New Club Classification Policy

This document defines the classifications under which a Rensselaer club may be approved by the Rensselaer Union Executive Board (E-Board). The classification will further characterize the benefits, resources, and responsibilities applicable to the club. Within each definition is the process for approval under that classification. The E-Board may deny any group seeking approval, even if the group meets the general requirements for a particular classification. However, the E-Board does not have the right to overrule any policies set forth in the Rensselaer Union Constitution and the Executive Board Bylaws. Every on-campus organizations must follow all policies found within the Rensselaer Student Handbook. The closure of clubs is outlined in the Rensselaer Club Sunsetting Policies and Procedures.

A club and/or organization can be defined for the purpose of this document as any group of individuals who meet together with regular frequency, share a common purpose, and have a defined organizational structure. All Rensselaer clubs and organizations are required to meet and maintain certain standards. The following are general guidelines to which all Rensselaer Union Recognized (Recognized) and Rensselaer Union Affiliated (Affiliated) Organizations must adhere to. All programs hosted by clubs and organizations must also uphold these policies. If any club, organization, or program violates any of the following policies, the organization may be immediately dissolved by the Executive Board.

- Rensselaer Union clubs shall not perpetuate or encourage hate mongering, violence, sexism, or discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual preference, age, race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, marital status, or ability. Nor shall any club be linked to a non-university local, regional, or national organization that sponsors programs or activities that do perpetuate or encourage such activities.

- The purpose and/or program of Rensselaer Union clubs shall not encourage students to prematurely terminate their Rensselaer education.

- No non-university local, regional, or national organization shall have an unreasonable advantage in recruitment of members or a monopolistic forum for influencing students over other comparable organizations through a Rensselaer Union club or organization.

- Rensselaer Union club activities must not involve an extraordinarily high risk of personal injury, liability, or be unduly life threatening or uninsurable.

- It is the policy of the Rensselaer Union that all officers, appointed officers, committee chairs, and Voting Members of Recognized and Affiliated organizations be full-time activity-fee-paying students or their spouses. Only Voting members can vote in business and election matters. Only Voting members can run for and hold elected offices.
Community members who are not affiliated with RPI as students, their spouses or legal dependents, faculty, staff, alumni, or students of Hudson-Mohawk Consortium schools currently enrolled in courses at Rensselaer may comprise no more than 5% of the membership of any Rensselaer Union club without specific approval of the Rensselaer Union Executive Board. Community members may not have voting rights, may not hold any officer position, control access to facilities or computer accounts, and may not have direct access to any Rensselaer Union funds.

In accordance with the Rensselaer Student Handbook policies on hazing: Hazing, reckless or intentional endangerment to health, or forced consumption of alcohol or other drugs for the purpose of initiation into or affiliation with any Rensselaer organization is prohibited.

The official language of all business meetings shall be English, unless, by unanimous vote of all of those present in the meeting, an alternative language is preferred. Interpretations in English must accompany any other language on all club documents such as websites, advertisements, and official communications.

All clubs on campus must be registered with the Rensselaer Union, even if the club is not officially Recognized or Affiliated by the Union as defined in the following sections. It is the responsibility of the club to gain their recognition through their appropriate academic or administrative department. Once a club has been recognized, they will need to register with the Rensselaer Union Administrative Staff so that the Institute can keep a centralized list of all clubs operating on campus. Clubs and organizations which fail to register risk losing access to club and organization privileges, which include being able to reserve meeting rooms and other spaces on campus, use of Institute financial and IT accounts, ability to participate in the fall Activities Fair, etc.

To become a Rensselaer Union Club a group must first register as a new organization with the RU and fill out the New Club Evaluation form. This form will then be presented to the RU Policies Committee along with justification for becoming Affiliated/Recognized. The Policies Committee will make a recommendation to the E-Board based on the application and bring the group to the E-Board for approval. If approved, the organization will gain Affiliated/Recognition status and will obtain all of the benefits and resources that classification warrants.

SECTION I: RENSSELAER UNION RECOGNIZED CLUBS

A Rensselaer Union Recognized Club (Recognized) are those clubs that have completed the Club Affiliation/Recognition Policy and have a Union approved Purpose and Constitution. A Union Recognized Club may or may not receive funding; in any event, Union Recognized Clubs

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1This form is administered by the Rensselaer Union Executive Board Policies Committee. The process for beginning a new club is discussed on the Rensselaer Union website.
receive administrative support from the Union and at a minimum must conform to general Institute policy.

I. Unfunded

A Rensselaer Union Recognized Unfunded club (Unfunded) is a Recognized club that has been approved by the Executive Board and provides value to the RPI community. These are clubs that do not restrict membership to any specific group of students. An Unfunded club hosts programs that do not require a subsidy from the Rensselaer Union and are fully funded on their own accord. However, an Unfunded club can use Rensselaer Union monies to subsidize program costs with agreement to return the monies within a timeframe decided by the RU Administration Office.

A club may qualify as an Unfunded Club for a multitude of reasons, including but not limited to:

- The club supports a charitable organization with the primary purpose of fundraising for philanthropic purposes. A club will not receive funding if the money being raised by the group does not, directly or indirectly, return to the student body or benefit the student body as a whole. Please refer to the Rensselaer Union Charitable Organizations Policy located in the Rensselaer Union Executive Board Budgeting Guidelines for further details.
- Clubs requiring excessive startup or ongoing financial resources that do not provide a substantial benefit to the student body will be classified as an Unfunded Club.
- The club does not restrict membership but does not fit the qualifications to receive funding for another reason.
- New clubs within their first four months of existence as detailed in the New Club Funding Policy.

The following resources are available to any group approved as an Unfunded club:

- An Agency account monitored by the RU, and the tax-exempt status of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- Access to meeting space and event space in the Union and around campus
- Multimedia support from the Union Programming and Activities Committee (UPAC)
- Access to vehicle rentals
- The use of charge sheets from the Office of the Bursar to charge student accounts

\[\text{Footnotes:} \]

2 See Footnote 1.
3 A subsidy is defined as the club expenses minus income.
4 Note: An Unfunded Club may hold a bank account outside the Rensselaer Union. However, if the club ever becomes Provisionally or Fully Funded, the club will need to close any outside accounts.
● The ability to borrow funds from the Union for approved programs that are not subsidized, with the understanding that the borrowed funds will be returned in full at the program’s conclusion
● Marketing and publicity support from the Rensselaer Union Administrative Staff
● Access to the Club Management System (CMS) and web space
● The E-Board will not approve as Recognized organizations that fall under any of the following categories:
  ○ Clubs or events associated with a particular religious or political viewpoint
  ○ Charitable organizations with the primary purpose of fundraising for philanthropic purposes
  ○ Clubs or organizations that are exclusive or in any way prohibit membership of an RPI Activity Fee paying student. (such as honor societies, Greek Houses)

To become an Unfunded Recognized club the student group must precisely follow the steps outlined in the Rensselaer Union Club Recognition Procedure. Upon approval, the organization will be formally known as an Recognized Unfunded Club.

II. Provisionally Funded

A Rensselaer Union Recognized Provisionally Funded Club (Provisionally Funded) is a Recognized club that is in the process of completing the Rensselaer Union New Club Funding Policy and is working towards becoming a Fully Funded Club. A Provisionally Funded Club will be given a provisional budget to hold programs as a trial to prove that the club can effectively utilize a budget from the Rensselaer Union and is truly in need of one. The Union Starter Budget that has been granted to the club will come from the Contingencies fund of the Rensselaer Union Executive Board to subsidize club activities. Provisionally Funded Clubs must meet all of the requirements detailed in The Rensselaer Union New Club Funding Policy in order to become a Fully Funded Club. The status of a Provisionally Funded Club will be changed to that of a Fully Funded Club once that club enters the first fiscal year for which they are receiving a subsidized budget that was submitted to the Executive Board during the Board’s normal budgeting process.

Each Provisionally Funded Club will be assigned a Rensselaer Union Executive Board Representative, assigned by the President of the Union, who will guide the club through the New Club Funding Policy and track their progress towards becoming a Fully Funded Club. Like a Fully Funded Club, a Provisionally Funded Club will receive a Student Activities Resource Person (SARP). Additionally, the Rensselaer Union Executive Board’s Policies Committee will act as the E-Board Representative for the club, working with the Club’s SARP to facilitate the budget allocated to the Provisionally Funded Club. All money related to the club’s operations

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5 This only includes organizations whose programs primarily fundraise for a specific cause or event. This does not include community service or volunteer based programs.
must be handled through the Union; no Provisionally Funded Club may have a bank account outside of the Rensselaer Union.

All resources available to Unfunded Clubs are also available to Provisionally Funded Clubs. The following are additional resources available to any group approved as a Provisionally Funded Club:

- An Executive Board Representative and SARP
- An Agency account monitored by the RU and the tax-exempt status of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
  - Any Provisionally Funded club must close any bank accounts outside the Rensselaer Union.

III. Fully Funded

A Rensselaer Union Recognized Fully Funded Club (Fully Funded) is a Recognized club that has been given a subsidy by the Executive Board. A Fully Funded club holds programs for which the expenses exceed the income, and thus requires additional funds to maintain its operations. All subsidies given to Fully Funded clubs by the E-Board are funded by the Activity Fee and RU incomes. As such, a club must fulfill its purpose as outlined in its constitution and must provide an opportunity to enhance the student life experience at Rensselaer. The process for becoming a Fully Funded club after gaining recognition from the Union is detailed in *The Rensselaer Union New Club Funding Policy*.

Each Fully Funded Club is assigned a Rensselaer Union Executive Board Representative who will guide the club through the budgeting process each year and assist the club with any matters related to its business with or within the Rensselaer Union. A Fully Funded is club also assigned a Student Activities Resource Person (SARP) with whom it handles its day-to-day transactions, and a Rensselaer Union account. All money related to the club’s operations must be handled through the Union; no Fully Funded club may have a bank account outside of the Rensselaer Union.

All resources available to Unfunded clubs are also available to Fully Funded clubs. The following are additional resources available to any group approved as a Fully Funded club:

- An Executive Board Representative and SARP
- An Account monitored by the RU and the tax-exempt status of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
  - Any Fully Funded club must close any bank accounts outside the Rensselaer Union.
- A subsidy, as determined by the E-Board and funded by the Activity Fee
- The E-Board will not provide funds to organizations that fall under any of the following categories:
  - Clubs or events associated with a particular religious or political viewpoint
Charitable organizations with the primary purpose of fundraising for philanthropic purposes

Clubs requiring excessive startup or ongoing financial resources that do not provide a substantial benefit to the student body

Clubs or organizations that are exclusive or in any way prohibit membership of an RPI Activity Fee paying student (i.e. honor societies, Greek Life organizations)

SECTION II: RENSSELAER UNION AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

A Rensselaer Union Affiliated Organization (Affiliated) is an organization approved by the Executive Board and that betters student life at RPI. An Affiliated group may be comprised of RPI students, faculty, or members of the surrounding community and must have a purpose aligned with the values of Rensselaer. An approved Affiliated group cannot apply for funding but still receives certain resources from the Rensselaer Union.

The following are benefits and resources available to Affiliated groups:

- Support from the Union staff
- An Agency account within the RU, and the tax-exempt status of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- Access to meeting space and event space in the Union and around campus
- Access to the Club Management System (CMS) and web space
- The ability to hold bank accounts outside the RU provided that no account is opened with a Social Security number and that Rensselaer’s Federal Tax ID number is used only with the express permission of the Institute

The only restrictions for approval as an Affiliated group are those aforementioned in the pretext of this policy. Affiliated organizations may restrict membership under reasonable circumstances (i.e. honor societies) and may serve any purpose deemed appropriate by the Executive Board. Affiliated student groups may have direct ties to national organizations or other departments of the Institute.

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6 This only includes organizations whose programs primarily fundraise for a specific cause or event. This does not include community service or volunteer based programs.