Rensselaer
Teaching Assistant
Handbook

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THE TEACHING ASSISTANT’S ROLE

Experience as a teaching assistant (TA) can be an outstanding way to learn the art of teaching and to have a positive influence on many students.

As a TA, you are the key link between professor and students. This gives you the opportunity to observe and influence higher-level decisions about course design and content, as well as the opportunity to maintain daily, close interactions with students. If you keep this perspective, you may find serving as a TA one of the most rewarding experiences you have in your education at Rensselaer.

In most cases, you will have to take some initiative to make sure that your TA experience provides both the mentorship you hope for and a set of responsibilities you can handle. Clear conversations with the professor for whom you are a TA can set the stage for both.

THE ROLE OF A TEACHING ASSISTANT AT RENSSELAER

The role of a Rensselaer TA may differ between departments or courses. The TA may engage in:

- Facilitating a class discussion,
- Running a laboratory,
- Conducting a recitation section, or
- Grading undergraduate students' work.
WHAT MAKES A GREAT TEACHING ASSISTANT?

PREPARATION. Whether you’re leading a discussion section, a review section, or a lab section, plan your materials in advance. Ask former TAs and the professor for materials developed for previous classes.

KNOWLEDGE. In addition to whatever advanced background training you have in your field, be sure to stay up to date with the content of the course in which you are a TA. Nothing is as disappointing to students as finding out that their TA hasn’t read the textbook or doesn’t attend lecture.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS. In particular, you need to be able to explain complicated things clearly, develop interesting examples, and listen carefully as students ask questions or try to explain their confusion. In addition, basic public speaking skills can contribute enormously to your comfort and success as a TA.

ACCESSIBILITY AND AVAILABILITY. You need to be approachable to your students; achieve this by maintaining a friendly attitude, staying after class to talk with students, and encouraging students to visit your office hours or email you their questions. Then, make sure your office hours are at times your students can actually attend, and be certain to be there.

CONCERN FOR STUDENTS’ LEARNING. Students can tell the difference between a TA who considers the TA role a waste of his or her time and a TA who enjoys teaching and interacting with students. Focus on the positive aspects of the course and your interactions with students.

A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PROFESSOR. A great TA provides the bridge between a professor’s goals and his or her day-to-day achievement. To do so, maintain regular, positive interactions with the professor and provide feedback about how the course is going, from the students’ perspectives as well as your own.

ORGANIZATION. Anticipate ways that you can make the course run more smoothly for both the professor and the students. Look for ways to streamline, document, or improve course activities and teaching responsibilities.

PREPARE FOR A SUCCESSFUL TA EXPERIENCE

• Meet with the professor and other TAs as soon as possible.
• At this meeting, set clear expectations about both what you can contribute to the course (in time, responsibilities, and skills) and what you hope to get out of the opportunity (in training, experience, and mentorship).
• Schedule regular weekly meetings with the professor and other TAs to maintain open communication and to iron out course details.
• Balance your TA work with other academic and professional obligations; consider this practice for a faculty position that combines teaching and research.
• Invite the professor to watch you teach and request feedback on your teaching performance.
• Offer feedback to the professor about the course and initiate conversations about those aspects of teaching that interest you most.
COMMON TEACHING ASSISTANT (TA) TASKS

CONDUCTING SEMINARS

Recitations
Science, engineering, and mathematics courses commonly use the recitation format for problem set review. A recitation encourages students to work out solutions as a group. It is important that TAs know the content of the current lectures and seminars in order to create problem sets that match topical subject matter.

Discussion Groups
 Humanities, arts, the social sciences, and management more commonly use discussion groups to review course content and readings. Small group interaction is usually one of the most rewarding experiences of undergraduate study.

A facilitator of a discussion group will need to have an idea of the form the discussion will take and a sense of the desired outcome. You can take some of the following steps, listed in the box below, to help ensure a worthwhile learning experience for each member of the group.

PREPARE FOR A SUCCESSFUL DISCUSSION GROUP

- Provide a detailed and written description of what is required before the group meets.
- Have a set of significant questions ready to ask the students.
- Keep the groups as small as possible.
- Do not allow one person to dominate the discussion.
- Be certain that everyone speaks - call on people who are reluctant to participate and reward them with a thank you for their insights.
- Encourage discussion between the students in the group.
- Work toward mutual learning.

REVIEW KEY CONCEPTS AND IMPORTANT SKILLS
Do not assume that everyone should already have complete control of essentials. Cover the problems that require the most important skills; resist digressions. Keep track of particular problems that students are having, and reintroduce them before a test. Keep a file of problems to provide students with more and varied practice.

USING THE Appropriate TONE FOR QUESTIONS
A great deal depends on how you phrase questions. The tone you adopt - whether paternal, sarcastic, Socratic, sincere, probing, or encouraging - will help shape student attitudes toward the subject, the class, and you. It is therefore best to decide why you are asking questions and then decide how to ask them. As with all other aspects of teaching, you will probably be trying to accomplish several things at once.

WHAT KINDS OF QUESTIONS TO ASK
Ask open-ended questions that require students to fully elaborate on the subject matter, rather than questions that require a yes or no response. Further, asking a series of related open-ended questions encourages students to think critically about the material. If you ask, "What is supply-side economics?" follow it with, "How is this approach to describing economies helpful in ways that demand-side economics is not?" And, "If supply-side economics looks at modes of production, as Rosalind suggests, how might supply-side economics influence demand-side economics?"
When possible, try to find a relationship between the subject matter and the students’ more general interests, for example, “How do supply-side economics affect the salary levels seen in major league sports?”

Questions encourage students to think independently. Ask real questions, and use the answers to develop the discussion by building new questions on top of previous answers.

Jane Fried, in her article, “Learning Reconsidered,” states that “Scientists have discovered that learning is most powerful when students can place new information in the context of previously acquired meaningful information.”

Remember that teaching is itself a learned skill and that many resources are available to assist you in better understanding the complexities of knowledge acquisition and in creating an optimal learning environment for your students.

**What to Do If No One Answers**

Try to vary the difficulty and complexity of the questions you ask, and don't panic if no one has an answer right away. Avoid answering your own questions or reposing them continually in different ways.

**Making Use of Answers**

When listening to answers, pay close attention and let the students know that you are interested in what they are saying. Ask a student to elaborate on an answer that is too compact or to develop an idea that someone else has offered. Do not be afraid to admit that you don't have an answer. If there is no single answer, be sure not to give students the impression that there is. Don't ridicule wrong answers or draw attention to someone who has not done the work they were supposed to have done if doing so will encourage a sense of alienation on the student's part.

RUNNING LABORATORY EXPERIMENTS

LAB SAFETY
Acquaint yourself with the laboratory that you will be using. Know where the phone is and what the appropriate emergency numbers are (see contacts listed below). Locate and know how to operate fire extinguishers (see text box at right), emergency exits, showers and eyewashes, electrical circuit breakers, and spill kits.

You should know where the first aid equipment is and know the procedures for any specific accidents that could conceivably occur. You should also have the proper safety equipment for working in labs, including lab coats, eye protectors, safety shoes, and any other appropriate equipment. Do not be cavalier with safety procedures since students will adopt their teacher’s attitudes, and any laxity on your part may be perceived as acceptable procedure.

KEEPING THE LAB SUPPLIED
Know what equipment the lab has and what materials are available to it. You will also need to know where materials are stored and possibly where to get more if supplies run short (see Laboratory Contacts, Appendix VIII).

SHOULD I ATTEMPT TO USE A FIRE EXTINGUISHER?
ONLY if all three of the following conditions are met:

1. You have received fire extinguisher training by Rensselaer within the last year.
2. The fire is in the incipient stage.
3. You are in absolutely no personal danger.

If in doubt, leave the area immediately. Fire extinguishers are provided for escape purposes only. You are never required to attempt to extinguish a fire.²

PREVENT ACCIDENTS IN THE LAB
To avoid accidents in the lab – such as the unfortunate incident that occurred at the University of Missouri at Columbia lab in 2010, which injured four people – be attentive to the condition and use of lab equipment and materials.³

To understand RPI’s safety policies, visit the Environmental Health & Safety website http://hr.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=284, or contact EH&S staff (see below).

IN AN EMERGENCY contact Public Safety at: 518-276-6611

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Areas of Expertise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Caracappa</td>
<td>Radiation Safety Officer</td>
<td>276-2212</td>
<td>Ionizing and Non-Ionizing Radiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todd Caschera</td>
<td>Safety Specialist</td>
<td>276-2281</td>
<td>Lab Safety and Hazardous Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Wicks</td>
<td>Operations Specialist</td>
<td>276-6427</td>
<td>Database &amp; Web support, Hazardous Waste</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² “Fire Safety Procedures” Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Department of Public Safety. 2010 Web.
LAB REPORTS
Provide explicit, written instructions on how to write lab reports, including what they should contain and what they are expected to accomplish. It is a good idea to provide a detailed syllabus at the beginning of the term, which explains lab reporting, provides an overview of the experiments, and includes whatever practical information – phone numbers, locations, due dates, etc. – the students will need throughout the year. Make sure that the reports come in as scheduled and try to allow students to revise based on your original evaluation of their report. Give specific explanations on improving both the report and the student’s laboratory procedures. Writing, remember, is a learning process, not simply a matter of report.

PREPARING FOR THE LAB
If you can, perform the experiment before the students do, so that you will know the procedures fully and be prepared to handle any possible difficulties or questions. When answering questions, be careful not to create the impression that there is one single correct answer. They are learning how to think in a particular manner; they are not following a recipe. If, for whatever reason, the experiment cannot be performed ahead of time, work it out in your head or on paper and discuss it with faculty members.

FAMILIARIZING STUDENTS WITH METHODS AND PROCEDURES
Before they perform the experiment, provide the students with an explanation of the equipment and materials they will be working with. They should not know exactly what to expect, but they should know the basic procedures.
ASSISTING IN THE PREPARATION OF TESTS

Like most other aspects of teaching, testing has two objectives: evaluation and education. Prepare tests, exams, and essays so that student performance accurately reflects understanding of the material. This way, the student will learn something in the process of discovering how much he or she knows about the subject.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS
The students should know beforehand exactly what material they will be responsible for and how they will be graded. It is a good idea to provide sample questions and practice tests, but it is not wise to give the same test twice. Sororities and fraternities keep files, and a duplicate exam will give some students an unfair advantage.

WHAT A TEST SHOULD COVER
A test should cover only the material central to the course objectives, and should allow students to demonstrate a range of understanding. A test should also present problems of varying complexity, reflecting the differentiation among student capacities. If the best student in the class gets 100% and everyone else fails, obviously the test was prepared for one person only.

TYPES OF TESTS
There are essentially three different kinds of tests. Each is better suited for testing a particular kind of knowledge.

• When testing for students’ absorption of factual material, multiple choice, true false, matching, or fill in the blank formats are best. They are easier for teachers to evaluate because they are quickly graded and provide little room for debate, but they are hard to prepare properly.

• To find out how well students can apply the theories or techniques they have been taught, prepare problems, multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. They offer students a chance to demonstrate powers of memory and abstraction. These kinds of tests are more time consuming to grade.

• To test analytic and evaluative capacities, use essays and multiple-choice tests. Essays allow students to demonstrate their ability to communicate complicated ideas. Essays, of course, are very time consuming to grade and require considerable, specific commentary.
GRADING

Grading provides a standardized measure of a student’s performance. Employers and graduate schools rely on such measures to help them decide between candidates. Grades provide students with a detailed measure of their performance in a particular course. Grades can encourage, reinforce, reward, redirect, challenge, affirm and motivate. Students should never construe a grade as a punishment. It is important that students understand that a grade, good or bad, represents only their level of performance in a particular course.

GRADING TECHNIQUES

Normative grading ranks an individual within a class, while criteria grading indicates an individual's achievement measured against a standard set by the teacher. If you grade according to a norm and distribute the grades in a class over a curve, then someone looking at the grades will be able to tell how a student did in relation to the other students in the class. Criteria grading offers the advantage of allowing a student to perform to his/her own level, but as a result it offers no information about the student's rank within a class.

INFORMING STUDENTS OF WHAT IS EXPECTED

Whether you choose normative or criteria grading or some combination of both, it is crucial to make your expectations explicit early on and stick to them. If you vacillate between methods, or change your mind without careful and open deliberation, students will believe that your grading is arbitrary and will resent your efforts. They will learn less and you will be evaluated poorly. Your grading should always be fair, but the students should not imagine that a grade is negotiable. If a student petitions you, claiming that you have made a mistake, consider the claim carefully. Do not simply raise the grade, but do not refuse to consider the matter either. The former will fill your office with clamoring students; the latter may well be unfair.

PROVIDING FAST AND VALUABLE FEEDBACK

If grades are going to be useful to the student, they must be informative and they must come back to the student early enough so that he or she can learn from your evaluation. A grade should always include a complete analysis of the student’s efforts. The student should know why a paper is a B, what would make it an A, or what needs to be learned to improve the student’s understanding. Providing models of excellent and less than excellent answers or solutions can be beneficial because it gives students a concrete idea of what is expected of them. Be careful, however, about using truly dreadful examples in order to get a laugh.

CHEATING

Rensselaer does not tolerate academic dishonesty. The Rensselaer Handbook provides academic integrity rules that you must follow (see Appendix I). You should also make every effort to ensure that the assigned work load is rigorous but not overwhelming, and that assignments and exams do not lend themselves to illicit collaboration.

MAINTAINING A GRADE BOOK

See Appendix VII for a sample electronic grade book template.
CLASS PARTICIPATION
Some portion of the grade should be reserved for class participation. This encourages students to keep up with the work from day to day. By expecting participation in class, you encourage them to take an active role in their education; they will learn more about the subject and develop a greater command of their social skills. Don't hesitate to ask questions of people who appear to be hiding or even of people who are shy.

KEEPING A GRADE BOOK
Keep detailed and accurate electronic records of your process of evaluation and all conversations with students about grades. If your records are accurate, you will be able to defend grading decisions in the event of a controversy.

A student's progress and achievement are personal matters. Do not publicly post grades. Inform your students that once grades are entered into the Student Information System they will be available the next day.

GRADING AND EVALUATING WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS
Evaluating written assignments requires locating answers, understanding the topic, and understanding the elements of good writing. Take some time on your own to review any of the numerous available resources on writing, or even consider taking a writing course to refresh your own writing skills. If you prefer self-instruction, one recent publication, “On Writing,” by Stephen King, (yes, that Stephen King), is an excellent choice.4

To grade writing, consider grammar, spelling and content organization. A paper should contain an introduction, the body of the work, and a conclusion summarizing all the main points.

In your feedback to the student, offer suggestions for improvement. Encourage students to continue to write on a regular basis, to read extensively across a wide range of topics, and to access the numerous resources on the subject of writing. However, while grading, (unless the assignment is literally to evaluate writing skill, or your department or professor has specific writing guidelines), you should look primarily at the student’s understanding of the material and secondarily at the student’s writing expertise.

## Characteristics of Effective Teachers

The following characteristics appear again and again in studies of effective teachers. These qualities can be classified according to a scheme worked out by M. Hildebrand in a 1971 study in which opinions on effective teaching from both faculty and students were analyzed.\(^5\)

| Organization & Clarity | • explains clearly  
|                        | • is well prepared  
|                        | • makes difficult topics easy to understand  
|                        | • uses examples, details, analogies, metaphors, and variety in modes of explanation to make material not only understandable but memorable  
|                        | • makes the objectives of the course and each class clear  
|                        | • establishes a context for material  |
| Analytic/Synthetic Approach | • has a thorough command of the field  
|                                | • contrasts the implications of various theories  
|                                | • gives the student a sense of the field, its past, present, and future directions, the origins of ideas and concepts  
|                                | • presents facts and concepts from related fields  
|                                | • discusses viewpoints other than his/her own  |
| Dynamism & Enthusiasm | • is an energetic, dynamic person  
|                        | • seems to enjoy teaching  
|                        | • conveys a love of the field  
|                        | • has an aura of self-confidence  |
| Instructor-Group Interaction | • can stimulate, direct, and pace interaction with the class  
|                                | • encourages independent thought and accepts criticism  
|                                | • uses wit and humor effectively  
|                                | • is a good public speaker  
|                                | • knows whether or not the class is following the material and is sensitive to students’ motivation  
|                                | • is concerned about the quality of his/her teaching  |
| Instructor-Individual Student Interaction | • is perceived as fair, especially in his/her methods of evaluation  
|                                               | • is seen by students as approachable and a valuable source of advice even on matters not directly related to the course  |

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THE ULTIMATE GOAL: ACTIVE LEARNING

If you needed to learn how to do something, would you rather listen to someone describe the process or be invited to join in a demonstration of the process? If you had to form an opinion about something, would you rather listen to someone explain his reasoning or be invited to analyze his reasoning along with him? If you knew you had to remember a large amount of new information, would you rather rush through the material without the opportunity to reflect on it or be given time to review, connect, and apply the information as you went along?

Whether you’re facing a lecture hall filled with 300 students or a seminar table with 15 students, one of your primary goals for the class should be to actively engage students with the material. The research is clear: Students learn more when they are asked to actively participate in the process of learning, whether it’s through discussion, practice, review, or application. This is in stark contrast to the idea of the student as a passive recipient of knowledge, absorbing information presented by the instructor. For this reason, active learning is an important theme in this handbook. Active learning strategies should be incorporated into every component of your course design. These range from short partner discussions during lecture to problem- or case-based research projects to small-group critical analysis exercises during seminars.

Active learning promotes independent, critical, and creative thinking. Students must engage with material in order to practice and develop thinking skills. You can facilitate this by asking students to analyze, synthesize, or apply material, both in the classroom and in class assignments.

For instance, in case-based problem-solving exercises, students must analyze the information they are given, generate or compare possible conclusions and solutions, and decide on a final strategy or interpretation. You can use case studies in a lecture and have students work out their solutions independently or in small groups. You can also use case studies as the basis for major projects or exams.

Another active learning technique that develops thinking skills is debate: you can present competing view-points in lecture and assign students to defend one of the viewpoints in a short (five-minute) written exercise or classroom debate. To further develop students’ thinking skills, you might ask students to defend and critique a single view, to “switch” views after they have defended one, or to find a broader perspective that can accommodate key ideas from both views. Active learning promotes collaboration.

Collaborative group work can be an extremely useful addition to a large class. For example, small-group discussions help students understand and retain material while also serving the broader goals of developing their communication skills and increasing their awareness of their classmates as learning resources.

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SEVEN WAYS TO HANDLE NERVOUSNESS

1. **PRACTICE**
   Practice doesn’t make perfect, but doing a presentation out loud several times before the real thing will make you feel more confident, especially if you practice under conditions as close to the actual situation as possible. Do at least one dry run in front of an audience, even if the audience is just a friend.

2. **CONCENTRATE ON THE IDEAS**
   Concentrate on the ideas you want to get across, not on your own nervousness. Even shy people speak up when it’s something they care about. Think about your audience’s needs, not your own.

3. **MAKE A STRONG START**
   You’ll be most nervous at the beginning of the talk, so start with an introduction that will be easy to remember and that will relax you as well as the audience.

4. **VISUALIZE**
   Rehearse for your first presentation by actually visualizing how it will go. Imagine what you’d like to say, how you’d like to say it, and a positive response from the audience. Many athletes use a similar approach by imagining an entire dive or jump, in detail, before they actually do it.

5. **USE AUDIOVISUAL AIDS OR MULTIMEDIA**
   Particularly if you have lots of technical information to cover, it can be reassuring to have much of it already written on transparencies or PowerPoint slides. Even just an outline on the board can reassure you that you won’t forget what you want to say. Be sure to look at your audience as much as possible, however, and not at your outline or PowerPoint slides.

6. **ASSUME A CONFIDENT ATTITUDE**
   To a large extent, you can control your own reaction to sweaty palms or a beating heart. Tell yourself you’re “psyched,” not nervous. Remember that to an audience, nervousness can seem like dynamism or energy. Your attitude will probably determine what the audience thinks.

7. **BREATHE**
   Right before your presentation, take a few moments to regulate and deepen your breathing. When it comes to public speaking, your breath is your main support. The moment you start to feel a case of nerves building up, take a deep breath. You will start to feel better immediately and your voice will convey your relaxation and confidence.
COMMON CONCERNS OF FIRST-TIME DISCUSSION LEADERS

For all their challenges, discussion sections are for many the most rewarding kind of teaching. You have a relatively small number of students whom you will get to know well; if you are like most TAs there will be many students eager to talk to you when they see you on campus. You will have an enormous potential to influence these students. Students crave intellectually surprising, challenging, and stimulating discussions. If you can successfully impart your own passion while helping students reach their own insights, you will have achieved one of the highest goals of the university. As the years pass, you may even run across students who chose your field because of the great discussions they had in your section. Here, we focus on some of the concerns common to first-time discussion leaders:

“How can I lead a good discussion on the material when I’m not an expert?”

Many TAs feel overwhelmed by the breadth of material to be covered in their section. They often find themselves going over texts for the first time just a few days before the students do. In other cases, you may be serving as a TA of an undergraduate course that you took years ago at a different institution. Unfortunately, there is no simple remedy for this situation. Your first time as a TA of a course, you may simply have to do a lot of preparation. It will be easier, however, if you talk with your colleagues in the course. Help them in your strong areas while they work with you on theirs. Experienced TAs can be of particular assistance. Also, simply attending lecture, even if the professor does not require it of you, will go a long way in preparing you for discussion sections. In addition, discuss with the professor what his or her expectations for the section are. Be clear about the major themes or goals of the course and how these should be reflected in your group’s discussion. Even without being an expert, you will be able to guide the discussion toward the most important ideas. It’s also fine to tell students when you don’t know something (and much better than giving them an incorrect answer!).

TAs commonly interact with students in discussion sections. Clear communication with the course instructor about section goals and explicit understandings about student and TA roles greatly enhance the quality of the experience for all involved. It’s important for students to recognize that scholars continue to learn all the time. If possible, tell them how you’d go about finding an answer or bring it to the next class.
“How do I know if my discussions are going well, and how can I salvage a section that isn’t going well?”

Usually student attendance, degree of participation or responsiveness, and even expressions, gestures, or body language will give you some indication. Ask students how the section is going, both informally and formally (e.g., through mid-semester evaluations or a small-group evaluation). You can often transform a flailing section simply by asking students how they think their time could best be used in section. Do not be afraid that by acknowledging the lackluster spirit of a discussion you are showing weakness; instead, use it as a springboard to ask students what they really care about and what it would take to turn up the excitement of the section. Students respond positively to any sign that a TA is willing to take feedback and is interested in helping students to succeed in the course. Be willing to shake things up a bit if your discussion section stagnates over time; for example, if you usually direct the discussion for the full hour, consider having students discuss the material in pairs first.

Steps down to the Pittsburgh Building, home of the Lally School of Management
THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS

For many TAs, the first day of class can be a daunting prospect. The impression that their students form about them, as well as about the course, may last the entire term. There are many administrative details to cover, but you also want to set the stage for how the section will run for the rest of the semester, and what you and your students should expect from each other. Consider the following suggestions to help you get through the first day and establish a good working relationship with your class.

• First, introduce and say something about yourself, about what you are studying, what you find genuinely interesting about this course, and what your other interests are. Explaining why you find your field exciting will communicate your enthusiasm for the subject you’re teaching.

• Decide what you want your students to call you. Help them learn your name by writing it on a corner of the blackboard for the first few sessions.

• Tell your students how, when and where to contact you. Give them your office hours, phone number, and e-mail address. Specify your policy for replying to emails (i.e., same day until 8 p.m.), your policy for outside-office hours meetings (i.e., 24 hour notice) and any hours when you do not want to be contacted.

• Convey your expectations and the expectations of the course as a whole by addressing some or all of the following:
  o What approach does the course take to the subject?
  o What is the role of the section in relation to the course?
  o What kind of preparation is expected?
  o Is attendance required?
  o In what ways will students be expected to participate? How can they best listen to and speak with each other (and not just you)?
  o Will you be distributing study questions, doing in-class writing, working in small groups, etc.? Will there be individual or group presentations?
  o How much time and effort will the course require?
  o How will their work be graded? What are the policies on written work and deadlines?

• Learn students’ names and use them as quickly as possible.

• Encourage students to use each other’s names as soon as possible. One way to do this is to have students make name tents by writing their names on both the front and back sides of paper sheets folded horizontally that can sit in front of each student for the first few sessions. You can also urge students to address each other directly by name, and compile and distribute a class list with names and contact information.

• Start in on the work as soon as possible. Work through a specific problem or piece of material that illustrates what the course asks of students and what it has to offer them. Engaging students in actual work during the first class communicates seriousness of purpose and gives students (especially those who are still shopping around) an idea of what your class will be like.
HELPFUL HINTS

• Be conspicuously organized.
• Provide a syllabus.
• Give clear instructions.
• Recommend significant reading materials.
• Use diagnostic tests early.
• Stress major topics and techniques.
• Give real world examples and/or model assignments.
• Review material.
• Encourage discussion among everyone to facilitate active learning.
• Provide quick and useful feedback.
• Encourage revision where possible.
• Avoid note reading.
• Learn each student’s name, even, and perhaps especially, when the class is large.
• Organize your topic carefully and divide it up into a manageable number of sections.
• Provide each section with a memorable subject heading.
• Begin the lecture by writing those section headings on the blackboard, using PowerPoint, or using the overhead.
• Explain the general topic for the day.
• Remind the students about the last lecture and explain how it ties into the present one.
• Take into account differences in learning rates.
• Repeat yourself by saying the same thing in different ways, and at different times.
• Use real life, specific, and memorable examples.
• Break up the talk with questions and demonstrations and try to vary the pace.
• Develop three or four different ideas in the space of an hour.
• Use visual aids and handouts (see text box at right).

MEDIA SUPPORT

Computer projection and overheads are available from Media Operations, at 276-8282, Website address: mms.rpi.edu/.

Computer equipment is provided on a rental basis, so the course professor must approve use.
THE STUDENT – TA RELATIONSHIP

As a TA, you are both teacher and student. You may be quite close in age to the people you teach, and it is very easy to become friendly with your students - to treat them as though they were in a class with you. It is, of course, important to have a good rapport with students, but it is dangerous to be too ingratiating. Evaluating student performance is even more difficult when you are close to your students. You should also not discuss your students with anyone other than the appropriate faculty.

If you develop too close a rapport with students, a student may imagine a romantic involvement with you. Under no circumstances should you pursue a relationship other than an instructor-student relationship with anyone whom you teach. The relationship between teaching assistants, faculty, and students cannot be sexual in nature.

If you play the older sister or brother, you may find yourself providing counseling services. This is not your role. If a student has personal problems, and wants to talk with you about them, be sympathetic, but direct them to the relevant counseling center rather than trying to help them yourself (see box at right).

For more information on inappropriate interactions, please see: Selections from the Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights & Responsibilities (section on Sexual Harassment), Appendix I.
GENDER AND RACE IN THE CLASSROOM

Women and minority students are occasionally more reluctant to speak out in class. While these statements may not hold for every class, TAs should be aware that gender and ethnicity may be related to a student’s degree of participation in discussion sections. To better ensure that your teaching provides equal opportunities for all students to participate in the discussion, we suggest some simple strategies:

• Get to know your students as individuals. When you know their personalities, interests, and backgrounds, you are less likely to stereotype them unconsciously. At the same time, students are more likely to participate in a class in which the teacher has shown genuine interest in them. When students know something about you and your interests, too, you become less of a stereotype to them, and they are more likely to be open to you.

• Become a careful observer of your class. During or after each section, note who participates and the length, depth, and frequency of contributions. Notice the responses students receive, especially when they are interrupted. Observe any differences in tone or approach that occur in your responses to students and their responses to each other.

• Hold all students responsible for the conduct and content of discussions. Encourage each student to elicit information from other students, to collaborate with others, to ask good questions, and to make comments or argue a point. Let students know that being rude or overly competitive, or interrupting and ignoring other students in discussion will not be rewarded.

• Listen to all students with equal seriousness.

• Ask all students the same kinds of questions—don’t reserve the abstract questions for one kind of student and the factual or experiential questions for another.

• Keep students from interrupting each other and intervene when comments occur too rapidly to permit a student to initiate or complete their contribution.

• Ask shy or non-participatory students outside of class how they can be helped to participate; you may suggest that they contribute in the next class on a topic in which they have insight or interest.

• Make room for individuals to comment on their personal experiences, but do not put students in the position of speaking for an entire demographic group.

• Model for your students the use of inclusive language in their writing and speaking, e.g., use “humanity” rather than “man.”

• Don’t be intimidated by students who display contemptuous attitudes toward you because of your gender or ethnicity. Don’t refrain from adding gender analysis to your discussion just because someone is skeptical about its usefulness.
• Find ways to articulate that there is a place for women and minority students in your discipline, which may appear to be overwhelmingly white and male.
• Sexist or racist behaviors and remarks have no place in the classroom and should not be tolerated. Subtle discrimination goes unnoticed more easily and for that reason may be more dangerous. Remember, your students for the most part are young and may have little awareness of their own biases. They may have had little experience with people of different ethnic backgrounds, races, or classes. Sometimes, it may be your job to help them see and privately question their own assumptions. It is always your job to help every student become a full participant in class, both as a speaker and as a listener. This requires sensitivity to students as individuals and constant evaluations of your own assumptions.

RESOURCES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
The Office of International Services for Students and Scholars (ISSS) is a wonderful resource for international students. For more information about their services, visit their website at: http://doso.rpi.edu/update.do?catcenterkey=11.

A SELECTION OF ONLINE RESOURCES FOUND ON THE ISSS WEBSITE IS BELOW:
Owning a car - http://doso.rpi.edu/update.do?catcenterkey=113
Public transportation, Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) - http://www.cdtar.org/
Personal and legal issues - http://doso.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=731
Health-related information - http://doso.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=730
Regional information and attractions - http://doso.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=732
Cultural and friendship organizations - http://doso.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=728
Rensselaer resources - http://doso.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=727
SERVING AS A TA & YOUR PROFESSIONAL FUTURE

As satisfying as teaching can be in its own right, a record of successful TA experiences has become increasingly important to PhDs seeking their first academic position. Even at research universities, search committees look for candidates who combine outstanding scholarly credentials with evidence of teaching ability. In fact, appointment papers for junior faculty may now specifically include a section in which the candidate’s potential or experiences as a teacher must be documented. When you apply for an academic position, you typically will be asked to include a curriculum vitae and three or more letters of recommendation. A vita should list the courses you have taught, the courses in which you have served as a TA, and the courses that you are prepared to teach, but this by itself is not very informative. You should ask at least one of your faculty references to comment on your teaching ability. Also consider preparing a teaching portfolio that best presents your abilities and experience. To increase the value of your TA experience on the job market, we recommend the following:

1. Make sure your faculty supervisors are aware that you will want them to write letters of recommendation that can comment favorably, and specifically, on your teaching.

2. Show evidence of organization and efficiency. Most TAs approach their initial teaching assignments enthusiastically. They are willing to devote a great deal of time and effort to making their section intellectually stimulating. This kind of enthusiasm makes teaching and learning exciting, but remember not to neglect your own graduate work.

Learn to budget your time carefully; you will need to do so for the rest of your academic career. Your future job will probably require a number of obligations besides teaching, and you will only be able to accomplish them by developing an organized and efficient approach toward your classes. Realize that your faculty supervisor may not be impressed by the simple fact that you spend a great deal of time on your course or section (in fact, this could make an unfavorable impression, if your own research falls by the wayside). The best way to make a good impression is to show that you can manage the teaching and your own work. Be as systematic as possible in things like classroom preparation and grading. Keep your outlines, notes, classroom handouts, etc. in proper files; you can make these files available when the time comes to evaluate your performance (e.g., when the professor is writing that letter of recommendation).

3. Consider putting together a teaching portfolio: A comprehensive way of documenting, reflecting on, and strengthening your record as a teacher. As teaching continues to be an important factor in the academic job market, the portfolio is a practical asset as well as a way to develop professionally.
UNIVERSITY RULES

1. STUDENT BILL OF RIGHTS/SYLLABUS

2. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

3. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

1. STUDENT BILL OF RIGHTS/SYLLABUS

The Student Bill of Rights is contained in the Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities and should be read carefully. Basically, students are entitled to a syllabus that provides a full explanation of:

• Course objectives
• What material will be covered
• What material will be tested
• Methods of testing
• Criteria of evaluation
• Procedures for testing
• Dates that assignments are due
• A full description of classroom procedures, any deviation from which should be explained, and a thorough definition of academic dishonesty and the penalties that any dishonesty entails.

2. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Untoward sexual behavior is a serious offense. You should carefully read the sections in the Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities concerning the definition of sexual harassment, and become fully knowledgeable of Rensselaer policy and procedures.

If you develop too close a rapport with students, a student may imagine a romantic involvement with you. Under no circumstances should you pursue a relationship other than an instructor-student relationship with anyone whom you teach. The relationship between teaching assistants, faculty, and students cannot be sexual in nature.

3. Academic Integrity

The violation of academic integrity is a serious offense, punishable by the disciplinarian penalties outlined in the Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to:

• Fraud (altering work after it is returned and claiming it was correct in the first place)
• Collaboration (working with others without authorization from the instructor)
• Copying
• Cribbing (using cheat sheets or electronically accessed information during an exam)
• Plagiarism (claiming to have written something written by someone else)
• Sabotage (destroying someone else's work)
APPENDICES

I. SELECTIONS FROM THE RENSSELAER HANDBOOK OF STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES
   - ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
   - AFFIRMATIVE ACTION
   - ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS
   - RULES FOR MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC ORDER
   - SEXUAL HARASSMENT
   - REPORTING PROCEDURES
   - GOOD SAMARITAN POLICY
   - COMPUTER CITIZENSHIP

II. IMPORTANT OFFICES

III. OFFICE OF GRADUATE EDUCATION (OGE)

IV. GRADUATE PROGRAM DIRECTORS (GPDs) & GRADUATE PROGRAM ASSISTANTS (GPAs)

V. FIRE SAFETY PROCEDURES

VI. ONLINE ARTICLES AND RESOURCES FOR BEST PRACTICES IN TEACHING

VII. GRADE BOOK SAMPLE

VIII. LABORATORY CONTACTS

IX. RENSSELAER CAMPUS MAP
NOTE ON THE RENSSELAER HANDBOOK OF STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

To familiarize you with the types of issues covered in the Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights & Responsibilities, we have included the following excerpts, which are also most relevant to the purpose of this TA handbook. However, all rules, regulations and procedures stated in the Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights & Responsibilities pertain to you, as a student of Rensselaer. A full copy of the Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights & Responsibilities should be thoroughly reviewed. It is available at:


I. SELECTIONS FROM THE RENSSELAER HANDBOOK OF STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Intellectual integrity and credibility are the foundation of all academic work. Academic dishonesty 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. If found in violation of academic dishonesty policy, students may be subject to two types of penalties: the instructor administers an academic (grade) penalty, and the student may be subject to the procedures and penalties of the student judicial system outlined in this handbook. Since academic dishonesty is a violation of the Grounds for Disciplinary Action, the student may be subject to any of the following sanctions: disciplinary warning; disciplinary probation; disciplinary suspension, expulsion and/or alternative actions as agreed on by the student and hearing officer. It should be noted that no student who
allegedly commits academic dishonesty will be able to drop or change the grade option for the course in question.

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

Academic Fraud
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.

Collaboration
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.

Copying
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.

Cribbing
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.

Fabrication
Unauthorized falsification or invention of any information in an academic exercise. For example, use of “bought” or “ready-made” term papers, or falsifying lab records or reports.

Plagiarism
Representing the work or words of another as one’s own through the omission of acknowledgment or reference. For example, 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.

Sabotage
 Destruction of another student’s work. For example, destroying a model, lab experiment, computer program, or term paper developed by another student.

Substitution
Utilizing 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.

Faculty Procedures for Responding to Academic Dishonesty (as stated in the Rensselaer Faculty Handbook)
If there is reason to believe a student in a course may have been involved in academic dishonesty, then contact the student(s) and schedule a meeting to discuss the allegations. This meeting should occur within ten (10) Institute business days of having discovered the possible dishonesty.
When meeting with the student, review the circumstances and evidence related to the suspicion of academic dishonesty and allows him or her the opportunity to provide his or her perspective on the situation. Take notes during the meeting to document important information. After reviewing the situation, speaking to any witnesses, etc., make a determination as to the nature and extent of the violation, if any, by the accused student. If it is concluded that a student has violated the Institute academic dishonesty policy, it is the faculty member’s responsibility to determine the academic (grade) penalty (i.e., failure of the course, significant reduction of the final grade, etc.) and to communicate this decision to the student in writing. This communication should occur within five (5) Institute business days of having met with the student. 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.

This written decision is copied to the Senior Judicial Administrator in the Dean of Students Office, along with a brief summary of the case facts and a copy of any supporting documentation (i.e., exams/assignments involving cheating, crib sheets, witness statements, etc.). A copy of the incident of academic dishonesty will be kept on file in the Dean of Students Office as a record of the incident and a way to monitor repeat/multiple offenses.

In addition to the academic penalty, the faculty member can request that judicial action be taken against a student for violating Grounds for Disciplinary Action, specifically academic dishonesty. Such requests should be made in writing to the Senior Judicial Administrator or Dean of Students. The documentation will be reviewed, assigned to a hearing officer, and proceed in accordance with Institute protocol.”

*Appeal Process for Academic Penalty for Academic Dishonesty* (as stated in the *Rensselaer Faculty Handbook*)

Decisions regarding grades are initially the responsibility and jurisdiction of the course professor, and the school in which the academic dishonesty occurred, as there is no one in a better position to make this determination. Any appeal of a grade or academic penalty for academic dishonesty falls under the same authority. Therefore, a student can submit a written appeal of an academic penalty to the Department Chair within five (5) Institute business days of being notified of the faculty member’s decision. If the course professor is the Department Chair 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 Chair (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 Chair (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, 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 dishonesty policy are prohibited from dropping a course in order to avoid the academic penalty.

**Prevention of Academic Dishonesty**

For those courses or academic exercises in which either the instructor or student considers proper definition of academic dishonesty to be open to interpretation, the instructor is expected to outline his or her particular standards. 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.

**AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

It is the policy of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute that all persons be provided equal opportunities regardless of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, creed, national origin, marital status, Vietnam-era Veteran status, disabled veteran status, or disability.

Rensselaer commits itself to affirmative action and will make a major effort to increase the number of minority members and women in the student body, faculty, and staff. While maintaining high standards of excellence, Rensselaer will continue to broaden its pool of available minority and women candidates for positions on the faculty, staff, and in the student body. The Institute will, furthermore, endeavor to graduate men and women with a commitment to affirmative action and to making equal opportunities a reality.

**I. Basis for Filing a Complaint of Discrimination**

Any adverse action or personnel action or other act of discrimination based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age (except to the extent permitted by law), creed, religion, national origin, marital status,
Vietnam-era Veteran status, disabled veteran status, or disability, may be the basis for filing a complaint of discrimination.

II. Who May File a Complaint of Discrimination?

Any employee, applicant for employment, or student at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute who believes that he or she has been discriminated against may file a complaint of discrimination. A group of eligible people may also file a complaint.

III. Use of Formal Administrative Channels

Employees are encouraged to utilize the formal chain of supervision whenever possible to seek relief or redress before filing a complaint of discrimination outlined in these procedures.

Students are encouraged to utilize the formal Institute chain of supervision (i.e., the Dean of Students Office, the instructor, department Chairperson, and/or appropriate academic Dean) to seek relief or redress before filing a complaint of discrimination outlined in these procedures.

IV. Matters Covered Under These Procedures

Matters covered under these procedures include, but are not limited to: hiring, promoting, demoting, transferring, terminating, assignment of rate of compensation, training, assignment of Institute housing, housing referral, use of Institute facilities, admission, and allocation of financial aid.

V. Prohibition Against Retaliation

Retaliatory action against any individual or group for filing, participating in, or cooperating with an investigation or Complaint of Discrimination under these procedures is strictly prohibited.

VI. Confidentiality

All aspects of these procedures are strictly confidential, and all participants in a complaint must refrain from breaching the confidential nature of a complaint.

VII. Time Limit for Filing a Complaint of Discrimination

In order to pursue redress through Rensselaer’s affirmative action procedures, an aggrieved employee or student should meet with the Affirmative Action Adviser to the President or designee as soon as possible after the alleged act of discrimination to discuss the complaint; in any case, no later than 60 days of the date by which the employee or student should reasonably have known of the action. In the case of students, the time limit shall be from the date of the incident up through 12 months following the date of graduation when the incident is between a student and a faculty member who is responsible for assessing the student’s work for grading purposes in a classroom. This time limit will also apply to incidents involving a student and the student’s adviser or others responsible for making an appraisal of any of the student’s activities.

VIII. Where to File

An employee, student, or applicant who wishes to file a Complaint of Discrimination must first meet with the Affirmative Action Adviser to the President or designee.

**ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS**

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute honors its role as an educational institution by establishing policies and guidelines that regulate the consumption of alcohol on campus and by developing proactive alcohol and other drug awareness,
educational, and behavior-change programs. Rensselaer is committed to educational goals in this area. The Institute’s aim is to develop an alcohol and other drug policy that is clear and consistent; to inform and educate individuals with regard to the policy, and the risk factors associated with alcohol use and abuse; to create an environment that promotes low risk use, safety, and individual accountability; and to maintain a healthy campus community where problems associated with alcohol and other drugs are minimal.

The overall philosophy of the Institute is that each individual member of the campus community is responsible for his/her own actions. When making decisions to consume beverage alcohol or to provide beverage alcohol to others, individuals must be mindful of the inherent consequences and risks involved. In addition, individuals are responsible for understanding and complying with applicable laws. The Institute will not be responsible for enforcing State and Local laws, nor will it shield individuals from the legal consequences of their actions should they choose to violate these laws.

Rensselaer’s policies and regulations are designed to encourage consistent and reasonable standards in our academic community. It is expected that all members will contribute to maintaining a positive and healthy environment by adhering to this policy. The Institute Alcohol and Other Drug Policy contain sections on:

I. The Law: New York State Statutes Regarding Alcohol Liability
II. Institute regulations on alcohol (see textbox at right)

III. Procedures and guidelines for on-campus events at which beverage alcohol is served
IV. Specific area policies for alcohol
V. The Law: Statutes Regarding Other Drugs
VI. Institute regulations on other drugs (printed below)
VII. Policy Enforcement
VIII. Violations/Sanctions
IX. Institute alcohol and other drug review committee

In accordance with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act (1989), the complete Rensselaer Alcohol and Other Drug Policy is available at: http://www.rpi.edu/dept/cct/apps/student health/docs/AlcoholPolicy.pdf

Extra copies are available at the Student Health Center, or by contacting readdk@rpi.edu.

RULES FOR MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC ORDER

New York State Education Law, Sections 6430-6435 requires all colleges and universities to adopt regulations for the “maintenance of public order on college campuses and other college property used for educational purposes and provide a program of enforcement thereof.” The law requires each college to file such rules and regulations with the New York State Education Department.

New York State Education Law Sections 6430-6435

The trustees or other governing board of every college chartered by the regents or incorporated by act of the legislature shall
adopt rules and regulations for the maintenance of public order on college campuses and other college property used for educational purposes and produce a program for the enforcement thereof. Such rules and regulations shall prohibit, among other things, any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers mental or physical health or involves the forced consumption of liquor or drugs for the purpose of initiation into or affiliation with any organization. Such rules and regulations shall govern the conduct of students, faculty, and other staff as well as visitors and other licensees and invitees on such campuses and property. The penalties for violations of such rules and regulations shall be clearly set forth therein and shall include provisions for the ejection of a violator from such campus and property, and in the case of a student or faculty violator his/her suspension, expulsion or other appropriate disciplinary action and in the case of an organization which authorizes such conduct, rescission of permission for that organization to operate on campus property. Such penalties shall be in addition to any penalty pursuant to the penal law or any other chapter to which a violator or organization may be subject. A copy of such rules and regulations shall be given to all students enrolled in said college and shall be deemed to be part of the by-laws of all organizations operating on said campus which shall review annually such by-laws with individuals affiliated with such organizations.

Academic freedom is essential to a university community. Freedom of speech and freedom of assembly are essential to academic freedom. Every member of the academic community should be free to pursue full involvement in the educational process of the university without interference from others. All members of the university community should be able to express their views by words and actions and to express by words and actions their opposition to the views and opinions of others. In order to preserve these rights all members of the university community have a responsibility to conduct themselves so that such rights may be exercised without interfering with the rights of others and without fear of violence or injury or interference.

The following rules and regulations are adopted to maintain public order on the university campus and other university property.

1. Any act which would constitute a violation of federal, New York, or local law if committed off-campus is prohibited on campus or on other university property.

2. No unauthorized person or persons shall interfere with reasonable and free access to, exit from, and normal use of any university building, classroom, or other university premises.

3. No unauthorized person or persons shall interfere with the freedom of movement or speech of any individual or group.

4. When a speaker is the object of protest or controversy, no unauthorized person or persons shall take any sign or other demonstration impediments into the building where the speech is to take place.

5. Every person who attends any lecture, speech, discussion, or public event shall treat all participants in an orderly and reasonably courteous manner.
6. No unauthorized person or persons shall disrupt or interfere with classes, educational activities, or any events sponsored by any university officer or official, faculty group, or student group.

7. No unauthorized person or persons shall utilize or threaten physical force, physical harassment, or physical obstruction.

8. No person or persons shall use language or actions likely to provoke or encourage physical violence.

9. No person or persons shall use, in public, language or gestures which are unreasonably abusive or obscene.

10. No person or persons shall, without proper authority, occupy any university buildings or premises.

11. No person or persons shall examine, disturb or destroy university records without permission of the person authorized to deal with such records.

12. No person or persons shall cause injury or damage to person or property.

13. Any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers mental or physical health or involves the forced consumption of liquor or drugs for the purpose of initiation into or affiliation with any organization is prohibited.

14. The possession of any rifle, shotgun, or firearm in or on the campus or other university property is prohibited.

15. In addition to complying with the requirements of the foregoing specific regulations, which are not exhaustive, members of the academic community shall conduct themselves in a manner which does not unreasonably disrupt the academic community or unreasonably infringe upon the rights of others.

Procedures
When requested by the Dean of Students or designee, persons engaged in any demonstration, meeting, or other occasion on campus or on Institute property used for educational purposes, or on other Institute property shall identify themselves in a manner satisfactory to the Dean or designee.

Only peaceful demonstrations are appropriate in an academic community and the Trustees are confident that no member or group of the Institute community will go beyond the bounds set by these regulations. In order to safeguard the interests of all members of the Institute community, it is requested that those planning a demonstration inform the Dean of Students Office as far in advance as is reasonably possible of any planned demonstration, its proposed locale and the object of intended protest, or other purpose.

At any demonstration, meeting, or other occasion, judgment as to whether the regulations are being observed shall be made at the scene by the Dean of Students or designee. The Dean of Students or designee may, before making a judgment, consult with appropriate individuals at the scene who are not involved in the demonstration, meeting, or other occasion. Responsibility for exercising such judgment shall rest solely with the Dean of Students or designee. It must be emphasized that judgment as to whether the regulations are being observed shall not be exercised by demonstrators, those demonstrated against, or spectators in contradiction to the expressed judgment of the Dean of
Students or designee, except at the risk of such individuals.

If the Dean of Students or designee at the scene of any demonstration, meeting, or other gathering determines that one or more of the regulations are being breached, he or she will request the participants to modify their conduct so as to comply with the regulations, indicating briefly and informally the nature of the breach of regulations and the requested corrective action. All participants and spectators shall comply immediately, fully and cooperatively with the requests of the Dean of Students or designee.

Should any participant or spectator decline to comply with the requests of the Dean of Students or designee, they shall be subject to ejection from the campus and, in the case of students, faculty and other staff, subject to disciplinary action by the university including suspension, expulsion, or other disciplinary action. Thereafter if, in the judgment of the President or any one of the President’s designees, there appears to be a clear and present danger of injury to person or property or disruption of university operations is threatened, the President or designee shall seek the aid of Public Safety, the courts, or other civil authority in maintaining or restoring order including, when appropriate, ejection of the violators from the campus or other Institute property.

Hearings and Disciplinary Action

In the event that any student, group of students, organization, or member of the faculty or staff becomes subject to disciplinary action as provided for in these rules and regulations, steps shall be taken to determine whether: The regulations have been breached; or The person(s) so violating willfully disobeyed any reasonable request of the Dean of Students or designee.

(a) In the case of a student, group of students, or organization comprised primarily of students, all alleged violations of the rules will be adjudicated within Rensselaer’s Judicial System in accordance with its procedures which are published by the Institute.

(b) In the case of a faculty member, a hearing will be held by a committee consisting of three faculty members to be selected as follows: two by the Faculty Senate and one by the President. Such committee shall, if such a breach or willful disobedience is established to its satisfaction, render a decision providing for expulsion, suspension or other appropriate disciplinary action. Such decision shall be subject to appeal to the President.

The faculty member shall be informed in writing, at least three business days before the hearing, of the charges to be considered. Faculty members, who are entitled to individual hearings if they so choose, shall have the opportunity to cross examine, produce evidence, and be heard in their own defense. They shall be permitted to have with them an adviser of their own choosing from within the Institute.

(c) In case of any member of the staff other than faculty, a hearing will be held by a special committee of at least three members appointed by the President. The President shall appoint the Chair. If such breach or willful disobedience be established to the satisfaction of such
committee it shall determine the nature and extent of any disciplinary action to be taken against the violator, including expulsion, suspension, or other appropriate disciplinary action. Such determination is subject to appeal to the President.

The staff member shall be informed in writing, at least three business days before the hearing, of the charges to be considered. Staff members, who are entitled to individual hearings if they so choose, shall have the opportunity to cross examine, produce evidence, and be heard in their own defense. They shall be permitted to have with them an adviser of their own choosing from within the Institute.

(d) No person who was involved in any incident which is the subject of a disciplinary hearing shall sit in judgment.

(e) Nothing in these rules shall prevent an informal discussion and settlement of an incident through normal administrative procedures if the alleged violator shall request such informal settlement in writing. Settlement of such informal discussion shall provide for expulsion, suspension, rescission of permission for an organization to operate on public property, or other appropriate disciplinary action. Informal settlement shall not bar the right of appeal.

Members of the Institute community are as citizens subject to penalties. In addition, they are subject to rules pertinent to the Institute community. Therefore, any student, faculty, or staff member may be subject to disciplinary action, as provided herein, in addition to such penalties as may be imposed by civil authorities.

In the event that visitors, licensees or invitees, or other persons who are not members of the academic community shall decline to comply with the request of the Dean of Students or designee or to comply with these rules, such persons shall be advised that they are no longer welcome on campus or on other Institute property and shall be requested to leave. If such persons fail to comply with such request, the President or the President’s designees may resort to the courts or other civil authority to enforce the request.

These rules and regulations may be amended by the Board of Trustees.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Notice Pursuant to the “Campus Sex Crimes Prevention Act” and Campus Crime Reporting and Statistics

In accordance with Federal and State law, the following notice is provided: The Advisory Committee on Campus Safety will provide upon request all campus crimes statistics as reported to the United States Department of Education.

The U.S. Department of Education web site address for campus crime statistics is:

The phone number for the Department of Public Safety, the designated college campus contact authorized to provide such statistics for the Institute, is 276-8527. In addition, information about sex offenders, if any, living or working at Rensselaer, will be available at the Department of Public Safety. For more information about, and access to New York’s “Sex Offender Registry,” go to:
http://criminaljustice.state.ny.us/nsor/index.htm
Sexual Assault Prevention

Rensselaer is committed to the standard that all members of the community shall be able to pursue their interests free from non-consensual sexual contact. Therefore, it is a violation of community standards, and Institute policy, to have sexual contact with any member of the community without the clear, freely chosen consent of those involved. Persons bringing action under this policy are encouraged to pursue the incident through the criminal justice system as well as the Institute disciplinary process as set forth in this handbook. Persons bringing action under this policy shall be notified of the outcome of any Rensselaer judicial action.

Rensselaer provides support to assist any individual in better understanding and pursuing the matter through internal and external means. In addition, Rensselaer provides counseling, referral, and related support to any individual involved in such an incident. Students or employees aware of any incident of campus sexual assault are encouraged to contact Public Safety (available 24 hours a day), the Dean of Students Office, and/or Human Resources as soon as possible.

All federal, state, and local laws apply at Rensselaer. Although the Institute may assist students who are charged with crimes, it will not protect anyone from prosecution. In addition, Rensselaer may impose sanctions of its own.

Sexual Harassment Awareness Policy

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute is committed to providing a work and learning environment free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment violates an individual’s fundamental rights and personal dignity.

Rensselaer considers sexual harassment in all its forms to be a serious offense. This policy applies to all staff, faculty, student employees, and students.

Definitions

Sexual harassment can involve males or females being harassed by members of either sex. Although sexual harassment typically involves a person in a greater position of authority as the harasser, individuals in positions of lesser or equal authority also can be found responsible for engaging in prohibited harassment.

Students and Rensselaer employees are prohibited from harassing other students and/or employees whether or not the incidents of harassment occur on Rensselaer premises and whether or not the incidents occur during working hours.

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (1) submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of employment or the educational relationship; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for employment or education decisions affecting the individual; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a students or employee’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working, educational, or living environment. While sexual harassment encompasses a wide range of conduct, some examples of specifically prohibited conduct include: Promising, directly or indirectly, a student or employee a reward, if the student or employee complies with a sexually oriented request.
Threatening, directly or indirectly, to retaliate against a student or an employee, if the student or employee refuses to comply with a sexually oriented request. Denying, directly or indirectly, a student or employee an employment or education related opportunity, if the student or employee refuses to comply with a sexually oriented request. Engaging in sexually suggestive conversation that is unwelcome or physical contact or touching another student or employee in a way that is unwelcome. Displaying, storing, or transmitting pornographic or sexually oriented materials. Engaging in indecent exposure. Making sexual or romantic advances toward a student or employee and persisting despite the student or employee’s rejection of the advances. Physical conduct such as assault, touching, or blocking normal movement. Retaliation for making harassment reports or threatening to report harassment.

Sexual harassment can be physical and/or psychological in nature. An aggregation of a series of incidents can constitute sexual harassment even if one of the incidents considered on its own would not be considered harassing conduct.

**REPORTING PROCEDURES**

*Reporting Procedure for Complaints, Discrimination, Harassment, or Retaliation Policy*

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute’s complaint procedure provides for immediate, thorough, and objective investigation of all claims of discrimination or harassment. If discrimination or harassment has occurred, Rensselaer will take appropriate remedial action that is commensurate with the severity of the offense.

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute strictly prohibits retaliation against any person for using this reporting procedure, or for filing, testifying, assisting or participating in any manner in any investigation or proceeding involving allegations of discrimination or harassment. Any person who violates this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

**Confidentiality**

All inquiries, complaints, and investigations are treated confidentially. Information is revealed strictly on a need-to-know basis. However, the identity of the complainant usually is revealed to the person(s) accused of such conduct and any witnesses. Publicizing information about alleged discrimination, harassment, or retaliation is strictly prohibited, and may be considered evidence of a malicious intent.

A copy of any investigation report will be included in the personnel file of any person who is found to have engaged in discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. All other information pertaining to a complaint or investigation is maintained by the Division of Human Resources in secure files.

**Procedures**

All incidents of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should be reported.

*Informal Resolution Procedures*

Students or employees often can stop or prevent discrimination, harassment, or retaliation by immediately and directly expressing his/her disapproval of the conduct. In any case, students and employees should report all incidents of discrimination or harassment to a Dean of Students Office representative.
Some complaints can be resolved through informal mediation between the two parties. The Dean of Students Office may arrange for or facilitate mediation between the parties and coordinate other informal problem resolution measures.

**Formal Resolution Procedures**

To initiate a formal investigation into an alleged incident involving discrimination, harassment, or retaliation by a Rensselaer employee, a student must file a complaint with Rensselaer’s Division of Human Resources.

A victim of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation can institute a formal complaint with the Dean of Students Office if the accused is a Rensselaer student.

In either instance, complaints should be filed as soon as possible after an incident of alleged discrimination, harassment, or retaliation occurs, and the informal resolution either fails or the complainant elects to go directly to a formal complaint. To ensure a prompt and thorough investigation, the complainant should provide as much of the following information as possible:

The name, department, and position of the person or persons allegedly causing the discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. A description of the incident(s), including the date(s), location(s), and the presence of any witnesses. The alleged effect of the incident(s) on the complainant’s position, salary, benefits, promotional opportunities, or other terms or conditions of employment. The names of other students or employees who might have been subject to the same or similar discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. Any steps the complainant has taken to try to stop the discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. Any other information the complainant believes to be relevant to the discrimination, harassment, or retaliation.

**Time Limit for Filing a Complaint**

In order to pursue redress through Rensselaer’s procedures, an aggrieved employee or student should meet with a representative of the Department of Human Resources or the Dean of Students Office, as the case may be, as soon as possible after the alleged act of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation to discuss the complaint; in any case, no later than 60 days of the date by which the employee or student should reasonably have known of the action. In the case of an aggrieved student, the time limit shall be from the date of the incident up through 12 months following the date of graduation when the incident is between a student and a faculty member who is responsible for assessing the student’s work for grading purposes in a classroom. This time limit will also apply to incidents involving a student and the student’s adviser or others responsible for making an appraisal of any of the student’s activities.

**Student Judicial Procedure**

In cases where the accused is a Rensselaer student, all procedures that are applicable to a violation of the Grounds for Disciplinary Action under the applicable requirements of the Student Judicial System, set forth elsewhere in the Handbook, will apply.

**GOOD SAMARITAN POLICY**

(Applicable to Alcohol and Drug related incidents)

Student health and safety are primary concerns of the Rensselaer community. It is
imperative that someone call for medical assistance when an individual experiences alcohol intoxication, drug overdose, or serious injury after consuming alcohol or other drugs. In general, people may be reluctant to seek emergency or medical attention for fear of judicial consequences for themselves, the person in need of assistance, and/or the organization hosting the event where the situation occurs.

Since these situations are potentially life threatening, Rensselaer seeks to reduce barriers to seeking assistance.

The Good Samaritan Policy is part of Rensselaer’s approach to reducing harmful consequences caused by the consumption of alcohol and other drugs. The Good Samaritan Policy is the Institute’s commitment to increase the likelihood that community members will call for assistance when faced with an alcohol or drug-related emergency.

An individual who receives emergency assistance and/or medical treatment due to alcohol or drug consumption and completes an alcohol and other drugs assessment, education activities and/or treatment as assigned through the Rensselaer Health Center will not be subject to judicial action (for violating Institute Alcohol & Other Drug Policy).

A person who calls for emergency assistance and/or medical treatment due to alcohol or drug consumption on behalf of another person will not be subject to judicial action (for violating Institute Alcohol & Other Drug Policy), but may be required to attend an alcohol and other drugs education program if deemed necessary by the Rensselaer Health Center.

A representative of an organization hosting an event is expected to promptly call for emergency assistance and/or medical attention due to consumption of alcohol or other drugs. This act of responsibility will mitigate the judicial consequences against the organization resulting from violations of the Grounds for Disciplinary Action at the time of the incident (for violating Institute Alcohol & Other Drug Policy). The organization’s membership may be required to attend an alcohol and other drugs education program if deemed necessary by the Rensselaer Health Center. However, failure to call for emergency assistance and/or medical treatment will be considered an “intolerable circumstance” affecting judicial sanctions against the organization if violations of Grounds for Disciplinary Action have occurred.

**COMPUTER CITIZENSHIP**

*Computer Use at Rensselaer – Policy on Electronic Citizenship*

Ethical principles that apply to everyday academic community life also apply to the use of information and computing resources. Every member of the Rensselaer community has basic rights and responsibilities. It is unethical for anyone to violate these rights or ignore these responsibilities.

Furthermore, everything that is technically possible is not necessarily ethical or legal. Anyone who uses Rensselaer’s computer systems and networks is responsible for meeting the standards outlined in Rensselaer’s policy.

To participate in community life, we expect for ourselves and extend to others the freedom to express ideas and a respect for privacy, for property, and for the environment in which we work. In
community life, these expectations are reflected in the privileges and responsibilities afforded to each of its members.

The privilege of access to Rensselaer’s computer systems and networks imposes certain responsibilities and obligations and is granted subject to Institute policies and local, state, and federal laws. (The phrase “Rensselaer’s computer systems and networks” as it is used in this document refers to all Rensselaer-owned and operated computer equipment and software, the campus computer network, and all computers connected to the campus network.)

Appropriate use should always be ethical, reflect academic honesty and community standards, show restraint in the consumption of shared resources, and are in compliance with Rensselaer’s policies and state and federal law. It should demonstrate respect for intellectual property; ownership of data system security mechanisms; and individuals’ rights to privacy and to freedom from intimidation, harassment, and unwarranted annoyance. Appropriate use of

Rensselaer’s computer systems and networks includes instruction; independent study; authorized research; independent research; communication; and official work of the offices, units, recognized student and campus organizations, and agencies of the Institute.

As a condition of using computing and networking at Rensselaer, you must be familiar with this policy and observe it. Persons in violation of the policy are subject to the full range of sanctions, including, but not limited to, the loss of computer or network access privileges, disciplinary action, dismissal from the Institute, and legal action. Some violations may constitute criminal offenses and be subject to local, state, and/or federal prosecution.

The Policy on Electronic Citizenship is an Institute-wide policy intended to allow for the proper use of all Rensselaer’s computer systems and networks, effective protection of individual users, equitable access, and proper management of those resources. It should be taken in the broadest possible sense and applies to Rensselaer network usage even in situations where it would not apply to the computer(s) in use (for example, student-owned computers attached to the campus network). The policy is intended to supplement, not replace, all existing laws, regulations, agreements, contracts, and Rensselaer policies that currently apply to these services.


The complete text of Rensselaer’s Policy on Electronic Citizenship, outlining the privileges, responsibilities, and obligations of those who participate in Rensselaer’s electronic community, is available at: http://www.rpi.edu/web/comec/

Students may also request extra copies from the Academic and Research Computing Help Desk or the Dean of Students Office.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OFFICE</th>
<th>PHONE</th>
<th>EMAIL and/or WEBSITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admissions</td>
<td>276-6216</td>
<td><a href="mailto:admissions@rpi.edu">admissions@rpi.edu</a>; <a href="http://www.rpi.edu/dept/admissions/index.html">http://www.rpi.edu/dept/admissions/index.html</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Advising &amp; Learning Assistance Center</td>
<td>276-6571</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tedesp@rpi.edu">tedesp@rpi.edu</a>; <a href="http://alac.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=199">http://alac.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=199</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ambulance (from on-campus phones only)</td>
<td>276-6611</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bursar-Academy Hall</td>
<td>276-6610</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bursar@rpi.edu">bursar@rpi.edu</a>; <a href="http://finance.rpi.edu/update.do?catcenterkey=33">http://finance.rpi.edu/update.do?catcenterkey=33</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Career Development Center</td>
<td>276-6234</td>
<td><a href="http://www.rpi.edu/dept/cdc/">http://www.rpi.edu/dept/cdc/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Center for Communication Practices</td>
<td>276-8983</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ccp.rpi.edu/">http://www.ccp.rpi.edu/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chaplain's Office- Religious Affairs</td>
<td>276-6518</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mf@rpi.edu">mf@rpi.edu</a>; <a href="http://www.rpi.edu/dept/chaplains/public_html/">http://www.rpi.edu/dept/chaplains/public_html/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling Center-Health Center</td>
<td>276-6479</td>
<td><a href="mailto:counseling@rpi.edu">counseling@rpi.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dean of Students</td>
<td>276-6266</td>
<td><a href="http://doso.rpi.edu/setup.do">http://doso.rpi.edu/setup.do</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Department of Athletics</td>
<td>276-6685</td>
<td><a href="http://www.rpiathletics.com/">http://www.rpiathletics.com/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Disability Services for Students</td>
<td>276-2746</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dss@rpi.edu">dss@rpi.edu</a>; <a href="http://www.rpi.edu/dept/doso/dss/index.html">http://www.rpi.edu/dept/doso/dss/index.html</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Health &amp; Safety</td>
<td>276-5035</td>
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<td>Financial Aid</td>
<td>276-6813</td>
<td><a href="mailto:financial_aid@rpi.edu">financial_aid@rpi.edu</a>; <a href="http://www.rpi.edu/dept/admissions/aid/index.html">http://www.rpi.edu/dept/admissions/aid/index.html</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Folsom Library</td>
<td>276-8310</td>
<td><a href="http://library.rpi.edu">http://library.rpi.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Center</td>
<td>276-6287</td>
<td><a href="mailto:readdk@rpi.edu">readdk@rpi.edu</a>; <a href="mailto:mulleh@rpi.edu">mulleh@rpi.edu</a>; <a href="http://studenthealth.rpi.edu">http://studenthealth.rpi.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>International Student Services</td>
<td>276-6561</td>
<td><a href="http://www.rpi.edu/dept/doso/ISSS/public_html/">http://www.rpi.edu/dept/doso/ISSS/public_html/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Office of Graduate Education</td>
<td>276-6488</td>
<td><a href="mailto:graduate@rpi.edu">graduate@rpi.edu</a>; <a href="http://gradoffice.rpi.edu/setup.do">http://gradoffice.rpi.edu/setup.do</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Office of Minority Student Affairs</td>
<td>276-6273</td>
<td><a href="http://doso.rpi.edu/update.do?catcenterkey=3">http://doso.rpi.edu/update.do?catcenterkey=3</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Parking &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>276-6616</td>
<td><a href="mailto:parking@rpi.edu">parking@rpi.edu</a>; <a href="http://www.pt.rpi.edu/">http://www.pt.rpi.edu/</a></td>
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<td>Payroll Disbursements</td>
<td>276-8696</td>
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<td>Psychologist (Counseling Center)</td>
<td>276-6479</td>
<td><a href="mailto:readdk@rpi.edu">readdk@rpi.edu</a>; <a href="http://studenthealth.rpi.edu/update.do?catcenterkey=2">http://studenthealth.rpi.edu/update.do?catcenterkey=2</a></td>
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<td>Public Safety (Emergency calls only)</td>
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<td>Public Safety (non-emergency calls)</td>
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<td>Public Safety Information Line (school closings)</td>
<td>276-6600</td>
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<td>Registrar</td>
<td>276-6231</td>
<td><a href="mailto:registrar@rpi.edu">registrar@rpi.edu</a>; <a href="http://srs.rpi.edu/setup.do">http://srs.rpi.edu/setup.do</a></td>
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<td>Rensselaer Union Bookstore</td>
<td>276-6555</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bookstore@rpi.edu">bookstore@rpi.edu</a>; <a href="http://bookstore.rpi.edu/bookstore@rpi.edu">http://bookstore.rpi.edu/bookstore@rpi.edu</a></td>
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<td>Rensselaer Union Post Office</td>
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<td>Residence Life</td>
<td>276-6284</td>
<td><a href="http://reslife.rpi.edu/setup.do">http://reslife.rpi.edu/setup.do</a></td>
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<td>Mueller Center (fitness center) and Robison Pool</td>
<td>276-2642</td>
<td><a href="http://www.muellercenter.rpi.edu/">http://www.muellercenter.rpi.edu/</a></td>
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<td>Voorhees Computing Center Help Desk</td>
<td>276-7777</td>
<td><a href="mailto:consults@rpi.edu">consults@rpi.edu</a>; <a href="http://dotcio.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=11">http://dotcio.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=11</a></td>
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</table>
III. Office of Graduate Education (OGE)

The Office of Graduate Education at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute provides graduate students with the administrative, academic, and curricular guidance they need to progress through their courses and programs.

CONTACT INFORMATION

PHONE: (518) 276-6488  
FAX: (518) 276-2256  
EMAIL: graduate@rpi.edu  
WEBSITE: http://gradoffice.rpi.edu/setup.do  

PHYSICAL ADDRESS: 1516 Peoples Ave., Troy NY 12180  
From the corner of 15th and Peoples, facing east (looking towards the Houston Field House), we are the first driveway on the right. See map below.

MAILING ADDRESS: OGE, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, 110 8th St. Troy, NY 12180-3590

OGE DIRECTORY

- Stanley Dunn, PhD, Vice Provost & Dean, Graduate Education
- Trina Beaudoin, Administrative Assistant, Graduate Education, beaudp@rpi.edu
- Dennis Gornic, Associate Dean & Graduate Student Ombudsman, gornid@rpi.edu
- Connie Grega, Graduate Education Student Services Assistant Director, gregac@rpi.edu
- Ajuba Jones, Assistant, Graduate Education, jonesa3@rpi.edu
- For graduate student services related to the Schools of Engineering or Architecture: Celia Paquette at paquec@rpi.edu
- For graduate student services related to the Schools of HASS, Business, or Science: Kate Norman at normak@rpi.edu
- For graduate student services related to the Department of Biomedical Engineering: Ronnie Rowe at rower@rpi.edu
- For graduate student services related to External Fellowships: Mecaila Smith at smithm12@rpi.edu
# IV. GRADUATE PROGRAM DIRECTORS (GPDs) & GRADUATE PROGRAM ASSISTANTS (GPAs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
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<td>AERO</td>
<td>Thierry Blanchet</td>
<td><a href="mailto:blanct@rpi.edu">blanct@rpi.edu</a></td>
<td>8697</td>
<td>Darwisah Burgess</td>
<td><a href="mailto:burged@rpi.edu">burged@rpi.edu</a></td>
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<td>APMA</td>
<td>Ashwani Kapila</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kapila@rpi.edu">kapila@rpi.edu</a></td>
<td>6894</td>
<td>Dawnmarie Robens</td>
<td><a href="mailto:robensd@rpi.edu">robensd@rpi.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Applied Sci</td>
<td>William Siegmann</td>
<td><a href="mailto:siegmw@rpi.edu">siegmw@rpi.edu</a></td>
<td>6905</td>
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<td>ARCH</td>
<td>Ted Krueger</td>
<td><a href="mailto:krueger@rpi.edu">krueger@rpi.edu</a></td>
<td>2562</td>
<td>Erin Bermingham</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bermie@rpi.edu">bermie@rpi.edu</a></td>
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<td>ASTR</td>
<td>Paul Stoler</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stolep@rpi.edu">stolep@rpi.edu</a></td>
<td>8388</td>
<td>Nicole McGuade</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mcquade@rpi.edu">mcquade@rpi.edu</a></td>
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<td>BCBP</td>
<td>Chunyu Wang</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wangc5@rpi.edu">wangc5@rpi.edu</a></td>
<td>3497</td>
<td>Jody Malm</td>
<td><a href="mailto:malmj@rpi.edu">malmj@rpi.edu</a></td>
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<td>BIOL</td>
<td>Susan Gilbert</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sgilbert@rpi.edu">sgilbert@rpi.edu</a></td>
<td>3458</td>
<td>Jody Malm</td>
<td><a href="mailto:malmj@rpi.edu">malmj@rpi.edu</a></td>
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<td>BMED</td>
<td>Hiroki Yokota</td>
<td><a href="mailto:yokoth@rpi.edu">yokoth@rpi.edu</a></td>
<td>2039</td>
<td>Kristen Bryk</td>
<td><a href="mailto:brykk@rpi.edu">brykk@rpi.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>CHEG</td>
<td>Wayne Bequette</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bequette@rpi.edu">bequette@rpi.edu</a></td>
<td>6683</td>
<td>Lee Vilardi</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vilarl@rpi.edu">vilarl@rpi.edu</a></td>
<td>6929</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHEM</td>
<td>Freddie Colon</td>
<td><a href="mailto:colonw@rpi.edu">colonw@rpi.edu</a></td>
<td>2515</td>
<td>Sharon Gardner</td>
<td><a href="mailto:derris@rpi.edu">derris@rpi.edu</a></td>
<td>2140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIVL/TRAN</td>
<td>Michael O’Rourke</td>
<td><a href="mailto:orourm@rpi.edu">orourm@rpi.edu</a></td>
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V. Fire Safety Procedures

What to Know: To protect yourself, it’s important to understand the basic characteristics of fire.

- Fire can spread surprisingly fast. There is no time to gather valuables or make a phone call. In just two minutes, a fire can become life-threatening. In just five minutes, an entire home can be engulfed in flames.
- Heat and smoke from a fire can be more dangerous than the flames. Inhaling the super-hot air can sear your lungs. Fire produces poisonous gases that make you disoriented and drowsy. Most people assume that the heat of a fire will wake them up but, instead of being awakened by a fire, you may fall into a deeper sleep. Smoke is the leading cause of residential deaths. Cooking accidents are the primary cause of residential fires.
- Rules and regulations have been established to protect all members of the Rensselaer campus community. More information on fire regulations that pertain to on campus housing can be found at the Web Site of Residence Life.
- You should have a plan in case you do experience a fire. Your plan should include the following:
  - Know your residence and routes of escape
  - If you only have one stairway exit out of the building and a window is the only other exit point, obtain a window exit device such as a semi rigid or rope ladder that affixes to the window
  - Keep your smoke or heat detectors in working condition and place them in locations such as kitchens where most fires originate
  - Keep a fire extinguisher near-by and know how to use it
  - Limit the use of portable heater units and if you do use one, ensure it has tips over and over-current protection.

What to Do in a Fire:

- Do not panic. Alert others. Call 911.
- Act fast to contain the fire and when possible, extinguish the fire
- Use water or a fire extinguisher to put out small fires. Do not try to put out a fire that is getting out of control or is larger than a small waste basket. If you are not sure if you can control the fire, get everyone out of the area and call the fire department from another location
- Never use water on an electrical fire. Even an electrical fire that looks contained could be spreading within the walls outside of view. When in doubt, call the fire department.
- Remember the valuable lesson you learned as children—if your clothes catch on fire, stop, drop and roll until the fire is extinguished. Running only makes the fire burn faster
- Sleep with the door closed. If you wake up to the sound of a smoke detector, feel the bottom of the door with the palm of your hand before you open the door. If the door is cool, leave immediately. Be prepared to crawl. Smoke and heat rise, and the air is clearer and cooler near the floor.
- If the door is hot, escape through a window. If you cannot escape, hang a white or light color shirt outside the window, alerting fire fighters to your presence.
- Fire prevention is the responsibility of everyone.

TIPS TO FOLLOW TO PREVENT FIRES:

- Keep your area clutter-free
- Keep the hallways/walkways safe from obstacles
- Do not block exits or stack items on the windowsills
- Inspect extension cords for frayed wires
- Do not overload extension cords or outlets
- Know your building safety plan
- Participate in building fire drills. When you hear an alarm never assume that it is just a drill. Get out immediately.
- Take the time to learn an alternate route to evacuate your building
- Never leave candles burning unattended. Candles, incense, or any open flames are not permitted in the Residence Halls.

WHAT IS A FIRE EMERGENCY?
Any time you see uncontrolled flames, smoke, or smell smoke.

IF YOU ARE ON CAMPUS WHEN YOU EXPERIENCE A FIRE EMERGENCY:
Call the Public Safety Department: 276-6611 or 911 from a campus phone.
Note: Dialing 911 from a cell phone will not connect you with Public Safety.

WHAT DO I DO?

- Activate the nearest fire alarm pull station according to the instructions on the pull box. This will start the building evacuation alarms and summon emergency response.
- Exit the building and proceed to a safe location.
- Call the Department of Public Safety at 276-6611 or 911 from a campus phone. Provide your name and exact location of the fire. STAY ON THE LINE for additional questions from the dispatcher. Also remain at the scene to provide information to the fire response personnel.

Q: SHOULD I ATTEMPT TO USE A FIRE EXTINGUISHER?
A: ONLY IF ALL THREE OF THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS ARE MET:

1. You have received fire extinguisher training by Rensselaer within the last year.
2. The fire is in the incipient stage.
3. You are in absolutely no personal danger.

If in doubt, leave the area immediately. Fire extinguishers are provided for escape purposes only. You are never required to attempt to extinguish a fire.
## VI. ONLINE ARTICLE AND RESOURCES FOR BEST PRACTICES IN TEACHING


Setting up and maintaining a proper grade book at the beginning of the semester is necessary. Templates are available online, such as the one provided below.\(^8\)

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"http://www.getworksheets.com/samples/excel/gradebook.html" Date Last Accessed: 08/03/10
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IX. **RENSSELAER CAMPUS MAP**

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2. Banner, James, and Harold C. Cannon. *The Elements of Teaching*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999. The authors divide their study into the “elements” that go into the making of a good teacher: learning, authority, ethics, order, imagination, compassion, patience, character, and pleasure. All teachers have all these attributes to varying degrees; the important thing is how the traits are developed and used to the students’ best advantage.

3. Bligh, Donald A. *What’s the Use of Lectures?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000. A thoughtful, thorough work on when and how to use lectures most effectively, and especially how to be aware of, and compensate for, the inadequacies of lectures for many kinds of student learning.


10. Fried, Jane. *Higher Education’s New Playbook: from Learning Reconsidered 2: Implementing a Campus- Wide Focus on the Student Experience*. Published by ACPA, ACUHO-I, ACUI, NACADA, NACA, NASPA, and NIRSA, 2006. LR2 is a blueprint for action. It shows how to create the dialogue, tools, and materials necessary to put into practice the recommendations in *Learning Reconsidered*. This companion book brings together new authors, discipline-specific examples, and models for applying the theories in the original publication to move beyond traditional ideas of separate learning inside and outside the classroom.


15. Light, Richard. Making the Most of College: Students Speak Their Minds. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001. A valuable collection of insights and guidelines for, among other methods, using collaborative work among students to enhance learning. This is an excellent analysis of the ways students learn best based on surveys and interviews of Harvard students but applicable to other research university undergraduates.


