

NEXT: RISD 2020- 2027



A Strategic Plan for Shaping Our Future



NEXT: RISD 2020–2027 sets our institutional direction in anticipation of our 150th anniversary in 2027. We initiated this strategic planning process by asking two simple questions:

1. Who is a RISD student—now and in the future?
2. What would you hope to see if you were visiting campus in 2027?

To find the answers, we considered many characteristics that help define a RISD student. We heard obvious attributes, including *talented, creative, intelligent* and *hard-working*, but also traits like *intrepid, unstoppable, diverse* and *committed* to helping improve the lives of others. What, then, could we focus on to best educate these remarkable creative talents in the future?

Understanding that our students are more committed than ever to making a positive impact on the world around them, this strategic plan is deeply situated in the context of our time. Together, we stand at a unique crossroads of potential pathways. The decisions, actions and forms of change that we will explore and activate through this plan will shape RISD's future.

Empowered with the unique gifts of questioning, making and communicating, the RISD community is positioned to address urgent global challenges at the intersection of sustainability, social justice and innovation. Therefore, this plan infuses inclusion and equity into our classrooms and studios and prioritizes health and wellness for our students, faculty and staff. It expands our research capacity and output, and commits to fostering teaching pedagogies to reframe and advance art and design education. This will ensure that by 2027 a RISD education will be more accessible, relevant and powerful than ever.

This future can only be realized if we also commit to the structures that support this shared vision. The RISD that I hope we see in 2027 is a place where teaching and individual faculty research and

practice are thriving, and where our many unique resources are incubators for their best ideas. I imagine a campus characterized by 21st-century learning facilities comprised of both flexible and dedicated spaces. I imagine shared classrooms, studios and labs that encourage the future work of artists and designers, both individually and collaboratively. I imagine a RISD driven by innovative initiatives and supported by fundraising, alumni engagement and new, mission-driven revenue streams.

As RISD's president, I am proud of the values we articulate in this plan—values that will guide how we use our resources to support our ambitions. The development of any successful plan requires great community involvement. Thoughtful, engaged planning always benefits from the collective wisdom of the organization. As someone with decades of experience at RISD, I am also proud of the inclusive process and the participation of our entire community in finalizing the principles and priorities of this plan, and know that the plan is better as a result of your many active voices. In 2027 when we look back at RISD's 150-year history, I am confident that this plan will have been an integral part of guiding us to even greater distinction.



Rosanne Somerson
President

RISD is thriving. After more than 140 years as a leader in art and design education, we approach our 150th anniversary from a position of strength and renewed commitment to expanding our excellence, relevance and reach. As RISD continues to gain national and global recognition, our model of education has never had more potential for greater impact. The ambitious initiatives outlined in this plan build on our exceptional history, our varied identities and our shared belief in process and experimentation.

We're in a good position to envision a better future. Our shared future—as citizens of the world and as an institution—requires us to intervene in the critical challenges of our time. Artists and designers play important roles in addressing the world's political, humanitarian and climate crises. The RISD community's deep well of critical thinking and making allows us to shape new creative perspectives at the intersection of the environment

and social justice. With an institutional commitment to contributing to just societies, a sustainable planet, and new ways of making and knowing, we have a responsibility to act with urgency and to respond with empathy.

But we have work to do to get there. To secure RISD's future, we need to improve our structures and processes. At a time when the cost of higher education continues to rise, one of our top priorities is a commitment to decrease our dependence on tuition-based revenue in order to make RISD accessible to a broader range of talented students. As this plan unfolds, our intensive, immersive, residential model of education will evolve in exciting ways over the next seven years. We will be poised to celebrate our 150th anniversary with enhanced flexibility to catalyze new realms of teaching and learning and to activate ethical solutions for global challenges.

This plan is our pledge to the next generation of creative leaders.

**OUR NEW STRATEGIC PLAN
STEMS FROM RISD'S
CORE MISSION AND VALUES.**

OUR MISSION

The mission of Rhode Island School of Design, through its college and museum, is:

- to educate its students and the public in the creation and appreciation of works of art and design
- to discover and transmit knowledge
- and to make lasting contributions to a global society through critical thinking, scholarship and innovation.

OUR VISION FOR 2027

RISD will contribute to the creation of just societies, a sustainable planet, and new ways of making and knowing that equip humans to live in mutually enhancing ways with each other and with the earth.

OUR VALUES

We value the material practices of artists and designers as principal modes of engagement with the wider world.

We value the necessary and crucial contribution of deep disciplinary understanding to effective interdisciplinary practice.

We value collaborative interplay across design, fine arts and the liberal arts to cultivate deep literacies, to shape cumulative understanding, to transform thought and to expand making practices.

We value experimental, contextual and culturally diverse methods of creative practice and rigorous scholarship as essential ways of creating knowledge and engaging with complexity and uncertainty.

We value enlightened engagement with emerging and evolving technologies, along with critical reflection on the interests those technologies serve and

the impact they have on diverse peoples, communities and the planet.

We value a classroom, studio and campus environment that advances principles of social equity and inclusion, environmental and climate justice, and equal access to resources and opportunities.

We value the development of lifelong skills that integrate the physical, emotional and mental well-being of our entire community.

We value the careful stewardship of our human, financial and physical resources.

We value our role as a place-based institution with a commitment to furthering progress in Providence and Rhode Island through mutually beneficial engagement with the community.



LAYING THE FOUNDATION

Since our founding in 1877, RISD has worked to expand artistic knowledge and offer a coherent educational experience that celebrates the diverse practices of art and design and cultivates advanced inquiry and ethical leadership. As we examine our strengths and expand our understanding of contemporary cultural practice, we want to ensure that the contributions our students, faculty, staff and alumni make in the world are as relevant as ever. To unleash our community's full potential, we will:

- address faculty teaching loads and reduce student workload
- support holistic and integrated wellness practices
- support the exploration of new models of teaching and learning
- build capacity for new pedagogies and research

Foundational Goals

1. Provide flexibility for students and faculty

We will reduce undergraduate and graduate credit-hour requirements to allow for flexibility, review student work patterns and implement a common scheduling grid across divisions to create more fluid learning structures and encourage cross-disciplinary exploration and cocurricular participation (see also p 39).

We will commit to addressing faculty teaching load through a phased approach and explore different models of faculty work that allow more participation in research, scholarship, creative practice and institutional service (see also p 38).

2. Promote student health and well-being

We will make key investments in Student Affairs—beginning with both Health Services and Counseling and Psychological Services—to create an integrated wellness program that fully supports our students.

We will make facilities and communications more accessible for everyone by ensuring that our websites, publications and campus events address the needs of the deaf or hard of hearing along with the blind or visually impaired.

3. Promote innovative teaching

We will establish a Teaching and Learning Lab (see also pp 22, 30, 34) to promote innovative teaching methods, diverse learning modalities and new curricula and courses, while also advancing our social equity and inclusion priorities. In addition, this lab will support opportunities for faculty to come together to exchange knowledge, debate pedagogy and establish mutually supportive systems for improved teaching.

4. Build capacity for new research

We will establish an ongoing Faculty Fellows Program (see also pp 22, 30, 34) to bring a dedicated cohort of scholars and practitioners to RISD to support teaching, research and artistic inquiry around critical topics such as equity and inclusion, sustainability, and climate and environmental justice.

SECURING RISD'S FUTURE

We know that the inherent value and financial sustainability of higher education in the US are being questioned as both the cost of attendance and student debt continue to climb. By tapping into the ethos of experimentation and collaboration on which RISD was founded, we are creatively reimagining organizational, administrative and financial models to:

- reduce our reliance on tuition
- increase financial aid
- improve our institutional operations
- ensure our long-term financial stability

Foundational Goals

1. Generate new revenue

We will align and expand the programs offered through Continuing Education, Executive Education, Partnered Projects and Pre-College (see also p 23) locally and globally to honor our mission of making lifelong learning opportunities accessible to a broader range of students. This will also increase income from grant-funded research and offer new revenue sources from events, conferences and facilities rentals.

We will invest in building on the existing fundraising operation in Institutional Engagement and lay the groundwork for a comprehensive capital campaign by expanding our global network of alumni groups, involving faculty and staff, and launching volunteer, mentorship, career planning and internship programs.

2. Rethink the way we budget and prioritize our resources

We will reconcile specific resource needs with the diversity of practices our model of immersive studio education requires by creating a more inclusive and integrated process for allocating and managing our budget in alignment with enrollment trends.

3. Radically improve efficiency

We will adopt a new enterprise management system to break down siloed functional processes and advance our operations.

We will transform RISD's websites and other digital functions into a strategically consistent, intentional and audience-focused ecosystem.

We will address space and scheduling issues by establishing clear policies and efficient workflows.

We will improve our ability to provide students, employees and external partners with efficient, timely and accurate financial and human resources transactions by investing in enabling systems such as digital forms, workflow products and digital archiving.

4. Clarify how we make decisions

We will review our governance model to clarify the decision-making roles and responsibilities of trustees, faculty and administrators in order to enhance communication and effectiveness. We will also examine key functions such as graduate studies, research and community engagement to strengthen their efficiency, operations and impact.

FROM 2020-27, RISD WILL EMPHASIZE THREE STRATEGIC AREAS:

JUST SOCIETIES

SUSTAINABILITY

**NEW WAYS OF
MAKING AND
KNOWING**

1

**THE RISD COMMUNITY WILL
CONTRIBUTE TO SHAPING
JUST SOCIETIES, BOTH LOCALLY
AND GLOBALLY.**

Artists and designers are vital participants in and contributors to the evolution of local and global communities. Creative practices and traditions support and inform life in Providence, and the city's history, character and future are deeply intertwined with RISD's.

To help students become civically and ethically engaged in building more democratic and equitable societies, we are enriching both curricular and cocurricular opportunities by adding a range of global and underrepresented artistic and cultural voices. Our students and faculty draw on these traditions and contexts in their investigations, engagement and research—in the realms of materials, emerging technologies, culture, civic practices, and social and natural systems.

Over the past decade, we have increased both the diversity of our faculty, staff and students and the disciplines and cultural traditions they engage in their work. We have expanded curricular opportunities to encourage meaningful immersion in a variety of local and global contexts and have provided more support for students interested in pursuing work with our campus and regional communities as well as through international programs and travel/study courses.

RISD can provide a bridge between Providence's past and its future, working with the local community to reflect upon and negotiate change. In the coming years, we will accelerate and strengthen our commitment to inclusivity, equity and social justice both on campus and through our community's contributions in the larger cultural context.



Strategic Objectives

1. Increase access to RISD

Strengthen financial support for both undergraduate and graduate students by increasing financial aid and scholarships, along with social equity funding for materials, travel, internships and research opportunities.

2. Empower students and alumni to succeed

Create an integrated network of professional advising and develop new strategies of mentoring and tutoring in studio and liberal arts courses.

Build the capacity of our learning support systems to meet existing and emerging needs, including multilingual learning, peer tutoring and professional support for writing practices across the curriculum.

Develop more robust relationships with alumni by celebrating their accomplishments and providing mentorship opportunities with current students.

Develop cohesive community engagement practices by articulating an institutional philosophy geared toward civic learning and action, building criteria for engagement centered around long-term, reciprocal partnerships and coordinating support across all divisions of the college and museum.

3. Support faculty and staff development

Establish a Teaching and Learning Lab to promote inclusive and innovative pedagogy that advances principles of social equity and inclusion, environmental and climate justice, experimentation and global perspectives in our curricula (see also pp 13, 30, 34).

Implement an annual development program for faculty and staff that furthers a learning environment of mutual respect and support.

4. Pioneer research on issues of social equity in art and design pedagogy

Inaugurate a Faculty Fellows Program (see also pp 13, 30) and invite the first cohort to focus on social equity as it relates to art and design in order to generate new research, curricula and teaching guides that advance our social equity and inclusion goals.

Develop, preserve and interpret the RISD Museum and Fleet Library collections to uncover underrepresented stories and elevate marginalized or distorted voices in ways that support an inclusive environment, build meaningful relationships with our constituents and effectively reflect the communities served by these research and knowledge centers.

Support professional development opportunities at the RISD Museum and Fleet Library that encourage diverse perspectives and introduce potential career paths for underrepresented groups.

5. Further diversify our community

Implement a strategic, intentional hiring plan to attract and retain faculty and staff in order to expand our curricular offerings and create a more diverse and inclusive community.

Develop a long-term recruitment strategy to enroll students from a broader range of domestic and international locations and life experiences, and plan for modest but strategic graduate and undergraduate enrollment growth.

Share RISD's unique creative practices with wider audiences locally and globally through Continuing Education, Executive Education, Partnered Projects and global activities that expand our international reputation and promote collaborative innovation (see also p 14).

Outcomes

Cultivate an ever more diverse community

Expand the content of our curriculum and the practice of our pedagogy

Contribute to the decolonization of our disciplines and fields of study



Models in custom boots designed by Danielle Simpkin 19 AP wait backstage at the Collection runway show

2

THE RISD COMMUNITY WILL CONTRIBUTE TO A SUSTAINABLE PLANET.

Art and design are integral to addressing global needs. Empowered with unique gifts of questioning, making and communicating, artists and designers are positioned to command our attention, proactively effect positive change, steward sustainable practices and work toward environmental and climate justice.

RISD's rich history and expertise at the nexus of art, design, environmental humanities, environmental social sciences and the sciences are evident through our faculty, departments, programs and curricula. Over the past decade, we have developed both a concentration and a new MA program in Nature-Culture-Sustainability Studies, expanded our examination of ecological art and design, critically engaged new approaches to issues of the day and supported deep scholarly engagement with living systems at the Edna W. Lawrence Nature Lab.

In the next seven years we will build on our progress and position RISD to lead in shaping new creative perspectives at the intersection of culture, creativity and the sciences. To accomplish this we will harness our efforts in more intentional and interconnected ways as we address sustainability challenges in our facilities, through our curriculum and through dedicated research and practice.



Strategic Objectives

1. Build and renovate facilities in line with sustainable principles

Substantially reduce RISD’s reliance on fossil fuels and source our power supply from renewable energy.

Approach improvements to both our historical buildings and new projects as opportunities to conserve energy and employ green best practices.

2. Infuse sustainability into the curriculum

Join the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network to align our research and studio work with a global network of universities and translate the latest expertise into action.

Support the infusion of sustainability principles and explorations of material practices through the Teaching and Learning Lab and expand models for addressing the challenges of climate change through art and design (see also pp 13, 22, 34).

Create an advisory board to help interpret, inform and aggregate our sustainability efforts across campus, the curriculum and the community, and to coordinate a more comprehensive teaching program that prepares students for work at the nexus of art, design, the environmental humanities and the sciences.

3. Lead in bringing art and design to the challenge of climate change

Invite a future cohort of Faculty Fellows (see also pp 13, 22) to focus on issues of sustainability, environmental and climate justice, and the exploration of living systems.

4. Create structures to advance inquiry into art, design and living systems

Activate a comprehensive research program to catalyze methods, pedagogies and multiple modes of practice that allow RISD to enter the world of environmental research from art, design and cultural perspectives.

Build on the Nature Lab’s biomaking spaces, research expertise and collections to augment opportunities for learning and experimentation in material studies,

Outcomes

Operate a greener campus

Embed sustainability principles throughout our curriculum

Contribute focused research

3

**THE RISD COMMUNITY WILL
CONTRIBUTE TO NEW WAYS
OF MAKING AND KNOWING.**



At RISD we engage in myriad forms of creative practice, culture making and critical scholarship. Through these efforts we address complex issues, contribute new ideas, enhance human understanding, create shared experiences and forge new collaborations across disciplinary boundaries. Such contributions require time and space for reflection, renewal, experimentation and innovation.

To enable students and faculty to make still greater contributions, we will recalibrate workloads and enhance physical and organizational structures that cultivate thoughtful and reflective practices. We will frame and support cross-institutional inquiry (in material practices and existing and emerging technologies) to enrich our cultural contributions and uphold social equity and climate justice by bringing the diversity of our current creative practices to bear on critical social, political and environmental challenges.

Strategic Objectives

1. Introduce innovative curricula and pedagogy

Inform new teaching methods and course development and inspire new areas of research by supporting faculty efforts to create more meaningful connections between their teaching, research and practice through the Teaching and Learning Lab (see also pp 13, 22, 30).

2. Redefine graduate education at RISD

Expand and support a cohesive community of graduate-level learners and faculty by rethinking structures and requirements; reassessing capacity, resources and outcomes of current programs; and strengthening the shared academic and cocurricular experience.

Increase scholarship aid to make graduate study more financially accessible.

Foreground research and integrate new areas of advanced practice and higher-order theoretical and methodological discourse to further distinguish graduate from undergraduate education.

Experiment with new delivery models for graduate education.

Prepare graduate students for academic and professional careers by developing teaching and research assistantships that better integrate required pedagogical training and mentorship (see also p 39).

3. Increase institutional research capacity and output

Expand and further develop the RISD Research office to broaden the college's research agenda and support individual faculty and student research, projects and grant-related activities.

Expand the capacity of the Fleet Library to support research through continued development of partnerships, programming and collections along with further investment in digital platforms to publish and promote the creative, scholarly and experimental work of RISD's faculty and students.

Activate the RISD Museum's physical and virtual spaces to allow for new forms of exhibition and research that encourage and support collaborative and responsive work, multiple perspectives, cross-cultural dialogues and opportunities for free expression.

4. Enhance academic facilities and equipment

Prioritize the continued implementation of the Campus Master Plan, focusing the next phase on improving academic spaces across divisions.

Invest in shared state-of-the-art equipment to enable cutting-edge work and support richer interdisciplinary and collaborative inquiry by aggregating similar methods and equipment from disparate departments.



5. Establish a series of labs for inquiry and exchange

Develop an ecosystem of research activity by creating a series of non-departmental, co-located labs that provide faculty and students with the flexibility to coalesce around common areas of interdisciplinary inquiry.

6. Create more flexibility for faculty inquiry

Commit to addressing the reduction of faculty teaching loads to create time and space for research (see also p 12).

Explore alternative models of academic appointments that allow for more participation in research, scholarship, creative practice and institutional service.



7. Support student contributions to research agendas

Reduce undergraduate and graduate credit-hour requirements while maintaining national accreditation standards and create a common scheduling grid across all divisions that provides flexibility to pursue alternative modes of learning (see also p 12).

Increase undergraduate and graduate research assistantships to support student engagement with research projects (see also p 34).

Outcomes

Create new knowledge

Enrich specific fields of study with contemporary research

Demonstrate the importance of creative practice to global issues

Promote the value of art and design in our everyday lives



BUILDING ON OUR PREVIOUS PLAN

RISD's last strategic plan, *Critical Making | Making Critical*, advanced seven key areas. The outcomes of that plan laid the foundation for the ambitious goals outlined in this new plan.

1. Teaching and learning

- Added 10 new full-time faculty positions
- Developed 3 new interdisciplinary concentrations
- Created 2 new graduate programs
- Established 2 endowed faculty positions/
1 endowed curatorship
- Implemented 1-credit courses
- Developed additional science courses and tracks in History, Philosophy and the Social Sciences
- Added Museum fellowships for faculty and students

2. Discovery and knowledge through research

- Established a new research office
- Developed regular sabbatical presentations
- Increased conference funding
- Launched annual license for Digital Commons



BUILDING ON OUR PREVIOUS PLAN

3. Student support

- Increased financial aid
- Expanded Career Center programming
- Increased staffing in Health Services
- Increased staffing in Disability Services
- Increased staffing in Counseling and Psychological Services
- Maintained selectivity and retention in admissions while increasing number of applications

4. Facilities planning

- Developed Campus Master Plan
- Renovated 189 Canal Street
- Renovated 123 Dyer Street
- Completed planning for Quad housing
- Addressed shop safety issues / increased training in shops
- Increased annual funding for deferred maintenance
- Renovated first floor of 20 Washington Place
- Created new ambisonic sound studio at 15 West



5. Critical making and innovation

- Developed Co-Works
- Upgraded classroom technology

6. Diversity and lifelong learning

- Expanded recognition programs for staff
- Increased professional development opportunities
- Administered employee engagement / climate surveys
- Expanded diversity programs

7. Technology and administrative systems

- Implemented Student Planning (student information system)
- Implemented Slate (admissions management system)
- Implemented Tableau (institutional data analysis)
- Implemented Raiser's Edge (cloud-based fundraising and donor management)



STRATEGIC PLAN CORE COMMITTEE

titles as of December 2018

Maggie Balch
Dean of Students

Patricia Barbeito
Interim Dean of Faculty and
Associate Provost of Teaching
and Learning

Daniel Cavicchi
Interim Provost

David Frazer
Professor of Painting

Sarah Ganz Blythe
Deputy Director, Exhibitions,
Education and Programs, RISD
Museum

Shawn Greenlee
Associate Professor and
Programs Head, Experimental
and Foundation Studies

Mara Hermano
Vice President of Integrated
Planning

Carl Lostritto
Assistant Professor of
Architecture

Andy Martinez
Archivist

Margot Nishimura
Interim Dean of Libraries

Jorge Paricio
Senior Critic in Industrial Design

Dave Proulx
Executive Vice President of
Finance and Administration

Lisi Raskin
Associate Professor and
Department Head, Sculpture

Taylor Scott
President's Chief of Staff
and Communications

Matthew Shenoda
Vice President of Social Equity
and Inclusion

Emily Vogler
Assistant Professor and
Department Head, Landscape
Architecture

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