

# Student Life



Rensselaer helps educate “leaders of tomorrow” by providing a robust set of student life programs and services designed to:

- facilitate academic success
- offer education and practice in leadership and followership
- encourage fitness for a lifetime of growth
- connect students to careers and the world of work
- build maturity, an appreciation of cultural diversity and expression, and a set of personal and professional goals and values.

Details on student life and services are offered in *The Rensselaer Planner and Guide to Student Life*, a publication of the Office of the First Year Experience.

## Office of the Dean of Students

**Dean of Students:** Mark Smith

The mission of the Dean of Students Office (DOSO) is to support and assist students in the achievement of personal and academic success with an emphasis on student development, advocacy, rights and responsibilities, safety, and liability. The services and initiatives of this office include counseling, advising, and referral information; policy development and implementation; the approval and processing of excused absences, leaves of absence, and withdrawals and readmission for undergraduate students; and overseeing the Institute judicial system.

**Greek Life** Greek Life provides counseling, advising, and program development for individual social fraternities and sororities, as well as advising the Interfraternity and Panhellenic Councils. In addition, this office coordinates educational programming, reviews and approves applications for recognition, is involved in policy development and implementation, and is committed to positive alumni and community relations.

**Office of Minority Student Affairs** The Office of Minority Student Affairs (OMSA) provides support services—academic, financial, personal, and career—to underrepresented students in the sciences, mathematics, and engineering professions, and/or enrolled through the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP). Support services focus on recruitment (pre-college initiatives), enrollment (summer programs), retention (academic initiatives, counseling, financial aid, and leadership development), and graduation (career development, graduate student support initiatives).

**International Services for Students and Scholars** International Services for Students and Scholars (ISSS) provides educational programs and consulting, arrival information, orientation programs, counseling and advising, and immigration information for Rensselaer’s international community. ISSS also serves as liaison to government agencies, sponsors, and other campus offices. All Rensselaer students and exchange visitors who are not United States citizens or permanent residents must register with ISSS.

**Disability Services for Students** Disability Services for Students (DSS) provides support services and referral information to current or potential Rensselaer students with disabilities. This service assists students in achieving access to the academic, social, and cultural programs offered on campus. Services are available to students whose disabilities may be physical/orthopedic, psychiatric, sensory (hearing, vision), or learning-related (including dyslexia, attention deficit, traumatic brain injury).

**Student Conduct** Regulations governing student conduct and a statement of student rights are contained in *The Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities*. These policies are intended to

help maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning and personal growth and to make the process of education positive and successful for all members of the community. Each student is expected to obtain a copy of the current handbook and to know its contents.

## First-Year Experience

**Dean:** Lisa Trahan

### **The Office of the First-Year Experience**

The Office of the First-Year Experience offers a comprehensive array of programs and initiatives for undergraduate and graduate students, as well as for parents and families that begin before students arrive on campus and continue well beyond their first year. Specifically, the Office of the First-Year Experience sponsors the Navigating Rensselaer orientation program, Family Weekend, Campus Community Service Day(s), the Information and Personal Assistance Center (IPAC), and the Community Advocate Program, along with many other community actions initiatives, programs, and publications designed to help students and families navigate Rensselaer.

### **Student Orientation (SO)**

Student Orientation is designed to aid new students in their transition, integrate them into the life of the Rensselaer community, and introduce these students to the broad opportunities available at Rensselaer. Essential components of the Navigating Rensselaer orientation program include an introduction to academic and student life at the Institute; opportunities for new students to interact with faculty, staff, and continuing students; and the opportunity to meet with an academic adviser and register for classes. The orientation process also includes a component that is designed to provide information to the immediate support group (e.g. parents/guardians, spouse, etc.) who play an important role in the life of each new student.

### **Navigating Rensselaer & Beyond (NRB)**

When students arrive on campus in the fall, it is our hope that they are relatively comfortable with the campus and ready to get involved, connect with classmates, and explore the surrounding community. Navigating Rensselaer & Beyond is a five-day program full of skill-building opportunities, interest-specific activities, and interactive ways to connect with others both on campus and throughout the community.

### **Community Service**

Helping others - that's what community service is all about. Or is it? Community service, through a number of volunteer and service-learning projects, offers participants the opportunity for civic engagement as well as intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth. The Office of the First-Year Experience offers a wide variety of programming for the entire campus to become citizens in the larger community. FYE-sponsored programming includes the America Reads and America Counts tutoring programs in local schools, Tutor Time, the Community Service Fair, monthly blood drives, Community Service Day projects and Commiversity Events, and the Student Appreciation Dinner for Clothe-A-Child.

### **Information and Personal Assistance Center (IPAC)**

IPAC is a resource to the campus community, providing directory and general information. In addition IPAC offers several campus service programs each year designed to enhance the student experience at Rensselaer.

### **Parent and Family Programs**

Parents and families play an integral role in the lives of Rensselaer students. Therefore, the Office of the First-Year Experience continues to offer programs and initiatives including Family Weekend, Parent

Orientation, and other activities that allow families to stay involved and connected to Rensselaer. The Parents of Rensselaer, a parents association open to all parents and family members of undergraduate students, also facilitates the connection of parents with the campus community. Family Weekend, occurring in the fall semester, is a wonderful opportunity for students and their families to spend time together participating in various activities and events on and around campus.

### **Preparing the Global Citizen (PGC)**

The PGC initiative is designed to increase cultural and community awareness among members of the Rensselaer community and to prepare our students to be facilitators of inclusivity in diverse environments. This program is made possible by the Unity and Pluralism Award provided by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Housed within the program are the student leadership group Community Advocates and the Global Citizen Grant for faculty and staff to seek support for cultural awareness programs.

### **Communiversity Events**

Communiversity Events provide opportunities for all of us to celebrate common interests, purposes, and goals. These special events are opportunities for members of the larger Rensselaer Community of students, faculty, staff, and residents of Troy, to come together and enjoy entertainment and learn more about the community on common-ground - in festive and cultural settings. They are free to all and strategically scheduled so that members of the campus community have the opportunity to learn early about what is available outside the campus walls, and residents of Troy have an opportunity to meet the campus community. Events include: Welcome Fest; Fall Fest; Communiversity Concerts; and events surrounding the Martin Luther King Day holiday.

## **Career Development Center**

**Director:** Thomas L. Tarantelli

**Career Development Center Home Page:** <http://www.cdc.rpi.edu>

The Career Development Center (CDC) helps students take charge of and manage their career development. The CDC offers a comprehensive program of career development, co-op, internship, and job placement activities to both undergraduate and graduate students. Rensselaer students have 24-hour access to many career services and resources via the World Wide Web.

**Graduating Student Services** In 2002-2003, 2278 students registered with the CDC for on-campus recruiting, resume drops, and open jobs. This was a 20 percent increase over 2000-2001. Top employers of May 2003 graduates included Accenture Corporation, American Management Systems, BAE Systems, Electric Boat Corporation, General Electric, Harris Northeast Utilities, IBM Corporation, Intel Corporation, Lockheed Martin, Merck & Co., Microsoft Corporation, United Technologies, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, and Proctor & Gamble.

**Co-op Program** Rensselaer's optional co-op program, which is open to both undergraduate and graduate students, provides an excellent vehicle for students to gain critically needed work experience while still in college. More than 650 students were enrolled in co-op in 2001-2002, working for leading employers such as General Electric Company, United Technologies, and Pitney Bowes & Pfizer. The vast majority of co-op students obtain their jobs through the Career Development Center and can apply for a wide variety of positions across the country.

## Athletics

**Director: Ken Ralph**

Athletics are an integral part of Rensselaer life. Varsity sports, intramurals, and athletic clubs provide students with an opportunity for instruction in sports for physical fitness, recreation, and development of leadership/followership skills.

**Intercollegiate Sports** Rensselaer fields intercollegiate teams in 23 sports:

- **Baseball** Karl Steffen, head coach
- **Men's Basketball** Mike Griffin, head coach
- **Women's Basketball** John Greene, head coach
- **Men's and Women's Cross-Country** Colin Tory, head coach
- **Field Hockey** Bridget LaNoir, head coach
- **Football** Joe King, head coach
- **Golf** Miles Nolan, head coach
- **Men's Ice Hockey** Dan Fridgen, head coach
- **Women's Ice Hockey** John Burke, head coach
- **Men's Lacrosse** Tom Korrie, head coach
- **Women's Lacrosse** Leslie Kachadourian, head coach
- **Men's Soccer** Adam Clinton, head coach
- **Softball** Erica Lewis, head coach
- **Men's and Women's Swimming** Shannon O'Brien, head coach
- **Men's and Women's Tennis** Carol Pillsworth, head coach
- **Men's Indoor and Outdoor Track** Colin Tory, head coach
- **Women's Indoor and Outdoor Track** Colin Tory, head coach
- **Women's Soccer** Leslie Kachadourian

The men's hockey team competes at the Division I level and in the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) hockey league. The remaining teams play in Division III. In three sports, Rensselaer also fields junior varsity teams. Rensselaer is a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the ECAC, NYSWCAA, and the Upstate Collegiate Athletic Association.

The department trains and employs student trainers, lifeguards, and equipment room attendants. Several varsity teams sponsor student managers that assist in all matters of team operations.

**Athletic Clubs** Club sports sponsored by the Rensselaer Union include offerings such as Aikido Karate, Archery, Badminton, Ballroom Dance, Bowling, Cheerleading, Chung Do Kwan, Crew, Cricket, Cycling, Equestrian, Fencing, Gymnastics, Isshinyu Karate, Judo, Juggling and Unicycling, Outing Club, Racquetball, Rugby, Sailing, Scuba, Ski Club and Team, Squash, Table Tennis, Tae Kwon Do, Tennis, Ultimate Frisbee, Volleyball, Water Polo, Weightlifting, and Wrestling.

**Intramural and Recreational Program** An extensive intramural athletic program offers competition in 20 sports: basketball, billiards, bowling, golf, gym hockey, ice hockey, indoor soccer, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, touch football, track, badminton, aerobics, water polo, baseball, wallyball, wiffleball, and volleyball. Two intramural leagues are subdivided into as many divisions as necessary to accommodate all who are interested and to provide a level of competition commensurate with abilities. Recreational opportunities of all descriptions, either planned or unstructured, are available to all students.

**Facilities** Rensselaer's athletic fields include five illuminated for practice after dark and the Ned Harkness Field and Track, a synthetic turf field and track, was opened in 1994.

The '87 Gymnasium contains two general-purpose gymnasiums, a swimming pool, seven four-wall combination handball and squash courts, a weight room, an indoor track, and a wrestling room. The Rensselaer Alumni Sports and Recreation Center houses the Robison Gymnasium, which has an indoor track; a physiotherapy room; basketball, volleyball, and tennis courts on a resilient surface; and locker facilities. The Robison Pool has eight lanes for competitive swimming as well as three-meter and one-meter diving boards. The Houston Field House has an ice rink, locker and team rooms, and permanent seating for 5,300 spectators. The Mueller Center, housing cardiovascular, weights, aerobics, and other fitness activities, opened in 2000.

## The Rensselaer Union

**Director:** Richard M. Hartt

Every enrolled activity fee-paying student is a member of the Rensselaer Union, a self-supporting and a self-governing body that controls, finances, and organizes student activities.

The Union recognizes 130 service, media, religious, performing and visual arts, multicultural, athletic, and extracurricular clubs and organizations. The Union serves as a partner in intramurals and intercollegiate athletics, providing operating budgets for all varsity programs. Students are also responsible for the business operations of the Union, including the University Bookstore, a convenience food store, Post Office substation, a full-service bank, and a number of other retail operations. The Union also works with student organizations to identify and carry out projects that benefit the greater Troy community.

Student leaders at Rensselaer are elected in an all-campus student election each spring. The offices of Grand Marshal, established in 1866, and President of the Union, established in 1891, are the two most responsible positions. An Executive Board of students makes major budget decisions for the Union. The Student Senate is the chief legislative body for student government and draws representation from the entire student body.

## The Archer Center for Student Leadership Development

**Director:** Linda McCloskey

The Archer Center for Student Leadership Development provides leadership education for the Rensselaer students and community both in and outside of the classroom. The Center enhances students' leadership skills through a variety of cutting-edge, interactive learning experiences that include adventure-based initiatives, corporate training techniques, and other methods. Archer Center programs provide every student with the opportunity to gain key leadership skills in areas such as team development, visioning, effective communication, ethical decisionmaking, and multiculturalism.

The Archer Center offers custom-designed workshops for student organizations, manages the Professional Leadership Program for juniors, the Professional Leadership Series for graduate students, and facilitates other co-curricular programs. They also work with faculty across campus to develop interactive formats for classes and laboratories, and coordinates many other special events. Additionally, the Archer Center teaches a required course sequence in the Lally School of Management and Technology and a required Professional Development course sequence in the School of Engineering. Student groups, faculty, staff, administrators, and local communities benefit from Archer Center programs. Corporate representatives work with the Archer Center by funding some of its programs and/or speaking in leadership classes, at workshops, conferences, and at the recognition banquet.

The Archer Center for Student Leadership Development, with help from its colleagues and corporate partners, is dedicated to promoting practices that foster teamwork and integrity in the professional and personal lives of tomorrow's leaders.

## Religious Affairs

**Coordinator:** Edward Kacerguis

Rensselaer has a combination of resident and part-time chaplains who represent major faiths and work with the appropriate student organizations: the Rensselaer Christian Association, B.A.S.I.C., the Rensselaer Newman Student Fellowship, Hillel, and the Islamic Student Organization. All chaplains are available for personal counseling regardless of the beliefs of the individual.

The Rensselaer Newman Foundation and the Catholic Chaplaincy offer all the services of the usual parish and operate the Chapel and Cultural Center (C+CC). The Protestant Chaplain (who works with the Troy Area United Ministries), the local rabbis, and an imam on campus seek to involve students in the life of the local churches, synagogues, and mosques.

The Catholic Chaplains conduct mass daily and four times on weekends when classes are in session, and the Protestant Chaplain holds services on nights chosen by the students. The Rensselaer Christian Association gathers each Friday for song, prayer, and sharing, and in small groups daily. The Rensselaer Newman Student Fellowship organizes varied activities and speakers. Hillel is a focal point for the Jewish student community, gathering for their activities throughout the year. The Islamic students meet throughout the day for prayer as well as on each Friday for Sabbath. A number of churches, synagogues, and mosques in the area welcome students to their communities.

## Residence Life

**Director:** Peter G. Snyder

Approximately 55 percent of the undergraduate student body lives in campus housing. Options vary from apartments to traditional double and triple rooms in residence halls.

Institute policy requires that all non-commuting single first year students live on campus and participate in a Platinum, Diamond, or Gold dining plan. Single upper-class and graduate students may choose to live either on or off campus, to join a dining plan, or to cook for themselves. Students selecting Burdett Avenue Residence Hall housing are required to enroll in either the Platinum or Diamond dining plan.

Rensselaer's Family Student Housing community is home to 93 families who reside in two individually styled apartment complexes. A closely knit and culturally diverse community, the family housing area offers ample green space and play areas, a community center, and access to campus and community resources.

Residence Life is the focus for student housing programs related to living and dining at Rensselaer. In addition to providing clean, comfortable, and well-maintained residence halls and apartments, Residence Life strives to build a community that values the potential of each individual and encourages students to broaden their perspectives, enhance personal growth, and prepare for life beyond Rensselaer. A student staff of resident assistants, resident directors, apartment managers, and learning assistants complements the professionals in the Residence Life office.

## Rensselaer Dining Services

**General Manager:** John Fusco

Rensselaer Dining Services, managed by the Sodexo Campus Services, offers an innovative dining program designed to meet the diverse dining needs of the Rensselaer community. Meal plans range from unlimited meals anytime, in any resident dining hall, to those with unlimited meals within specified hours or days. Students may also use Mealplan Advantage Dollars (MAD) at all resident dining halls and other Sodexo Campus

Services managed facilities on campus as well as Rensselaer Advantage Dollars (RAD), which can also be used at nondining services food outlets such as Father's, Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream, and on-campus laundry machines.

Students with special dietary concerns for religious, health, or personal reasons may make arrangements to meet with the dining services to see how their needs can be met. Rensselaer does not operate a kosher kitchen but can offer frozen kosher dinners to any resident student who requests them. Dining services also offers packaged kosher foods daily. Bag lunches are available for any meal plan participant who cannot attend a regularly scheduled meal due to class schedule conflicts by bringing his or her class schedule to the general manager or dining hall manager.

For more information, refer to our web site at [www.rpi.edu/dept/dining](http://www.rpi.edu/dept/dining).

## Student Health Service

**Director:** Leslie Lawrence, MD

The Student Health Center is a comprehensive, nationally accredited, physician-directed program providing outpatient ambulatory health care. Services include medical, gynecology, and allergy clinics, a counseling center, and health education and wellness programs. Specialty consultation referral and a prescription delivery program are also available.

The Student Health Center is fully certified by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC). The AAAHC is an independent national organization that evaluates the quality of care at ambulatory centers such as outpatient surgery centers, clinics, and college health centers. Rensselaer's commitment to seek and maintain AAAHC certification provides assurance of the quality of patient care and the appropriate organizational framework for providing care.

The Counseling Center offers individual counseling sessions and group workshops for personal and academic adjustment problems. Confidentiality is strictly maintained except when a student's behavior presents a clear and present danger to the student or to others.

Located on the Troy campus, the Gallagher Student Health Center is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends during the academic semesters. Summer session and vacation hours are more limited. A 160-bed community hospital with a 24-hour emergency department is located two blocks from the campus.

All matriculated students pay a Health Center Fee that provides access to the Student Health Center during each regular semester (see Tuition and Fees section). This is a mandatory fee that is not waivable. Coverage for summer sessions is included in the spring semester fee.

Rensselaer students are required to have adequate health insurance. The Rensselaer Student Accident and Sickness Insurance Plan uses a low-cost Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) that provides nationwide year-round coverage at a very reasonable cost (see Tuition and Fees section). This insurance plan, together with the services of the Student Health Center, provides seamless coverage for students while at school. The plan also meets J-1 visa requirements. Dependent coverage is available at reasonable cost. A student, who has equivalent health insurance that provides nonurgent coverage in Troy, may request a waiver of the PPO plan.

All students, including part-time students, must submit a medical history and record of physical examination on a form provided by Rensselaer. No other form can be accepted. Students must show adequate evidence of meeting Rensselaer and New York prematriculation immunization and tuberculosis screening requirements.

## Student Records and Financial Services

**Director:** Sharon L. Kunkel

This office combines the activities of the registrar and the financial aid office to provide seamless services to students, families, alumni, and Institute faculty and staff.

Student Records and Financial Services registers, provides advising support, awards and administers financial aid resources, and manages accounts for all Rensselaer students. This office maintains accurate student academic and financial records and preserves the confidentiality, security, and ethical handling of these records. It implements academic policy guidelines developed by the faculty as well as financial policies set forth by federal, state, and Institute guidelines.