

# THE RENSSELAER GRADUATE STUDENT SUPPLEMENT

to the

## Rensselaer Student Handbook of Rights & Responsibilities

2014 - 2016

Prepared By The  
Office of Graduate Education  
&  
Dean of Students Office

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
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The Rensselaer Student Handbook of Rights & Responsibilities, 2014-2016, assures that Rensselaer’s academic and disciplinary policies accurately reflect the educational experiences of all students. Graduate students, as teaching and/or research assistants and senior members of the student population, are expected to demonstrate an operational understanding of professional and ethical conduct applied to the research enterprise including intellectual property issues and appropriately conduct oneself in a culturally and educationally diverse higher-learning environment. The *Graduate Student Supplement* to the Rensselaer Student Handbook of Rights & Responsibilities sets guidelines specifically applied to graduate students and graduate education.

The information contained in this supplement pertains to matriculated graduate students, non-matriculated graduate students or co-terminal students pursuing a graduate degree. It sets policies and procedures to be followed to assure compliance to the highest standards of research, teaching and collegial interactions within Rensselaer’s graduate education enterprise. All students, undergraduate and graduate, who choose to pursue a degree program at Rensselaer, are held to the standards, procedures and policies stated in the Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights & Responsibilities. Due to the nature of graduate education, graduate students are also expected to adhere to the policies and procedures in this document specifically aligned to their graduate education.

## **I. STUDENT - GRADUATE ASSISTANT - FACULTY RELATIONSHIP**

The professor in the classroom and in conference shall encourage free discussion, inquiry, and expression, teaching or research assistants shall also abide by this and the following statements in this section as applicable to either or both of their capacities as teaching assistants and students. Students shall be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study, based on acceptable interpretation and/or documentation, and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion.

## **II. PROFESSIONAL ETHICS**

All members of the Rensselaer Community, regardless of position, should share the common values that nurture the development and wellbeing of themselves, each other, the students, employees, and the Institute. It is expected that no one in privileged positions of leadership and power would inappropriately exploit their position for personal advantage. Because of a power asymmetry, a teaching or research assistant is prohibited from having a sexual or romantic relationship with an undergraduate student. Moreover, in accord with Institute-wide employee policies, discrimination and harassment in all its forms, including sexual harassment are considered to be serious offenses that are prohibited at Rensselaer, not only as a matter of policy, but as a matter of Federal and State law.

## **III. MISCONDUCT IN SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES**

### **Introduction**

It is the responsibility of the Institute to create conditions that protect and encourage graduate students in their scholarly pursuits. Rensselaer requires that those engaged in scholarship be dedicated to the highest ethical standards. Misconduct in Scholarship activities by any member of the Rensselaer community threatens the Institute as well as the individual. In addition, universities that receive support from federal agencies are required to develop procedures for investigating incidents of scholarly misconduct. This section describes the Rensselaer policy and outlines the steps to be taken in response to allegations of scholarly misconduct. The process applies to all graduate students, and provides for an objective examination of pertinent facts, protection of individual rights, and integration with other relevant review procedures, all under the general supervision of the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education as the graduate academic hearing officer.

### **Scholarly Misconduct Policy**

Intellectual integrity and credibility are the foundation of all academic work. Misconduct in Scholarly Activities is, by definition, considered a flagrant offense to the educational process. It is taken seriously by students, faculty, and Rensselaer and will be addressed in an effective manner.

Since Misconduct in Scholarly Activities is a violation of Professional Ethics guidelines, the student found in violation of said guidelines may be subject to any of the following sanctions: disciplinary warning; disciplinary probation; disciplinary suspension, expulsion and/or alternative actions as defined by the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education. It should be noted that no student who allegedly commits Misconduct in Scholarly Activities will be able to drop the course in question.

Scholarly Misconduct does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of scholarly matters. If the alleged misconduct is not substantiated, the Institute will undertake diligent efforts to restore the reputation of those under investigation. Should either the inquiry or the investigation show that the allegations of misconduct were not made in good faith, those making the allegations will themselves be subject to disciplinary action.

## Scholarly Misconduct Definitions

The definitions and examples outlined below are samples of types of scholarly misconduct and are not to be construed as an exhaustive or exclusive list. The scholarly misconduct policy applies to all graduate students, and to scholarly pursuits and research. Additionally, attempts to commit scholarly misconduct or to assist in the commission or attempt of such an act are also violations of this policy.

- a. **Fabrication** refers to the unauthorized **falsification** or invention of any information in an academic exercise, including but not limited to the use of “bought” or “ready-made” term papers, or falsifying lab records or reports;
- b. **Plagiarism** refers to the representation of the work or words of another as one’s own through the omission of acknowledgment or reference, including but not limited to using sentences verbatim from a published source in a term paper without appropriate referencing, or presenting as one’s own the detailed argument of a published source, or presenting as one’s own electronically or digitally enhanced graphic representations from any form of media;
- c. **Academic Fraud** refers to the alteration of documentation relating to the grading process, for example, changing exam solutions to negotiate for a higher grade or tampering with an instructor’s grade book;
- d. **Collaboration** refers to the deliberate facilitation of academic dishonesty in any form; for example, allowing another student to observe an exam paper or allowing another student to “recycle” one’s old term paper or using one another’s work in a paper or lab report without citing it as another’s work;
- e. **Copying** refers to obtaining information pertaining to a graded exercise by deliberately observing the paper of another student; for example, noting which alternative a neighboring student has circled on a multiple-choice exam;
- f. **Cribbing** refers to the use or attempted use of prohibited materials, information, or study aids in an academic exercise; for example, using an unauthorized formal sheet during an exam;
- g. **Sabotage** refers to the destruction of another student’s work. For example, destroying a model, lab experiment, computer program, or term paper developed by another student;
- h. **Substitution** refers to the utilization of a proxy, or acting as a proxy, in any academic exercise; for example, taking an exam for another student or having a homework assignment done by someone else; or
- i. **Retaliation** means any adverse action threatened or taken against a person because he or she has filed, supported, or provided information in connection with a an allegation of Scholarly Misconduct, including but not limited to direct and indirect intimidation, threats, and harassment.

Scholarly Misconduct also include the **Failure to Comply** with Federal requirements affecting specific aspects of the conduct of research, e.g., the protection of human subjects and the welfare of laboratory animals; and the **Inappropriate Allocation of Authorship Credit**, or other serious deviation from accepted practices in proposing, carrying out, or reporting technical results from research, educational or other scholarly activities.

## IV. RESOLUTION PROCEDURES FOR MISCONDUCT IN SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

Decisions regarding alleged Scholarly Misconduct should yield a just decision based on the best, and most complete, information available. Any decisions should be based on the expert judgment of individuals qualified in the respective scientific field, using scientific interpretations and standards of proof, with a minimum of procedural complications. At the same time, however, the process must be fair and afford all parties an equal chance to present their best arguments. The confidentiality of all parties in a dispute must be preserved to the extent consistent with Rensselaer's obligations to research sponsors and to the scientific community. Acrimony and recriminations are undesirable, so adversarial interactions should be avoided. Yet in an open society it is essential that the respondent has the opportunity to respond to the complaint. The process should move speedily, in accord with the Misconduct in Scholarly Activities procedural standards, yet haste and error must be avoided.

Guided by these principles, Rensselaer has established an academic integrity policy governing graduate student research in addition to classroom performance that is applied only to graduate students suspected of misconduct in scholarly activities at Rensselaer.

### 1. Screening Stage

Initial reports of alleged scholarly misconduct in research must be brought to the attention of the Dean of the School where the individual whose actions are in question is enrolled as a graduate student. The Dean of the School must in turn report the allegations to the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education, who will promptly examine the case and determine if the case falls under the Misconduct in Scholarly Activities Policy that may result in a serious penalty to the student.

If found in violation of Misconduct in Scholarly Activities policy, students may be subject to two types of penalties:

- a) for course related violations, the instructor may administer an academic (grade) penalty; or the student may be subject to the procedures and penalties of the Procedural Standards in Disciplinary Proceedings outlined in this handbook, or
- b) for research related violations, the student will be subject to the procedures and penalties of in this handbook.

If the violation is judged insufficient to merit a serious sanction, the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education may inform the student that a penalty less than expulsion will be determined and imposed. If the student agrees to this method of resolution, he or she must forfeit in writing the right to pursue an appeal of the Deans' decision. If the Dean's review determines that a violation has occurred that may warrant serious penalty, the matter will enter the **inquiry stage** to determine whether there is sufficient evidence of misconduct to merit a full investigation.

If so determined, the inquiry stage will be followed.

### 2. Inquiry Stage

The Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education will immediately inform the respondent in writing of the accusation and that an inquiry has been initiated. The Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education will prepare a list of proposed members for the Inquiry Panel. The respondent may challenge the inclusion of specific individuals to this panel by stating his or her objections in writing. The Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education will then select the Inquiry Panel.

The inquiry will be conducted by a Panel consisting of one Faculty member, one graduate student, and one academic administrator with rank of Associate Dean or higher. The Panel will choose its Chair. The Panel should take no more than 30 days to conduct its inquiry and determine whether or not there is a reasonable basis to conclude that serious misconduct occurred. During this discovery stage, the only persons who may be present during fact finding sessions are the respondent, the complainant, Inquiry Panel members, and any consultant called by the Inquiry Panel. The respondent will be permitted to be present during fact finding sessions and have the right to respond to questions as they arise. If the respondent is not available to attend, the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education will fairly resolve the conflict between timeliness and the respondent's right to be present.

If a majority of the Inquiry Panel finds there is reasonable basis to conclude serious misconduct occurred, then the matter must proceed to the investigation stage. The Inquiry Panel reports the results of its inquiry to the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education, who will advise, in writing, the respondent and the complainant of the Inquiry Panel outcome. If there is to be an investigation, the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education must advise the respondent in writing of the specific charges to be investigated. At that time, any collaborators involved must be informed of the allegations.

### **3. Investigation Stage**

An investigation of alleged serious misconduct will be conducted by a committee appointed by the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education. The committee will be comprised of a minimum of three specialists in the subject area of the respondent and will include one individual from outside Rensselaer. The Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education will prepare a list of proposed members for the Investigation Panel, which may include persons who served on the Inquiry Panel. The respondent may challenge the inclusion of specific individuals by stating any objections in writing. The Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education will then select, and appoint, the Investigation Panel. The Panel will elect its own Chair.

### **4. The Investigation Panel**

The Investigation Panel will determine whether serious scholarly misconduct occurred. The Panel will follow the procedures as described herein and will seek to provide factual information in a manner that is fair to all parties. The Investigation Panel should take no more than 120 days to complete the investigation and prepare a report of its findings including a recommendation on the disposition of the case. The Investigation Panel will submit its report to the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education, who in turn will notify the Dean of the School and the student.

### **5. Academic Disciplinary Sanctions**

For individuals found to have committed serious scholarly misconduct, the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education may take one or more of the following actions

- **Disciplinary Warning** Issued to students to indicate that their behavior is in violation of Institute regulations and that repetition may bring more serious consequences.
- **Disciplinary Probation** A formal warning period which indicates to a student that further policy violations may result in more serious consequences including suspension or expulsion.

- **Removal from Residence Facilities** The student's room rental agreement if with Rensselaer residence facilities or City Station South is void and he or she may be required to vacate the premises permanently or for a specified period of time.

*College Suites at City Station [both "South" and "West"] and its environs are sanctioned by Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute as a part of the Institute's student housing program. As such, a Rensselaer student's conduct is deemed to be "Institute-related" and may be subject to the jurisdiction of the Rensselaer judicial system as it is described in the Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities when that conduct occurs anywhere on the properties located in the City of Troy, New York used by the residents and customers of the housing/commercial complex commonly known as "College Suites at City Station" or "City Station."*

- **Disciplinary Suspension** The student is separated from Rensselaer for a specific minimum period of time and is required to leave the Institute. Return to campus, by a student on disciplinary suspension, may occur only with prior notification and approval of the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education. The student may apply for readmission at the end of the specified suspension time. Readmission is at the sole and absolute discretion of Rensselaer and a student may be required to fulfill specific conditions prior to and following readmission.
- **Expulsion** The student is permanently separated from the Institute without opportunity for readmission at any time. The student is required to leave the Institute within the time determined and cannot be in or on Institute property without the prior notification and approval of the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education.

If there is a finding of serious scholarly misconduct, the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education must also take the following actions:

- All pending scholarly publications, performances or shows emanating from the fraudulent research should be withdrawn and editors of journals in which previous publications appeared should be notified of the findings of the investigation;
- Institutions with which the investigated individual has been affiliated should be notified that there is reason to believe that the validity of previous research might be questionable.

## **V. ACADEMIC DISCIPLINARY PROCESS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS VIOLATING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY (Non-Research, Classroom-Based Courses)**

Decisions regarding grades for standard-listed, non-research-related courses are initially the responsibility and jurisdiction of the course professor, and the school in which the scholarly misconduct occurred, as there is no one in a better position to make this determination. Any appeal of a grade or academic penalty for scholarly misconduct in the classroom falls under the same authority. Therefore, a student can submit a written appeal of an academic penalty to the Department Head within five (5) Institute business days of being notified of the faculty member's decision. If the course professor is the Department Head or Dean of the School or there are other circumstances that could create the perception of bias, steps must be taken to use other appropriate individuals for the appeal process.

The Department Head (or designee) will then make a determination based on the facts/circumstances of the case and the appropriateness of the original sanction. This determination should be made and

communicated to the student and the professor within ten (10) Institute business days of receiving the appeal. Included in this written notification should be information regarding the student's option to appeal the grade decision and of the procedure/time limit in which to do so.

If the student or professor believes he or she has grounds for appealing the decision of the Department Head (e.g., new evidence), both parties have the option to submit a written appeal to the Dean of the School within five (5) business days of receiving the decision. The Dean will then render a decision based on the facts/circumstance of the case and the appropriateness of the sanction. This determination should be made and communicated to the student and the professor within ten (10) Institute business days of receiving the appeal.

The decision of the Dean of the School may be subject to final determination by the Provost (or designee), with good cause and at the written request of either party involved, within five (5) Institute business days of notification of the Dean of the School's decision. The Provost is unconstrained in the procedure he or she chooses to employ in the context of such a review. The Provost is the final level of appeal and his/her decision stands as final for both the student(s) and professor involved. The Provost will render a decision based on the circumstances of the case and the appropriateness of the sanction. This determination should be made and communicated to the student and the professor within ten (10) Institute business days of receiving the appeal.

Students found in violation of the Academic Integrity Policy are prohibited from dropping a course in order to avoid the academic penalty.

## **VI. RECORD OF GRADUATE ACADEMIC DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

Effective October 5, 2015 and thereafter, it is the Policy of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute that students who are found in violation of the Scholarly Misconduct Policy or other Student Code of Conduct Policy violation of Rensselaer and receive the sanction of 'Expulsion' or 'Suspension' will have a notation on their official transcript of Rensselaer.

A student, who is found responsible for a violation of the Scholarly Misconduct Policy or other Student Code of Conduct Policy violation of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, withdraws from the Institute before the implementation of a sanction of Expulsion or Suspension, while such conduct charges are pending, and declines to complete the disciplinary process, will have a notation on their official transcript of Rensselaer.

Transcript notations for expulsion shall not be removed from a student's transcript, unless such expulsion is vacated for any reason. Transcript notations for suspension may be removed after one year after conclusion of the suspension by the student submitting an appeal to the Vice Provost for Graduate Education requesting removal of such notation. The decision of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education is final and not subject to appeal. Requests for removal of transcript notations for suspension may be submitted annually thereafter or until the student graduates, whichever is greater. Notations regarding suspensions will also be removed if such suspension is vacated for any reason.

**Note:** Any disciplinary action can be disclosed to federal, state or local government entity, law enforcement, licensing or certification board, or corporate entity upon request of said agency if and only if: (a) by subpoena or (b) a student signs a confidentiality waiver for said agency or government entity.

## **VII. NOTIFICATION**

Upon final disposition of a case, the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education has the option, but not the obligation, to submit an anonymous description of the disciplinary situation, with penalties assigned, to the Polytechnic for publication.

## **VIII. PREVENTION OF MISCONDUCT IN SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES**

The instructor or research advisor is expected to outline his or her particular standards in courses and scholarly pursuits in which either the instructor or student considers proper definition of scholarly misconduct to be open to interpretation. An example for which such definition seems particularly necessary would be collaboration on out-of-class assignments.

Course supervisors are expected to provide adequate and conscientious proctoring for exams. Faculty and proctors may ask a student for identification during an exam or exercise, and take reasonable precautions to lessen probability of academic dishonesty occurring, such as requiring that all personal belongings, texts, etc., be placed away from desks in the exam room.

## **IX. APPEAL OF INVESTIGATION PANEL DECISION TO THE PRESIDENT**

The decisions of the Investigation Panel may be subject to final determination by the President of the Institute, at the written request of either party involved, within five (5) Institute business days of notification of the board's decision. Appeals of Investigation Panel decisions are made by either party via the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education. The President is unconstrained in the procedure he or she chooses to employ in the context of such a review including making a determination based solely on the written evidence (including the letter of appeal).

## **X. DEVIATION FROM PROCEDURES**

Deviation from the above listed procedures will not invalidate a decision or proceeding unless it causes significant prejudice to the accused student, which the student must bring to the attention of the applicable panel, committee, or board immediately upon belief that such prejudice occurred.

In determining whether a deviation caused significant prejudice, the applicable panel, committee, or board shall consider whether the course of the proceedings would have been substantially different had the deviation not occurred.

The applicable panel, committee, or board also shall determine whether the accused student gave adequate notice of the alleged procedural event.

## **XI. THE ROLE OF LEGAL COUNSEL**

The presence of an attorney at the Inquiry and Investigation Stages is at the sole discretion of the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education and/or the Panel Chairperson. Requests for an attorney to be present to advise an accused student will be considered only in instances where the student has been arrested or has had a criminal complaint filed against him or her. If it is determined that a

student will be permitted to have an attorney present, the student must notify the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education, in writing, a minimum of 72 hours in advance of the hearing, indicating the name, business address and phone number of the attorney who will be in attendance.

The role of an attorney is limited in the inquiry and investigation process. He or she is present only to advise the accused student and can confer with the student during the judicial proceeding.

However, the attorney is not entitled to address the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education or the Panel and may not communicate specific questions, responses, or statements for the student. Moreover, all correspondence, regarding the matter, including the filing of an appeal, must come directly from the student(s) involved. Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education may elect to discuss procedural matters with attorneys. However, as a general practice, communication and inquiries from attorneys will be referred directly to Institute Legal Counsel.

## **XII. STUDENT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY**

### **Statement of Intent**

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy learning, living, and working environment in which no member of the Rensselaer community is, on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination in any Institute program or activity. Gender-based and sexual-based harassment, including Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Violence, are forms of illegal discrimination in that they deny or limit an individual's ability to participate in or benefit from the Institute's programs or activities.

In support of the overall goals of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, the purpose of the Student Sexual Misconduct Policy is to maintain a campus living, learning and working environment that supports the Institute's educational mission, maintains respect and dignity for members of the Rensselaer community, and protects the rights of all members of the campus community. The Sexual Misconduct Policy is intended to foster personal responsibility, high ethical values, individual accountability and civility toward others.

The Policy embraces several core philosophies: respect for freedom of inquiry and constructive feedback; a conviction that honesty and integrity are key values to the campus community; and the belief that all members of the Rensselaer community should be part of a campus environment that is inclusive, respects differences and embraces diversity of culture, gender, religion, race, ethnicity, socio-economic background, nationality, age, lifestyle and ability.

Rensselaer is also committed to fostering a community that promotes prompt reporting of all types of Sexual Misconduct and timely and fair resolution of Complaints of Sexual Misconduct. In furtherance of this commitment, this Policy sets forth the available resources, describes prohibited conduct, and establishes procedures for responding to Complaints of Sexual Misconduct.

### **Jurisdiction**

This Policy applies to any allegation of Sexual Misconduct made against a student of the Institute, regardless of where the alleged Sexual Misconduct occurred, as long as the conduct giving rise to the

Complaint is related to an Institute sanctioned or sponsored event including but not limited to all Rensselaer academic, educational, athletic or extracurricular programs or activities.

If you are a student of the Institute and a Complaint has been filed against you, the investigation and adjudication process set forth in this Policy will apply.

If you are an employee of the Institute, or a third-party, and a Complaint has been filed against you, please refer to Human Resources Policy #600.3, Sexual Harassment Policy.

The Complaint procedures set forth in this Policy, as well as in Human Resources Policy #600.3, Sexual Harassment Policy, are administrative in nature and are separate and distinct from the criminal and civil legal systems. The Institute encourages Complainants to pursue all remedies available to them, including reporting incidents of potential criminal conduct to law enforcement. If the conduct in question is alleged to be a violation of both Institute policy and the law, the Institute will proceed with its normal process, regardless of action or inaction by outside authorities. Decisions made or sanctions imposed through these or other Institute procedures are not subject to change because criminal or civil charges arising from the same conduct are dismissed, reduced, or rejected in favor of or against the Respondent.

### **Period of Limitations**

A Complaint of Sexual Misconduct may be filed at any time, regardless of the length of time between the alleged Sexual Misconduct and the filing of the Complaint. However, Rensselaer strongly encourages individuals to file Complaints promptly in order to preserve evidence for a potential legal or disciplinary proceeding. A delay in filing a Complaint may compromise the subsequent investigation.

### **Student Sexual Misconduct Bill of Rights**

All students have the right to:

- Make a report to local law enforcement and/or state police;
- Have disclosures of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual assault treated seriously;
- Make a decision about whether or not to disclose a crime or violation and participate in the judicial or conduct process and/or criminal justice process free from pressure by the institution;
- Participate in a process that is fair, impartial, and provides adequate notice and a meaningful opportunity to be heard;
- Be treated with dignity and to receive from the institution courteous, fair, and respectful health care and counseling services, where available;
- Be free from any suggestion that the reporting individual is at fault when these crimes and violations are committed, or should have acted in a different manner to avoid such crimes or violations;
- Describe the incident to as few institution representatives as practicable and not be required to unnecessarily repeat a description of the incident;
- Be protected from retaliation by the institution, any student, the accused and/or the respondent, and/or their friends, family and acquaintances within the jurisdiction of the institution;
- Access to at least one level of appeal of a determination;
- Be accompanied by an advisor of choice who may assist and advise a reporting individual, accused, or respondent throughout the judicial or conduct process including during all meetings

- and hearings related to such process; and
- Exercise civil rights and practice of religion without interference by the investigative, criminal justice, or judicial or conduct process of the institution.

Individuals may file a report, including an anonymous report, of Sexual Misconduct by visiting <https://sexualviolence.rpi.edu>.

## **Title IX**

The Title IX Coordinators (Larry Hardy, (518) 276-3065, [HardyL2@rpi.edu](mailto:HardyL2@rpi.edu); and Jacqueline Turner, (518) 276-3980, [creecj@rpi.edu](mailto:creecj@rpi.edu)) are responsible for the Institute's compliance with Title IX including the review, investigation, and resolution of reports of discrimination, and sexual harassment, including Sexual Misconduct. The Title IX Coordinators are assisted and supported by several Title IX Liaisons who are accessible to members of the Institute community for consultation and guidance.

### 1. Title IX Coordinators' responsibilities include:

- Coordinating the Institute's compliance with Title IX;
- Overseeing the Institute's response to and resolution of reports of alleged violations of Rensselaer's policies regarding civil rights and Sexual Misconduct by students, staff, faculty, and third parties;
- Coordinating training, prevention and education efforts with regard to sexual discrimination, harassment, and Sexual Misconduct;
- Coordinating periodic reviews of climate and culture with regard to sexual discrimination, harassment, and Sexual Misconduct;
- Identifying and addressing any patterns or systemic problems;
- Being knowledgeable of and trained in Institute policies and procedures and relevant state and federal laws regarding sexual discrimination, harassment, and Sexual Misconduct; and
- Advising individuals, including a Complainant, a Respondent or a third party, about the courses of action available for responding to discrimination, harassment, and/or Sexual Misconduct at the Institute, both informally and formally, and in the community.

### 2. Title IX Liaisons

Rensselaer, in its commitment to support non-discrimination and equal opportunity, will appoint Title IX Liaisons for each academic and administrative Portfolio. The Title IX Liaison responsibilities include:

- Advising individuals, including a Complainant, a Respondent or a third party, about the courses of action available for responding to discrimination, harassment, and/or Sexual Misconduct at the Institute, both informally and formally, and in the community; and
  - Providing information to Complainants, Respondents, third-party individuals, and the campus community about internal and external care and support services.
- ### 3. Inquiries or Complaints concerning the application of Title IX may be referred to Rensselaer's Title IX Coordinators, Title IX Liaisons, and/or to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights:

Office for Civil Rights, New York Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
32 Old Slip, 26th Floor  
New York, NY 10005-2500  
Telephone: 646-428-3900  
FAX: 646-428-3843; TDD: 800-877-8339  
Email: [OCR.NewYork@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.NewYork@ed.gov)

## **Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct**

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute is committed to providing a working, living and learning environment free of sexual harassment, which includes Sexual Misconduct. Rensselaer prohibits sexual harassment and Sexual Misconduct in all of its working, living and learning environments. Sexual harassment and Sexual Misconduct violate an individual's fundamental rights and personal dignity. Rensselaer considers sexual harassment in all its forms to be a serious offense.

The expectations of the Rensselaer community regarding sexual conduct can be summarized as follows: In order for individuals to engage in sexual activity of any type with another person or persons, there must be clear, knowing and voluntary consent prior to and during sexual activity. Consent is sexual permission. Individuals who engage in Sexual Misconduct will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion or termination.

Employees, including faculty, contingent faculty, research professionals, staff and members of the President's Cabinet, are prohibited from having sexual or romantic relationships with students

## **Retaliation**

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute strictly prohibits retaliation against any person for reporting an allegation of sexual harassment or Sexual Misconduct, or for filing, testifying, assisting or participating in any manner in any investigation or proceeding involving allegations of discrimination, harassment, or an unethical action. Any person who violates this non-retaliation policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Responsible Employees**

All members of the Rensselaer community are strongly encouraged to report information regarding any incident of discrimination, harassment, Sexual Misconduct, stalking, and hazing directly to a Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Liaison. The Institute cannot take appropriate action unless incidents are reported to a Responsible Employee of the Institute. In general, most Rensselaer employees do not have legally protected confidentiality. Under Title IX, an Institute is required to take immediate and corrective action if a Responsible Employee knew or, in the exercise of reasonable care, should have known about sexual or gender-based harassment that creates a hostile environment.

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights instructs that a Responsible Employee is any employee who has the authority to take action to redress sexual harassment/misconduct; who has been given the duty of reporting incidents of sexual harassment/misconduct or any other misconduct by students to the Title IX coordinator or other appropriate designee; or who a student reasonably believes has this authority or duty.

Rensselaer's Responsible Employees include all faculty members, advisors to student organizations, coaches, administrators, resident assistants, and other employees with a responsibility for student

welfare. The Institute requires that all Responsible Employees share a report of alleged violations of this Policy and other Institute policies that are intended to protect the civil rights and dignity of the members of the Rensselaer community, including discrimination, harassment, Sexual Misconduct, with a Title IX Coordinator or a Title IX Liaison so that the Institute can respond appropriately to end the conduct, prevent its recurrence and remedy its effects.

### **REPORTING COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, OR RETALIATION**

Complaints of Discrimination, Harassment or Retaliation are to be reported to a Rensselaer Title IX Coordinator, Dean of Students, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education, or Vice Provost and Dena of Graduate Education.

# NOTES