



Institute Archives and Special Collections

Performing Arts Center Committee. Records, 1972-1980.



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Historical note

The Performing Arts Center (PAC) Committee was appointed by President Richard J. Grosch in the early 1970s to address the need for improved performance spaces at Rensselaer. Chaired by Tom Phelan, the committee had representatives from several campus constituencies, including faculty members in the Arts Department; staff of the Rensselaer Union and Facilities Planning, student leaders, members of the RPI Players, architecture students, and others with an interest in the performing arts.

The PAC Committee sponsored a study of venues both on and off campus to determine options for upgrading performance spaces available to Rensselaer students, professional groups, and local residents. These included several campus buildings, such as the former 15th Street Lounge (which was converted to a theater in 1972), an auditorium in West Hall, a large lecture room in Sage Laboratory, the '87 Gym, lecture halls in the Darrin Communications Center, the Armory, the Houston Field House, and two former chapels. Off-campus spaces were also considered, including the Troy Music Hall, Proctor's Theater, and Beman Fire House. New construction was also under consideration.

After several years of study, the Trustees appointed a Task Force chaired by Arnold Cogswell and comprised of some of the same individuals. This committee, known as the Cogswell PAC, hired Bohlin Powell Brown to conduct a feasibility study. In 1980 the Task Force recommended a three-pronged approach. West Hall's auditorium would be upgraded for large-scale events and Sage Lab's lecture room would be renovated for use by the Arts Department and musical groups. The Playhouse would become the permanent home of the RPI Players and would be completely reconstructed. Construction on the Playhouse was completed in 1983.

Contents

These records include minutes, memoranda, reports, specifications, costs estimates, floor plans, notes, and newspaper clippings documenting the work of the PAC Committee and later PAC Task Force. The records belonged to Donna Dorl, Program Director for the Rensselaer Union, and later Richard M. Hartt, Director of Student Activities. The collection documents the wide range of options considered for Rensselaer's PAC, funding issues, and the many groups and individuals involved in the process.

Inventory

Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	1972-1973
	2	1974
	3	1975-1976?
	4	1977
	5	1978
	6	January – April 1979
	7	June – October 1979
	8	November 1979
	9	December 1979
	10	January – February 1980
	11	March – April 1980
	12	June 1980 and n.d.
	13	July – September 1980