees. Location: Huston Field House. For the annual 'Big Red Freakout' (the biggest Hockey game of the season), we sponsored entrance tickets for graduate students and their families and worked with the Field House management to set up an area at the Field House during the game for distributing free pizza, soft drinks, and hot cocoa.



02/10/24 Big Red Freakout - Beginning of the line ...



02/10/24 Big Red Freakout - ... leading to pizza & cocoa



02/10/24 Big Red Freakout



02/10/24 Big Red Freakout

We are also in the process of planning additional programming events to be kicked off in the future:

Graduate Olympics: An annual series of semi-serious competitive events between departments, schools, faculty, and/or leadership. The Grand Prize is envisioned to be a wandering trophy to which the current champion would have the honor of adding a physical piece of their choosing. Included disciplines in these events would range from traditionally sportive (e.g., ultimate frisbee, soccer, tug-o-war, chess) to more exotic (e.g., video games, eating contests, jeopardy).

(Bi-)weekly After-Work Graduate Hangouts: Aimed to provide consistent, re-occurring opportunities for graduate students to relax and connect, we are planning to reserve the Game's Lounge in the basement of the Union on Friday evenings and provide food and drinks for graduate students.

FEDERATION

GRADUATE ORGANIZATIONS

We have worked on the creation of departmental graduate organizations across the entire campus, including Lally, Cognitive Science (HASS), Chemistry (Science), Earth and Environmental Sciences (Science), and MANE (Engineering). Establishing these communities is a marathon requiring constant engagement: while forming the Cognitive Science departmental organization is complete and it has been recognized as a Union Affiliated club (see Appendix A), the other processes are still ongoing. Our long-term goal is to ensure that every department has graduate representation.

Further, we have integrated the leaders of 13 existing graduate organizations into our communication platform: Bangladeshi Students Association, Biology/Biochemistry and Biophysics Graduate Council, Biomedical Engineering Graduate Council, Black Graduate Student Association, Chemical Engineering Graduate Council, Cognitive Science Graduate Student Association, Computer Science Graduate Council, Critical Game Design Graduate Representatives, Electrical Computer and Systems Engineering Graduate Council, Graduate Indian Students Association, Graduate Society of Women Engineers, Physics Graduate Council, Science and Technology Studies Graduate Representatives, and Students with Families. We started holding monthly meetings with them, taking place after the graduate leaders meeting with the RPI Leadership (see section ‘Institute Relations’).

SCHOOL BOARDS

Several deans have expressed a desire to connect better with their students. Thus, we are working on establishing Graduate Boards within the Schools of HASS, Science, and Engineering. Their purpose is to serve as a direct line of communication between the School’s graduate community and the School’s Deans. Each of these Boards shall consist of one appointed representative from every graduate departmental organization and a Graduate Council liaison; they shall meet monthly with their Deans. Having discussed this proposal with the Deans, we are now in the final stage of formalizing it.

To better understand the inner workings and structures of different types of Student Government, we connected and met virtually with graduate presidents from peer institutions, e.g. Northeastern, Michigan. While gaining inspiration from them, we also discovered how special our (graduate) Student Government at RPI is.

GRADUATE WIKI: ‘HOW TO NOT SCREW UP GRAD SCHOOL’

Generally, the experience we accumulate during our stay at RPI leaves with us when we graduate, resulting in a lot of repetitive trial/error struggles for incoming student generations. To reduce these and accelerate our progress toward the finish line (i.e., a degree), we have created a community-sourced [Grad Wiki ‘How to Not Screw Up Grad School’](#) [5], aimed at maintaining and sharing knowledge on how to navigate RPI, Troy, and beyond. To either contribute knowledge or help manage & maintain the project, email grad-council+grad-wiki@rpi.edu.

[5] <https://github.com/rpi-graduate-council/grad-wiki>

SPOUSE & CHILD SUPPORT

We advocated for stronger support of students with families, [raising the issue to RPI leadership](#) [6]. At the request of the Dean of Graduate Education Dorit Nevo, we conducted a graduate focus group regarding the challenges of managing a family in graduate school. Several of the resulting recommendations served as a basis for Dean Nevo's later actions, such as extending the pinch-hitter nanny service (previously only available to staff/faculty) to students and offering a limited number of classes to spouses. This is especially helpful for international students whose spouses may not be permitted to work in the United States. For a collection of resources compiled by Dean Nevo, see [OGE's website](#) [7]. Throughout the Summer and Fall of '23, we continued hosting social events for students with families and formed the now Union-recognized (i.e., funded) 'Students with Families' club later that year to further enable peer support and advocacy (see Appendix A: Motions).



04/08/23 Grads with Families for a dinner event at the Union

RESEARCH TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES SYMPOSIUM (FALL '24)

In recent years, there has been a proliferation of research-assisting tools, including (but not limited to) AI-assisted literature search, as well as literature management, note-taking, writing, collaborating, and more. Typically, these tools have to be discovered by trial and error, as they are not yet part of common knowledge or training. Having completed the format, schedule, and talk content, we are currently in the final planning stages of organizing the 'Research Tools and Techniques' forum by grads for grads to share knowledge of the tools we have discovered while being at RPI. This is planned to be a campus-wide event in Fall '24, with invitations going out to undergraduates, staff, and faculty.

[6] https://youtu.be/tSjQ2oIHD_M?t=2670

[7] <https://graduate.rpi.edu/incoming-students>

04 Institute Relations

One of the Graduate Council's primary responsibilities is representing the interests of graduate students and advocating for their needs. One of the main emphases of this term was advocacy work through actively building and maintaining relationships across the Institute.

OUR CURRENT CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

- **Meeting w/ President, Provost, and Vice Presidents**
 - *Participants:* all graduate leaders
 - *Frequency, Duration:* monthly, 1 hour
 - *Comments:* Initiated by President Marty Schmidt in March 2023, these meetings have served as a space for the representatives of graduate organizations across campus to discuss any issues they deem fitting, such as stipends, advising relationships, and teaching opportunities.
- **Meeting w/ President and Provost**
 - *Participants:* Graduate Council President
 - *Frequency, Duration:* monthly, 30 minutes
 - *Comments:* These were scheduled on-demand, and a slot was offered either within several days or a week if President Schmidt was traveling
- **Meeting w/ Dean of Graduate Education Dorit Nevo**
 - *Participants:* Graduate Council President and Vice President
 - *Frequency, Duration:* monthly, 1 hour
 - *Comments:* During these meetings, we usually discussed imminent action items
- **Meeting w/ Dean of Graduate Experience Colleen Smith**
 - *Participants:* Graduate Council President and Vice President
 - *Frequency, Duration:* bi-weekly, 1 hour
- **All-Grads Open Conversation w/ President, Provost, Dean of Grad Education**
 - *Participants:* the entire graduate community
 - *Frequency, Duration:* 2x a year, 2 hours

We also invited the following members of the RPI Administration to our regular Grad Council meetings for additional discussion of graduate topics

- Director, Folsom Library Andrew White
- Assoc. Dean of Off-Campus Commons Graham Knowles
- Dean of Graduate Experience Colleen Smith, for discussion of the Graduate Research Symposium, supporting funds for the Graduate Council
- Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education Dorit Nevo
- Provost Rebecca Doerge and President Marty Schmidt

ALUMNI RELATIONS

The Rensselaer Alumni Association represents our Institute's 110,000 alumni. We represented the graduate students at their Board meetings throughout the year, reviving the relationship and discussing with their leadership future pathways of collaboration. This will result in new opportunities for current graduate students, including mentorship and assistance with job placements. Historically, the alumni and graduate communities have been quite disjoint; we aim to expand upon available opportunities as time goes on to support further connecting them. We encourage you to connect with the alumni community through raaconnect.com.



02/10/24 GC President at the RAA Board meeting



02/10/24 RAA Board members at the Big Red Freakout

LIBRARY SERVICES

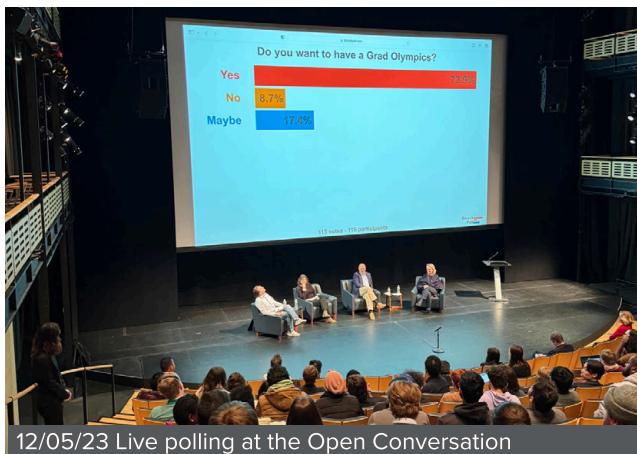
We formed a feedback group of graduate students to facilitate direct conversation with the Folsom Library directors and staff on a variety of issues, including journal access, support for student-friendly academic tools, and other resources offered by the library. In turn, this has enabled the Folsom Library to understand better the needs specific to graduate research and to perform additional outreach to new graduate students. This is an ongoing project to support the library in better serving the needs of the graduate population.



11/09/23 Graduate Feedback Group meets with Folsom Library librarians and management

OPEN CONVERSATION WITH RPI LEADERSHIP

A strong graduate community can only exist with active support from Institute leadership. To discuss the present and future of graduate culture on our campus, we invited President Marty Schmidt, Provost Rebecca Doerge, and Dean of Graduate Education Dorit Nevo to an [Open Conversation with all graduate students](#) at the EMPAC Theater on 12/05/2023, with over 200 graduate student attendees. This first session is intended to introduce RPI leadership to the students. It began with a moderated panel with questions for the guests on their views of RPI graduate culture, followed by an open Q&A. To make the conversation more interactive, we use a live polling service, allowing the audience to vote on questions. To make this possible, the EMPAC Theater had to upgrade its Wireless capacities. Provost Rebecca Doerge sponsored the reception following the event.



We [continued this series](#) on 03/13/2024 in DCC 308, asking graduate students in advance to submit questions and topics they wished to discuss. During this round, we focused on four areas: Institutional Budgeting/Investments, Graduate Stipend, Working Conditions, and Relationship with the Institute. Additionally, for live polling, we used the [Slido](#) [8] online service that allowed the audience to submit and ‘like’ questions in real-time, deciding the course of the conversation. This was followed by an open Q&A. The following food and drinks were again sponsored by the Provost.

After each event, we distributed an exit survey among graduate students and shared their feedback with our guests. These events are unprecedented at our Institution. We hope that they will soon become a strong tradition and serve as a pillar of building a relationship spanning multiple live channels. While we are still experimenting with the format, similar events are sure to continue in the Fall '24 semester. All graduate students are encouraged to attend and contribute to these to ensure that all voices are heard.



[8] <https://www.slido.com>

GRADUATE BUDGET SURVEY

At the Open Conversation with RPI Leadership on 03/13/2024, Dean Dorit Nevo presented the 'basket of goods' model. To better inform this model, we now created and distributed a Graduate Budget Survey via the Student Senate Survey platform. This survey is an exhaustive assessment of the living expenses of RPI graduate students (51-70 questions total, depending on the pathway, 34 of which ask for monetary input). It is split into the following sections: Rent and Utilities, Food and Groceries, Transportation, Healthcare, Student Loans, Technology and Entertainment, Personal Care, and Childcare. As of writing, over 250 graduate students have submitted their responses. The results will be shared with the RPI graduate community at the beginning of Summer '24 and with the RPI administration.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

We have successfully advocated for the Graduate Council to be again represented on the Board of Trustees, becoming a *permanent guest* on the Student Life Committee. At its 12/08/2023 meeting, we presented on graduate experience on campus, as well as the Council's work.

The Rensselaer Board of Trustees is responsible for setting the strategic direction of our Institute, overseeing its finances, and appointing its president. The Board is comprised of leaders from various fields, including business, academia, and public service.

OFF-CAMPUS COMMONS

We worked with the Associate Dean of Off-Campus Commons, Graham Knowles, to address the need for safe, quality housing, to advocate for LGBTQ+ students in order to create a more inclusive campus environment, and to provide feedback on food security on campus. We are continuing to explore whether there is sufficient demand to advocate for a discount laundry facility for off-campus students, as the overwhelming majority of graduate students live off-campus.



10/17/23 Discussion with Graham Knowles on student housing at a regular meeting of the GC

FURTHER POINTS OF ADVOCACY, EVENTS

- We have provided feedback and guidance to the Office of Graduate Education during their revision of *The Graduate Student Supplement to the Rensselaer Student Handbook of Rights & Responsibilities* in mid-2023.
- We brought attention to the rising cost of student health insurance, advocated for a review of our previous insurance plan, and ultimately helped review bids for our current plan.
- We raised awareness about the issue of food insecurity. The Institute has since implemented a free meal-swipe program and established a task force to create an on-campus food pantry to support students in need.
- A healthy student-advisor relationship is fundamental to success in graduate school. We brought attention to issues in current pathways for managing student-advisor disagreements and advocated for their revision. As a consequence, Dean Dorit Nevo created a task force at the beginning of 2024 to work on a 'Student Grievance Policy', with two seats on this task force being allocated to graduate students.
- Working with the 156th Grand Marshal of the Rensselaer Union, Cait Bennett, we volunteered three of our members to serve on the Research, Regional Engagement, and Welcoming & Inclusion Committees for the writing of the [Rensselaer Forward Plan](#) [9] - a 10-year strategic plan for our Institute. All of its five Committees included at least one graduate student. This allowed graduate voices to be part of shaping the future of Rensselaer.
- To thank the Graduate Program Administrators (GPAs) and various staff members on campus for helping us graduate students navigate the highly sophisticated and complex bureaucratic landscape of RPI, we delivered them home-baked goodies and Thank-You cards on 02/09/2024.
- The Graduate Council has been invited to take an active part in the agenda of the RPI Graduate Orientations (Fall '23 and Spring '24), GPA/GPD Meetings (Fall '23 and Spring '24), Faculty Senate General Meeting (Spring '24), as well as the Union Activity Fair (Fall '23), and the Alumni Weekend Activity Fair (Fall '23).
- In preparation for the City of Troy Mayor elections in Fall '23, we have attended the Troy Mayoral Debate and following it, on multiple occasions, discussed with the candidates opportunities of enriching the City's culture by supporting the RPI graduate students.



09/02/24 OGE staff with a 'Thank You' basket from the GC



08/25/23 GC at Grad Orientation with Dean Colleen Smith

[9] <https://president.rpi.edu/renssealaer-forward-plan>

|05 Rensselaer Union

CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT

We drafted an Amendment to the Rensselaer Union Constitution (Student Gov't) to acknowledge the Graduate Council President as '*the spokesperson for the graduate membership of the Union*'. Its purpose was to elevate the Graduate Council President's position since, practically, we have been doing the bulk of the advocacy for our community. Following revisions by members of the Senate, it was unanimously passed by the Student Senate (see Appendix A: Motions) and put forward to a vote by the RPI student body during the GM runoff elections 2024. This vote passed.

As a result of our initiative, the Student Senate drafted a second Amendment to the Rensselaer Union Constitution to elevate the role of the Undergraduate Council President equally, which also passed.

UNION ADMINISTRATION

Following our extensive interactions with the Director of the Union Charlie Potts and discussions of graduate issues on campus, he has taken the initiative to modify the job description of professionals in the Union's administrative roles to explicitly include their role of advocacy and support for graduate students at RPI. These modifications have already been affirmed with the RPI's Division of Human Resources. This is a much-welcome change, as these roles within the Union are often programming focused. Without an explicit check to also meet the graduate needs, there has been a danger of not devoting sufficient resources to our community, which is much smaller than the undergraduate one.

|06 Summary + Outlook

This is a beginning, not an end. The process of community-building is a marathon requiring constant attention; things can fall apart quickly, if not tended to. During our term, we aimed to build a foundation for the future Graduate Council generations to work off. This included creating efficient, scalable internal structures, connections within the graduate community, relationships within the Institute and the Rensselaer Union, as well as a general awareness of graduate needs and pain points within the Institute and the Union. However, bureaucracy has a high inertia; many effects of our discussions with the Institute, such as stipends and working conditions, will take time to surface.

Although we made substantial progress, many of the projects started are still ongoing; some are still in their infancy. The forming of the Departmental Organizations will go well into the next Council's turn as will the organization of the Research Tools & Techniques Symposium, the Graduate Wiki needs student contributions to grow, and the Graduate Olympics event is currently a draft on paper. To get involved, email grad-council@rpi.edu.

07 Acknowledgements

Many of our accomplishments would not have been possible without the support from our advisors, as well as the staff staff/administration of RPI and the Rensselaer Union.

We want to especially thank President Marty Schmidt, Provost Rebecca Doerge, and the Dean of Graduate Education Dorit Nevo for their attention, care, and dedication to our community. Rather than the term being marked as a ‘fight against’, it was a productive ‘working with’ on the improvement of graduate conditions at our Institute. Many parts of our advocacy were enabled through strategic re-orientation and initiatives on the top levels.

Finally, we want to thank the Dean of Graduate Experience Colleen Smith for her marathon of support, advocacy, and sponsoring for as long as any of us remember being here.



Your Graduate Council '23-'24

top row, left to right: Sombuddha Chatterjee, Lily Jade Joyce, Adrian Alicea Roman, Alexander 'Sasha' Lutsevich (President), Julie Barringer (Secretary), Sariah Marth

bottom row, left to right: Vitor Fernandes, Lawrence Hiquiana (Vice President), Inwon Kang, Diyanko Bhowmik (Treasurer)

not in the picture: Isaac Bannerman, Milena Jonas Bem, Aditi Dey Tithi, Elkin Cruz Camacho, Raouf Nacef, Steve Eshiemogie, Jacinta Okpanum, Tiburon Leon Benavides

|08 Appendix A: Motions



Motion # 2

Date: 1/18/2024

I move that the Rensselaer Union Executive Board approve Students with Families to be a Union Recognized Club.

So moved by:

Club Operations Committee

3-0-0

Committee Name

Committee Vote

Verification (chairperson or designee):

Spring Fang

Spring Fang

Signature

Printed Name

13 0 0
For Against Abstaining

Motion: **Passes** / Fails



MOTION

Rensselaer Union 54th Student Senate
Date: February 12, 2024 | Motion #3

WHEREAS The Graduate Council, chaired by the President of the Graduate Council, serves as the main advocacy body for the Graduate students, and

WHEREAS the Grand Marshal remains the chief spokesperson for the entire Union;

The Rensselaer Union 54th Student Senate hereby RESOLVES:

1. To approve the following amendment to the Rensselaer Union Constitution to be placed on the ballot during Grand Marshal Week 2024:

AMENDED: R.U. Const. art. IV, § 4.

The President of the Graduate Council shall be the presiding officer of the Graduate Council and an ex-officio member of all graduate committees.

- a. The President of the Graduate Council shall be regarded as the spokesperson for the graduate membership of the Union.
- b. The President of the Graduate Council shall be elected by the Graduate Council from among its members.
- c. The voting status of the President of the Graduate Council will be determined via the by-laws of the Graduate Council.

So MOVED BY

Alexander "Sasha" Lutsevich

Graduate Senator

AND SECONDED BY

Julie Barringer

Graduate Senator

VOTE

18-00-00

PASSES | FAILS

SIGNED BY

A handwritten signature in black ink that appears to read "Benjamin Viner".

Ben Viner, 157th Grand Marshal



Motion #3

Date: 03/02/2023

I move that the Rensselaer Union Executive Board classify the Cognitive Science Graduate Student Association as a Union Affiliated club, effective immediately.

So moved by:

Club Operations Committee

Committee Name

Verification (chairperson or designee):

Ramesis Yael Munoz-Valverde

Signature

11 0 0
For Against Abstaining

Ramesis Yael Munoz-Valverde

Printed Name

Motion: Passes / Fails

09 Appendix B: Graduate Council Photo Book 2023-24



GRAD COUNCIL INVITES

Provost	President	Head of OGE
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Rebecca W. Doerge

Martin A. Schmidt

Dorit Nevo

to an open conversation with **RPI GRADUATE STUDENTS**

EMPAC Theater
Dec 5th, 5:30pm

reception following

RPI Graduate Council

RSVP for food and seating reservation

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

RPI Graduate Council

GRAD COUNCIL INVITES

RPI LEADERSHIP

PROVOST	PRESIDENT	HEAD OF OGE
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REBECCA W. DOERGE

MARTIN A. SCHMIDT

DORIT NEVO

to the 2nd open conversation with **RPI GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Wed, March 13, 2024
5:30 - 7:30 PM
DCC 308

free food following
RSVP for food & topic suggestions



06/17/23 Graduate Council started the '23-'24 term off with the Summer Indoor Picnic at the Rensselaer Union. Despite the bad weather, there was a huge turnout, and grads and their families had a blast! Good food, good people, good fun!



09/20/23 Graduate Council organized a Union Takeover social for the graduate students, providing free food and drinks as the Fall '23 semester got started!



12/05/23 Graduate Council's first Open Conversation with RPI Leadership, promoting voices of graduate students all the way to the top of RPI.



01/27/24 Graduate Council's 1st Graduate Town Hall at the Rensselaer Union. Council members introduced themselves and shared what they were working on.



02/10/24 Graduate Council providing pizza and hot cocoa to hundreds of graduate students, as well as visiting members of the Rensselaer Alumni Association Board (bottom left) at the Big Red Freakout!



03/13/24 Graduate Council hosting the second Open Conversations with RPI Leadership. We hope for this to soon become a strong tradition in our community!



08/25/23 Graduate Council joining in welcoming new graduate students during the Graduate Orientation Fall '23.



a-c: 09/13/23 More outreach to all students during the Union Resource Fair. d: 01/18/24 Sasha presenting the Students with Families Student Organization to the Union's Executive Board for their approval. e-f: 04/08/23 Providing a fun and safe environment for students with families, allowing them to meet each other and connect!



a-c: 10/13/23 Graduate Council at the groundbreaking event for RPI's Quantum Computer. d-f: 10/03/23 GC members attending the Troy mayoral debate in the EMPAC Concert Hall, learning more about the candidates that will represent them. Following the debate, we had personal discussions with both candidates at Evelyn's Café.



10/18/23 Graduate students enjoying the Graduate Appreciation Day, thanks to Dean Dorit Nevo and Dean Colleen Smith. Also highlighting several departmental activities during that day, which went the extra mile to make the graduate students feel appreciated.



a-d: 02/08/24 - 02/09/24 Sending appreciation and gratitude back to the GPAs with Thank You cards and homemade treats! e-g: 02/09/24 - 02/10/24 Sharing updates on our work and providing input at the Rensselaer Alumni Association Board meeting.



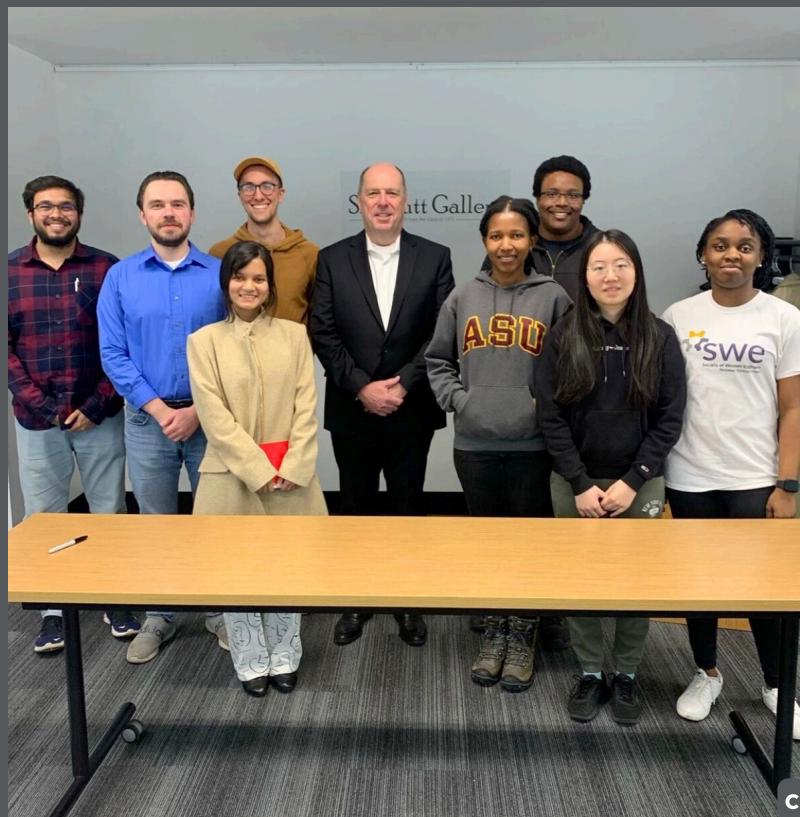
a-b: 04/27/24 Late night planning session for the Research Tools and Techniques Symposium (coming Fall '24). c-e: Our merchandise has arrived. f: 04/12/24 Transition meeting between Council '23-'24 and Council '24-'25.



a



b



c

a,b: 10/15/23 Student Leaders Panel during the Homecoming Weekend c: 03/27/23 Inaugural meeting Graduate Leaders Group, initiated by President Marty Schmidt (in the center of the photo)



a



b



c

Graduate Council meeting and working with various groups/leaders on campus. a: 10/17/23 Assoc. Dean of Off-Campus Commons Graham Knowles visiting a regular meeting. b: 11/09/23 First Graduate Student Focus Group with management and librarians of the Folsom Library. c: 11/14/23 Inviting President Marty Schmidt and Provost Rebecca Doerge to a regular meeting.



a



b



c



d



f



g



h



i

Taking some time to bond and rejuvenate at a potluck. Thanks for hosting, Sasha! a-b: 09/08/23 Graduate Council Retreat Fall '23. c-i: 04/27/24 Graduate Council Retreat Spring '24, to which we also invited the incoming Council '24-'25 and graduate leaders with their families.



We want to end our report with a photo from our Graduate Council Retreat Spring '24: parting Council '23-'24, incoming Council '24-'25, and graduate leaders from our campus + families.

“You cannot have a robust graduate research program without a robust graduate student body.” [1]



[1] 8th Annual RPI Graduate Research Symposium: Keynote with President Martin Schmidt '81 Ph.D., (May 12, 2023). Accessed: May 07, 2024. [Online Video]. Available: <https://mediasite.mms.rpi.edu/mediasite/Channel/3mt/watch/7715eb1c561246759fecbb0758bbe8c1d>