To: Rensselaer Students

From: Eddie Ade Knowles, Ph.D., Vice President for Student Life and Paul Marthers, Vice President for Enrollment and Dean of Undergraduate and Graduate Admissions

Date: February 17, 2010

Re: Financial Aid and the Revised Housing Grant Policy

In response to a number of inquiries and concerns regarding financial aid and Housing Grants, a revised policy has been developed and approved for implementation, effective February 17, 2010. The following memo provides details regarding the new policy that we are sharing with students, members of the campus community, and parents.

Financial Aid and the Housing Grant Policy
The central goal of the Rensselaer financial aid program is to meet student need – as much as is possible – with Institute funds. The housing grant (also referred to as a “room and board scholarship”) program was implemented to help students defray the full cost of attendance at Rensselaer. “Full cost of attendance” is defined as the annual tuition plus board charges to live in Rensselaer housing and eat on the Institute meal plan. Therefore, full cost of attendance necessarily implies living in Rensselaer residence halls and eating in Rensselaer dining facilities.

The housing grant program was never intended to provide portable funds that would help students pay for room and board charges incurred in off-campus living and eating arrangements. In this regard, because the housing grant program was designed to help students defray the full cost of attendance at Rensselaer (that is, Rensselaer fees for tuition plus campus-based room and board), the grants were not intended to be able to be converted into tuition scholarships in the event that a recipient chose to live and eat off campus.

Starting with the Rensselaer Class of 2014, housing grants will no longer be offered to incoming students. Instead, new students who qualify will receive financial assistance from Rensselaer (to the best of the University’s capacity to provide it) net of their expected family contribution toward the cost of attendance.

Housing Grant Policy for Classes of 2011, 2012, and 2013

Students Living in a Rensselaer Residence Commons
Any continuing student (i.e., those in the classes of 2011, 2012 and 2013) holding a housing grant will retain that grant as long as that student continues to live in a Rensselaer residence commons as an undergraduate.

Students Living in Greek Houses
Any continuing student (those in the classes of 2011, 2012 and 2013) holding a housing grant, who has been accepted as a member of a fraternity or sorority that has signed the Greek Life Commons Agreement, will be permitted to live in the house and continue to receive a housing grant while enrolled as an undergraduate, for a maximum of five years. However, in no case will the maximum payment exceed the value of the pre-existing housing grant, and in no case will the amount of payment from the housing grant exceed the baseline cost of living in the sorority or fraternity. The baseline cost of living will be reviewed and validated annually by the Bursar; and as a service to the house, billing will continue to be done through the Bursar’s Office.
**Students Not Living in Rensselaer Residence Commons or Greek Commons**

The following policies will apply for current housing grant recipients in the classes of 2011, 2012 and 2013, while they remain enrolled as undergraduates at Rensselaer (for a maximum of five years).

1. If a student with a housing grant voluntarily moves off campus, that student automatically forfeits her/his housing grant.*

2. All students who wish to continue their housing grant, but who are not living in approved Greek housing, may participate in the Residence Commons Room Selection and Lottery Process, and must accept the bed available in order to continue to receive the housing grant.

3. If a student elects to decline the bed offered and chooses to move off campus, that student forfeits her/his housing grant.

4. If a student with a housing grant who has not signed a lease to live off campus (as of the date of this notice), participates in the lottery and is unable to obtain a bed and thus is required to move off campus, that student will receive 50% of the housing grant for one semester, and the balance of that student’s unmet need will be determined by the Financial Aid office.

Please note, an exception to Point 1, above, will be made for students with housing grants who have already signed leases (as of the date of this notice) to live off campus for 2010-11. For one more academic year (2010-2011), Rensselaer will honor the 2009-2010 Housing Grant Policy that was previously stated on the financial aid and residence life web sites. That policy was as follows: students who choose to live off campus for the 2010-11 year will be allowed to apply their housing grants toward the cost of a Rensselaer meal plan, but those grants will be honored only up to the value of the meal plan (e.g., if your grant is $5,000 and you select a meal plan that costs $4,860, your housing grant amount will be reduced to $4,860).

This means that housing grant recipients who can show proof that they have already signed leases to live off-campus during the 2010-11 academic year may use their housing grants to purchase a Rensselaer meal plan, but only up to the cost of that meal plan. In no circumstances can Rensselaer housing grants be used to pay for off-campus rental charges.

It should be clearly noted that the use of a housing grant to purchase a food plan for students living off campus is limited only to the 2010-2011 academic year. This provision will terminate at the end of the 2010-2011 academic year. Students who fall into this category, who wish to retain their housing grants past the 2010-2011 academic year, would be expected to participate in the Residence Commons Room Selection and Lottery Process, as described in Points 2-4, above.

**Who Should I Contact If I Have More Questions?**

We understand that individuals may have questions regarding financial aid and the housing grant, and other housing issues. Below, you will find the appropriate offices that may assist you in this process.

Students with questions regarding the status of their housing grant are encouraged to contact the Office of Financial Aid at (518) 276-6813 or via e-mail at financial_aid@rpi.edu.

Students with questions related to housing issues such as the lottery and room availability are encouraged to contact the Office of Residence Life at (518) 276-6284 or via e-mail at: res_life@rpi.edu. In addition, you may find information on the Residence Life web site at http://reslife.rpi.edu.

Students with questions regarding the status of Greek houses and the Greek Life Commons Agreement are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office at (518) 276-6266.
In the near future, another electronic communication will be sent with more details regarding housing issues, along with links to this memo that will also be posted on the Financial Aid and Residence Life websites, respectively.