To: Rensselaer Students
From: Eddie Ade Knowles, Ph.D., Vice President for Student Life
Claude D. Rounds, Vice President for Administration
Date: December 18, 2009
Re: CLASS Residential Life Commons, 2010-11, Room Selection Process and Meal Plan Options

With the fall semester coming to a close, we hope your classes and final exams have gone well, and we wish you well as you start the winter break.

By now you are probably aware that with the arrival of the Class of 2013, we launched the CLASS Initiative - the new vision for student life based on the concept of Clustered Learning, Advocacy, and Support for Students. Through launching the CLASS Initiative, we will enhance the quality of support for all of our students throughout the undergraduate years.

Building on the success of Rensselaer's award-winning First-Year Experience program, the CLASS Initiative paves the way for the Institute to further improve the overall student life experience. Each class will be supported by a team of Residence Life cluster deans, upperclass and graduate student staff, faculty residential commons deans, and a class dean. This will ensure that every student knows where to turn for help at all times, and receives the best individual counseling, mentoring, and personal attention that Rensselaer has to offer.

The room selection process for the 2010-11 academic year will begin immediately and continue through March 1. It is linked to the CLASS Initiative and the creation of clusters of residence halls, or "Commons", supported by our team of faculty, student life professionals, and upperclass and graduate students, all living near or in the Commons. This new room selection process is a major change from the process of prior years.

In addition to the room selection process, students will have the opportunity to take advantage of new flexible meal plan options offered by Sodexo. Meal plan options and associated policies are outlined in greater detail at http://rpihospitalityservices.com/documents/Meal_plan_sheet.pdf.

The provisions of the process are as follows:

1) With the launch of the Sophomore - Year Experience in the fall of 2010, all second-year undergraduate students will live on campus and participate in a meal plan. The only exceptions are those second-year undergraduate students who have been accepted as new members of a fraternity or sorority that has signed the Greek Life Commons Agreement before February 1, 2010. Students in this category will have the opportunity to move into the fraternity or sorority with no obligation to participate in a campus meal plan.

The following areas have been designated as sophomore housing: Burdett Avenue Residence Hall (BARH); the Quadrangle; Warren Hall; Davison Hall; Nugent Hall;
Sharp Hall; the apartments in Bray, Cary, and Crockett Halls; the Rensselaer Apartment Housing Project (RAHP); and Stacwyck Apartments. The lottery for sophomore housing will begin February 1 and conclude February 8. Further details and policies can be found online at [http://reslife.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=514](http://reslife.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=514).

2) Blitman Commons and the Polytechnic Commons are designated as Special Commons for juniors and seniors only and applications are invited. Applications are available immediately and will be due to the Residence Life Office no later than January 28. "Open Houses" in these Residential Commons will occur the first week of classes, showcasing their amenities and offerings. With a dining facility in Blitman Commons, residents will participate in a meal plan. Juniors and seniors are encouraged to give serious consideration to the opportunity to live at Blitman or Polytechnic Commons. Details regarding the process can be found online at [http://reslife.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=515](http://reslife.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=515). The application for Blitman and Polytechnic is available at [http://www.rpi.edu/dept/cct/apps/reslife/images/Special%20Commons%20Application%202010-2011.pdf](http://www.rpi.edu/dept/cct/apps/reslife/images/Special%20Commons%20Application%202010-2011.pdf).

3) The remaining residential spaces, including any spaces that may not be filled by the application process for Blitman and Polytechnic, will be available for upperclass students (third-year and beyond; and graduate students). These include Colonie Apartments, North Hall, and the E-Complex. Lottery sign-up will be held February 10 through 24, and room selection will take place February 28. Upper class students, with the exception of those students living in Blitman Commons, will not be required to participate in a meal plan, but may be interested in some of the new flexible meal plan options. Details are available online at [http://reslife.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=516](http://reslife.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=516).

Information on room and meal plan rates, as well as financial aid and housing grants, will be available by mid-January. Students will not be expected to sign contracts before pricing information is made available.

While we know this new process is a significant change from past years, we believe that the CLASS Initiative will transform your lives here at Rensselaer. We look forward to experiencing, with you, everything CLASS has to offer.

For more information, please see the Residence Life Web site at [http://reslife.rpi.edu](http://reslife.rpi.edu), or contact the staff at (518) 276-6284 or res_life@rpi.edu. Enjoy your winter break and the holiday season!