

**NEASC/NASAD Joint Visit**

**Rhode Island School of Design (RISD)**

2 College Street, Providence, RI 02903  
Rosanne Somerson, President

**April 3 – 6, 2016**

**NEASC Team**

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NEASC Note: This report represents the views of the evaluation committee as interpreted by the chairperson. Its content is based on the committee's evaluation of the institution with respect to the Commission's criteria for accreditation. It is a confidential document in which all comments are made in good faith. The report is prepared both as an educational service to the institution and to assist the Commission in making a decision about the institution's accreditation status.

**For Institutions with NASAD Membership:**

**Programs or degrees for which renewal of Final Approval for Listing is sought.**

Bachelor of Fine Arts – 4 years: Apparel Design  
Bachelor of Fine Arts – 4 years: Ceramics  
Bachelor of Fine Arts – 4 years: Film/Animation/Video  
Bachelor of Fine Arts – 4 years: Furniture Design  
Bachelor of Fine Arts – 4 years: Glass  
Bachelor of Fine Arts – 4 years: Graphic Design  
Bachelor of Fine Arts – 4 years: Industrial Design  
Bachelor of Fine Arts – 4 years: Interior Studies  
(listed Interior Architecture on the website)  
Bachelor of Fine Arts – 4 years: Illustration  
Bachelor of Fine Arts – 4 years: Jewelry and Metalsmithing  
Bachelor of Fine Arts – 4 years: Painting  
Bachelor of Fine Arts – 4 years: Photography  
Bachelor of Fine Arts – 4 years: Printmaking  
Bachelor of Fine Arts – 4 years: Sculpture  
Bachelor of Fine Arts – 4 years: Textiles

Master of Arts in Teaching – 1 year plus 1 summer  
Master of Arts – 1 year: Art and Design Education

Master of Fine Arts – 2 years: Ceramics  
Master of Fine Arts – 2 years: Digital and Media  
Master of Fine Arts – 2 years: Furniture Design  
Master of Fine Arts – 2 years: Glass  
Master of Fine Arts – 2 years: Graphic Design  
Master of Fine Arts – 2 years: Jewelry and Metalsmithing  
Master of Fine Arts – 2 years: Painting  
Master of Fine Arts – 2 years: Photography  
Master of Fine Arts – 2 years: Printmaking  
Master of Fine Arts – 2 years: Sculpture  
Master of Fine Arts – 2 years: Textiles

Master of Industrial Design – 2 years  
Master of Industrial Design – 2.5 years

Post-Baccalaureate Program – 1 year: Glass

**Programs or degrees for which renewal of Plan Approval for Listing is sought.**

Post-Baccalaureate Program – 1 year: Jewelry and Metalsmithing

**Programs or degrees for which Final Approval for Listing is sought.**

Master of Fine Arts – 3 years: Graphic Design  
Master of Fine Arts – 3 years: Furniture Design  
Master of Arts – 1 year plus 1 summer: Interior Studies (Adaptive Reuse)  
Master of Design – 2 years plus 1 summer: Interior Studies (Adaptive Reuse/Narrative Environments)

**DISCLAIMER — NASAD**

The following report and any statements therein regarding compliance with NASAD accreditation standards represent only the considered opinion of the visitors at the time of the visit. Definitive evaluation of compliance and the accreditation decision will be made by the Commission following a complete review of the application, including the Self-Study, the Visitors' Report, and any Optional Response to the Visitors' Report submitted by the institution.

**OPTIONAL RESPONSE — NASAD**

RISD has the opportunity to provide an Optional Response to the Visitors' Report, which may be used to correct (1) errors of fact, (2) conclusions based on such errors, and (3) any documented changes made in the program since the on-site review. In particular, information in the Optional Response should address noted issues of apparent noncompliance, such as those included in Section P. of this report, and any areas where the provision of further information has been deemed advisable by the institution.

## **Introduction & Acknowledgements**

The Joint Visiting Team representing the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) visited the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) from April 3 to April 6, 2016 for the purpose of verifying the School's self-study of February 2016 and ascertaining that its programs and operations comply with the standards of the two accrediting organizations. NEASC provided four members of the team and NASAD three.

This evaluation of RISD is a comprehensive evaluation following its fifth-year report submitted and accepted in 2012 by NEASC's Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. In the preparation of this report the Visiting Team considered a number of documents in addition to the Self-Study Report, including RISD's strategic plan for 2012-2017 entitled *critical making / making critical*, catalog, viewbooks, and website as well as NEASC's accreditation letter of 2006 and its 2012 letter accepting RISD's 5<sup>th</sup> year interim report. A review of these documents before and during the Team's visit to RISD, the preliminary visit by the Team Chair and Vice Chair on September 28, 2015, and the official visit April 3-6 together have provided the basis for the information and evaluative judgments contained in the 11 sections of this report, which address the standards for Accreditation of both NEASC and NASAD.

President Somerson hosted a dinner for the team on April 3, with senior University leadership and a member of the Board in attendance. On April 5 the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Visiting Team met with a group of four RISD trustees, including the Board Chair. On April 4 and 5 team members (together or individually) met with senior staff, faculty leadership and students. Staff included the President, Provost, Chief Financial Officer, Dean of Student Affairs, VP of Campus Services, Executive Director of Media, General Counsel, VP of Integrated Planning, Director of Library Services, Dean of the Faculty, Executive Director of Continuing Education, the VP for Institutional Engagement, Dean of Human Resources and the Associate and Assistant VPs for enrollment. RISD faculty leaders who met with team-members include the Dean of Liberal Arts, Department Heads, Graduate Program Directors, Instruction Committee Chairs, and the Faculty Steering Committee. Team members also viewed student work and met separately with undergraduates and graduate students.

In all of these meetings, the Team found its RISD interlocutors knowledgeable and forthcoming. Their candor and clear-sightedness made the Team's work engaging and productive. The Team was impressed by RISD's strong commitment to the accreditation process and found its tradition of "critique," characteristic of its self-study and fundamental to its endeavors in art and design, evident in the high quality of the conversations throughout the visit.

### **NASAD Standard O.2. Completeness and Effectiveness of Self-Study**

The coupling of the NEASC and NASAD Team Visit was overall effective. Most helpful was the roadmap document aligning the NEASC and NASAD standards. The Visiting Team thanks the institution for the care with which it handled this arrangement.

## **NEASC Standard 1: Mission and Purposes**

### **NASAD Standard A. Purposes**

RISD's sense of its own mission and purpose, first expressed in its charter of 1877, has been understood and acted upon for 140 years. Its current mission statement, designed to reflect the institution as a whole (College and Museum) in a single sentence, was approved by the Board in 2006:

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, scholarships and innovation.

The Museum has its own mission statement as well; together the two statements articulate the institution's distinctiveness, those it serves, and its vision for the future. These statements are used to frame Board discussions and can be found in RISD's strategic plan, Fact Book and on its website.

While not everyone at RISD sees their efforts equally reflected in the mission statement, the RISD community as a whole is aware of the statement's intent and accepts the broad direction toward which it points. The statement will be reviewed as part of the new strategic planning cycle beginning later this year.

The statement provides a broad direction for the curriculum and forms the basis upon which expectations of departments for student learning and creation of new knowledge by faculty are developed, if not always aligned. In use now for 10 years, the statement's consonance with the implicitly understood purposes of the institution makes it possible to judge the effectiveness of the institution's actions with respect to its over-arching educational goals. Those judgments follow in this report.

#### *Institutional Effectiveness (NEASC):*

RISD has repeatedly reflected on its mission and purposes and used those reflections to plan for the future. Those reflections and consequent self-awareness include recognition of the mission statement's power to enhance institutional effectiveness as well as its limitations with respect to some aspects of planning and resource allocation.

## **NEASC Standard 2: Planning and Evaluation**

### **NASAD Standard O. Art/Design Unit Evaluation, Planning, and Projections**

Since 2012, RISD has been guided by a five-year Strategic Plan *critical making/making critical*. The development of this plan was itself a complex process: its origins lay in a broad-based planning effort during the years 2009-11, but after it ran into opposition on campus, it was significantly reconfigured. Perhaps as a result of that complicated pre-history, the Plan established clear institutional priorities, but did not define specific goals or benchmarks. Without specific goals, it is difficult to measure the Plan's success. On the other hand, we heard abundant testimony to the Plan's continuing resonance for members of the RISD community; clearly it has given the institution a sense of direction during a time of leadership transition.

The priorities established by the Strategic Plan are feasible and appropriate to the institution: for example, increasing full-time faculty positions in needed areas, increasing opportunities for interdisciplinary and collaborative work, developing the use of advanced technologies in classroom learning and studio fabrication, and improving access to a RISD education through enhanced financial aid. We share the view expressed to us in several meetings that the goals of the 2012-17 Plan are, in some respects, cautious and generic, reflecting the fact that it was a political document designed to build consensus in a turbulent period. We commend the current administration for envisioning a future strategic plan that will articulate more specific goals.

The most significant planning effort since the development of the Strategic Plan, and one that was recommended by the Plan, was the Campus Master Plan (2015). The CMP provides a detailed inventory and facilities assessment of RISD buildings, which is intended to serve as the basis for a long-range view of the physical development of the campus. In many respects, the CMP is an impressive achievement, rich in data and reflecting broad outreach to all constituencies on campus. Clearly, the forthcoming Strategic Plan will need to be closely coordinated with the CMP. In that connection, the Team encourages RISD to expand its notion of space design to encompass not just the spaces themselves but the equipment, technology, and other facilities therein. As will be noted in other places in this report, the Team is struck by the duplication of equipment and technology in multiple locations on campus, and suggests that data-driven planning might usefully be applied to that issue, too.

The primary challenge to these and other prior planning efforts is acknowledged to be the siloing of institutional data and the failure to coordinate planning across academic and administrative areas. The current leadership is addressing this lack of coordination with appropriate urgency. Responsibility for monitoring the Strategic Plan's implementation and for aligning planning cycles has recently shifted to the newly created office of the Vice President of Integrated Planning. This structure is too new for the Team to be able to evaluate its robustness or durability. If the goal of embedding data-driven planning throughout the institution is to be achieved, it will be vital to fill vacant positions in Institutional Research and build support from the bottom up, as well as top down, for this concept of integrated planning.

Academic programs are evaluated on a periodic basis (once every six or seven years.) These external reviews are thorough and professionally done, and provide the faculty and administration with external perspective on the strengths and weaknesses of existing programs. The review process has many of the typical features of such reviews (self-studies, recommendations from the external reviewers, responses and implementation plans from the visited department.) If there is one idiosyncrasy of the RISD reviews, it is that the findings of visiting committees are reported to and discussed by a committee of the Board of Trustees. While this practice must give Board members a singularly well-informed view of the operations of individual academic programs, it may be wondered whether giving a Board committee the responsibility to “monitor progress of and compliance with recommendations in accreditation and visiting committee reports” has the potential to draw trustees across the line from governance into management. The Team also heard that departments do not always follow through on the recommendations of Visiting Committees and that these failings are sometimes revealed in a subsequent visiting committee when the discrepancy between what was recommended and what was subsequently done comes to light.

Evaluation of learning outcomes has been sporadic but is now the focus of sustained leadership from the Vice-President of Integrated Planning. In the past, data relevant to learning assessment (such as NSSE surveys) have not been shared with those best placed to implement changes in program, curriculum or pedagogy. Looking to the future, it is anticipated that the new Strategic Plan will be informed by data on student success that will enable RISD continually to evaluate its success in achieving its educational mission and purposes.

*Institutional Effectiveness (NEASC):*

It is clear to the Visiting Team that the new leadership of RISD has given considerable thought to the effectiveness of past planning – whether in the context of strategic planning, facilities planning, academic planning or learning outcomes assessment. It is too early to assess the efficacy of integrated institutional planning, but the planning that is already under way is shaped by the leadership’s assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of prior planning and evaluation efforts.

**NEASC Standard 3: Organization and Governance**  
**NASAD Standard D. Governance and Administration**

The authority, responsibilities, and relationships among the governing board, administration, faculty and staff are not described in a single document but in a patchwork of documents. The official by-laws of the institution focus on the composition and operation of the Board of Trustees. They are supplemented by a separate Statement of Trustee Responsibilities and Expectations and by a set of Board committee charters. The by-laws have very little to say about the officers of RISD except for the President, and they are silent on the faculty's role. More details about faculty and staff roles are provided in a Faculty Handbook, created under the auspices of the Instruction Committee and updated annually, and a Staff Handbook, created by the Office of Human Resources. Both handbooks note, however, that, in the case of inconsistencies between a handbook and the provisions of a collective bargaining agreement, the latter should take precedence. The collective bargaining agreements are very lengthy documents that encompass not just matters of compensation and benefits but appointments procedures, workload expectations, professional responsibilities and the like. The Team has no reason to doubt that the board, administration, and faculty fulfill their respective roles as laid out in these documents, but this complex set of documents may contribute to a lack of clarity about decision-making authority. This lack of clarity was a concern heard in many meetings, and the Team commends the authors of the self-study for identifying it as an institutional challenge to be tackled in the near future.

The Board of Trustees embraces its responsibility for the quality and integrity of RISD. According to its Statement of Responsibilities and Expectations, the Board assumes ultimate responsibility not just for appointing and reviewing the President and securing the fiscal health of the institution, but also for the approval and monitoring of the Strategic Plan. The Board's engagement with the academic program (described most clearly in the Charter of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee) is unusually hands-on, as we noted in Standard Two.

All members of the Board except the President are independent and, to the best of our knowledge, free of any financial interest in the institution. The Board has a recently updated the conflict of interest policy and all disclosures are reviewed annually by two Board committees.

The Team was impressed by the Board's commitment to continuous review and improvement of its committee structure and overall functioning – in particular, the efforts that are being made to ensure consistency in the way that individual trustees understand their role, relative to the role of management. The introduction of an orientation for new Board members is an excellent step in facilitating such consistency. In the past there have been occasions when the lines between governance and management have been blurred, but the current Board leadership is strongly committed to supporting the President and her leadership team.

Looking to the future, the Team sees reason for optimism about the future partnership between the Board and the administration. To help ensure that this progress continues,



RISD should consider reviewing its governance documents with an eye to clarifying more explicitly the different roles and responsibilities of trustees, faculty and administration.

With respect to the relationship between faculty and administration, there is evidence of challenges in the past but again reasons for optimism. The challenges have arisen from a number of sources. One is a strong tradition of unionization, which has meant that the rules governing faculty involvement in governance and faculty appointments policies are embedded in collective bargaining agreements. This makes it harder to operate a conventional system of shared governance. Another (related) challenge is the lack of a forum for regular conversation between faculty members and administrators. The faculty as a whole meets monthly. Most senior administrators attend, unless specifically excluded, which is rare. To these structural challenges is added a culture of mistrust or suspicion – in itself not that uncommon but clearly exacerbated in recent years by the turbulence of the previous administration. Faculty express concern about what they see as a proliferation of administrators, especially senior administrators, over the past decade, at the same time (in their opinion) as the number of full-time faculty has remained essentially flat. In fact 10 new faculty lines were added/funded by the strategic plan, and of those lines, 8 have been filled as of 2015-16. While full-time faculty members are actively and conscientiously engaged in matters of educational programs and faculty personnel, this engagement seems to have run parallel to the work of administration rather than in partnership with it.

These patterns seem, however, to be on the verge of changing. The Team spoke to many faculty (including, notably, department chairs and graduate program directors) who expressed hopefulness about the prospect of working with the current President and Provost to address long-standing problems in the academic area (such as the logistical challenges associated with the timing of students' choice of their major, the administrative inefficiency of two- or three-person departments, or the role of part-time faculty). On the other side, within the senior administration, there is a strong sense that the impending process of strategic planning offers the best opportunity for sustained collaboration between faculty and administration. If the administration takes this opportunity to invite faculty (and, of course, the other constituencies) into the development of a strategic plan, there may be an opening not just to articulate a new set of institutional priorities but in the process to improve the quality of governance at the institution.

Along similar lines, the Team was impressed by the efforts that the administration is making to improve communication with staff and students, via regular town halls and open meetings. These efforts appear to be working. Staff express optimism that a period in which they felt (to quote a 2012 climate survey) that their input was neither solicited nor valued is coming to an end.

Governance questions have loomed large at RISD over the past decade. This is a very close community that has nonetheless experienced friction between different constituencies and frustration about how decisions are made, and by whom. The effectiveness of certain elements within the organizational structure has been reviewed: for example, the Board's Committee on Trustees and Governance has been quite active in reviewing Board charters and by-laws, and the President has significantly reorganized the senior staff from the very

small group she inherited into a much larger cabinet. But at some point in the near future it will become necessary to review the effectiveness of the structure as a whole.

*Institutional Effectiveness (NEASC):*

RISD periodically undertakes (and is now undertaking) a systematic review of its organizational structure for the purpose of improving its system of governance with respect to the administration, faculty, and the Board.

**NEASC Standard 4: The Academic Program**  
**NASAD Standards J., K., L., M., and N.**

The Visiting Team found at RISD a community of students, faculty and staff committed to excellence of practice and outcomes within all of the disciplines and departments.

Consonant with its mission, RISD offers a plethora of educational programs in architecture, design, fine arts, and arts education – as well as liberal arts. The self-study indicates 15 four-year undergraduate degrees leading to the BFA, the BArch (5-year), two one-year post-baccalaureate degree (J+M and Glass), and 17 two- or three-year graduate degrees leading to the MA, MArch, MAT, MDes, MFA, MID or MLA.

**Note:** *By content, the BArch and MArch degrees do not fall under the purview of NASAD. With regard to level and offering, they do fall within the NEASC accreditation authority.*

The Visiting Team enjoyed numerous opportunities to view student work, particularly the exhibitions at the Waterman, Sol Kolfler, and Gelman Galleries as well as electronic images of the work online. Being able to view work of undergraduates and graduate students at the entry, midpoint, and culminating levels – together with the published statements of departmental missions and expected learning outcomes – was much appreciated by the team, given NEASC’s request to pay especial attention to these matters. These exhibitions are one indication of RISD’s interest in vigorously addressing this question. Program-level learning outcomes are already listed on the [risd.edu](http://risd.edu) website, and it is clear that processes of documentation are being refined as part of the ongoing assessment efforts. These efforts include making appropriate distinctions between undergraduate and graduate curricula, syllabi, and performance criteria. The self-study’s candid appraisal that even more progress should be made with respect to the quality of course syllabi and the differentiation of undergraduate and graduate curricula was confirmed by Visiting Team conversations.

The purposes of the liberal arts courses – and here there is a broad spectrum in the humanities and social sciences as well as courses in mathematics and the natural sciences – are to contextualize and enrich understandings of art and design and to contribute to broad integrative knowledge that will serve students well in their careers and as citizens. That knowledge comes part and parcel with general education competencies such as communication (verbal and written), critical thinking, and information literacy. The attention given to writing in the first-year liberal arts courses and English language proficiency seemed to the team appropriate – especially in light of the increased numbers of international students. RISD’s self-study makes clear that while the institution does not have an articulated general education requirement, it has created a “curriculum map” indicating how undergraduate courses align with Gen-Education competencies as defined by NEASC and NASAD. The institution’s earnest investment in better understanding how well it achieves its goals in this area is stated in its self-study and reflected in its August 2015 report on General Education.

In short, the Team found evidence that the institution is making progress in identifying learning outcomes for individual students and for many departments, and while it may not be easy to roll this up into some general institutional learning outcomes, the Team is impressed by the institution's thoughtful approach to the challenge.

RISD's creative, studio-based education attracts some 2300 students from around the world, and surveys indicate their extraordinary satisfaction with the academic experience. The Team in its own interactions with students was deeply impressed by their widely shared camaraderie and commitment to the value of art practice as a positive force in the world. This is not to say that students found nothing to criticize. They expressed disappointment in perceptions among studio faculty of liberal arts as ancillary – perceptions not easy to reconcile with RISD's expressed pride in its cultivation of unexpected ways in which the liberal arts complement studio work. More importantly, the sometimes unpredictable enrollment numbers by department for the sophomore year (as determined by students' major selection) results in difficulties for students with respect to access of resources, planning and registration. Misalignment in scheduling contributes to an inefficient use of space and time, and a review of the situation, if done in a holistic and constructive manner, might lead to changes in structures and processes that would improve the academic experience for both students and faculty.

The internal and external review processes for individual programs, conducted on a 6-7 year cycle, are clearly robust, but RISD acknowledges that more integration, alignment, and planning between Academic Affairs, Integrated Planning, and the departments are in order. While the effectiveness of individual departments with respect to their own particular goals is keenly judged (in the spirit of "critique"), the connections of these goals to the whole of the student academic experience is less so.

Tracks in Museum education were recently consolidated (due to enrollment concerns), and the Provost is currently completing an assessment of the organization and structure of the Division of Graduate Studies. The question of "new programs" also seems to be on the Provost's agenda. The Team heard little about new programs in the works, only that the Provost's Council is reviewing the process (judged not to be nimble in the self-study) by which new programs are proposed.

Overall, the Team finds that the programs build quality without considering how synergies might be developed among different disciplines. The Team was particularly struck by facilities redundancies and by artificial prohibitions of students from one area using resources from other areas. Individual faculty express a desire to develop synergies, but the tradition of disciplinary autonomy has retarded the growing of connective tissue among the programs.

The Visiting Team commends RISD for its plan (announced in the self-study and aligned with its new cycle of strategic planning) to evaluate undergraduate open major selection and to continue to step up attention to learning outcomes and assessment of academic programs.

*Institutional Effectiveness (NEASC):*

Given RISD's reputation, the Visiting Team was not surprised to find a high quality

curriculum, talented teachers with high standards, and a commitment on the part of both faculty and administrators to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of academic programs – first and foremost departmentally through faculty committee processes. The Team also observed a desire (an effort to be led in conjunction with a Director of Assessment) to understand that effectiveness more broadly with respect to both general education competencies and institutional goals. Tracks in Museum education were recently consolidated (due to enrollment concerns), and the Provost is currently completing an assessment of the organization and structure of the Division of Graduate Studies.

**NASAD Standard J. Branch Campuses, External Programs, Use of the Institution’s Name for Educational Activities Operated Apart from the Main Campus or the Primary Educational Program (if applicable)**

Not Applicable

**NASAD Standard K. Community Involvement; Articulation with Other Schools**

RISD has a long-standing relationship with Brown University, including shared registration agreements and the joint use of facilities for athletic, academic and co-curricular activities (the two campuses are immediately adjacent and in some cases, including student housing, overlapping). Students from both institutions take advantage of the broad range of courses available.

The Brown-RISD Dual Degree program was established in 2007, one of the first such dual-degree programs in the nation between an art institution and a research university. Students in the program earn a BFA from RISD and a BA or BS degree from Brown over the course of five years. Students must be admitted into both programs in order to apply for the dual degree; the program is highly competitive. Students in the program first attend RISD’s Foundation year; their second year of coursework is taken at Brown. After these initial two years, students work closely with their faculty advisors at both institutions to build their academic portfolio. A fifth-year Capstone project is expected to combine aspects of both degrees.

**NASAD Standard L. Non-Degree-Granting Programs for the Community**

RISD’s Continuing Education program has been serving the public since the institution’s founding. RISD | CE offers over 200 year-round evening and weekend courses, 12 certificate programs for adults and a pre-College program for high school students. Executive Education has been recently added to the list of course offerings. The director of the program reports directly to the Provost. CE courses are held in the same studios and classrooms as the degree program and the curriculum and faculty undergo similar review processes. The Visiting Team did hear that the CE Program has a difficult time finding available studio space and openings in the schedule. Some of the offerings are available for transfer credit towards degree requirements.

**NASAD Standard M. Review of Specific Operational Standards for (1) All Institutions of Higher Education for which NASAD is the Designated Institutional Accreditor and/or (2) Proprietary Institutions (if applicable)**

Not Applicable

**NASAD Standard N. Programs, Degrees, and Curricula**

**1. Credit Hours**

**a. Definitions and Procedures**

*(1) Definition of Credit and Methods of Assigning Credit*

(a) RISD states that a credit hour represents at least three hours of work each week for a 14-15 week semester, or the equivalent amount of instruction during a five-week Wintersession. In lecture/discussion courses requiring outside preparation, one hour of credit represents one hour of work each week of the term in class, and two hours of work outside class. In studio/laboratory courses, one hour of credit represents three hours of time in the studio/laboratory and home space during each week of the term. Three-credit studio classes generally meet in class for five hours per week, and Experimental and Foundation studio classes meet 7.5 hours per week.

(b) RISD maintains clear criteria for transferring credits from other institutions. RISD is in compliance such that the acceptance of transfer credit does not substantially diminish the proportion of intermediate and advanced coursework in a student's academic program. RISD does not award transfer credit for experiential learning, only for coursework taken at accredited colleges. To be eligible for transfer, credits must be from courses taken at an accredited college or university and the grade must be a C or better. Transfer credits apply toward the 42 required for Liberal Arts at RISD and the Division of Liberal Arts determines the eligibility of each course. Once enrolled, RISD degree students may only transfer 12 credits from other institutions. Transfer credits are reviewed and approved by the relevant department head. Transfer of undergraduate credits is constrained by the number of courses, earned grade and appropriate approvals. RISD has a two-year residency requirement, which approximates 50% of the program, well above one quarter of the degree. RISD accepts graduate credit in transfer on a strictly limited basis to preserve the integrity of the degree awarded (NASAD *Handbook 2015-16*, Standards for Accreditation III.A. 2., 3., and 4.).

*(2) Publication of Definitions and Policies*

The URL to the [risd.edu](http://www.risd.edu) website with policies and disclosures is:

<http://www.risd.edu/Policies/Disclosures/>

For course/credit load: <http://www.risd.edu/Policies/Academic/>

There are also links from the registrar's website:

<https://risdregistrar.wordpress.com/> and published in the course catalog.

*(3) Procedures Used to Make Credit Hour Assignments*

Department heads and divisional deans approve courses and credits, followed by the Curriculum Committee or Wintersession Committee depending on when the

course is offered (NASAD *Handbook 2015-16*, Standards for Accreditation III.A.6.).

*(4) Means Employed to Ensure Accurate and Reliable Application*

The deans, department heads and applicable committee are responsible for ensuring accurate and reliable application of credit hour policies. The normal credit load is 12 to 15 credits per semester, and 3 credits during Wintersession. Twelve (12) credits per semester is the minimum requirement for fulltime enrollment (NASAD *Handbook 2015-16*, Standards for Accreditation III.A.6.).

*(5) Procedures for Institutions for which NASAD is the Designated Institutional Accreditor*

Not Applicable

**b. Evaluation of Compliance**

RISD appears to comply with NASAD Standards and seems to be within the range of commonly accepted practices as noted in art/design units in other national institutions (NASAD *Handbook 2015-16*, Standards for Accreditation, III.A. Credit and Time Requirements).

**c. New, Experimental, Atypical Formats or Methods**

There are fair and equitable practices for awarding credit for Independent and Collaborative Study projects, which require approximately the same time commitment as regular courses and must be approved in advance. Departmental approval is also required in order for students to receive credit for Internships, Study Abroad and Service Learning.

**2. Specific Curricula**

**a. General Content and Competency Standards**

**Experimental and Foundation Studies**

Foundation Studies courses (18-credit studio curricula) are taken by all first-year undergraduates regardless of their intended major. Classes in Drawing, Design and Spatial Dynamics meet once a week for 7.5 hours each. Students are also expected to work on outside assignments. Individual (one-on-one) and group critique introduces students to RISD's studio culture.

## b. Individual Curricula

### ***Baccalaureate Programs***

#### **Apparel Design**

##### **Bachelor of Fine Arts—4 years: Apparel Design (BFA)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Bachelor of Fine Arts in Apparel Design (BFA).
2. **Curriculum.** This Apparel Design curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs as published in the NASAD *Handbook*. The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Apparel Design (BFA) degree program requires a minimum of 126 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines for distribution: 75 credits or 62.5% of coursework in the Major/Studio and Supportive courses; 15 credits or 12.5% in Art/Design History; 18 credits or 15% of coursework in General Studies; 18 credits or 15% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*). The curriculum provides a progression from basic to complex projects culminating in the senior year. The curriculum also engages students in technology, materials and processes as evidenced in the student works shown in the RISD galleries and portfolios. The BFA Apparel Design curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to cover NASAD Standards, and the essential competencies, opportunities and experiences for Apparel Design.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the BFA in Apparel Design appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Major in this area.
4. **Student Work.** The Visiting team reviewed work completed during all three years of a student's time in the Apparel Design major. The RISD faculty continually assess student progress in ongoing studio work through all three years for progress in the areas of design thinking, patterns, draping, construction, hand and loom techniques, and other skills needed in the apparel industry. The unique strength of this program is the variety and preparations of student work options for the profession of apparel design.
5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website:  
<http://www.risd.edu/academics/apparel/undergraduate/>  
New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed from sophomore to senior year through a scaffolded set of classes leading to a Capstone project and final presentation at graduation. A comprehensive student portfolio review happens at the end of each of the three years of work within the major.
6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The Apparel Design curriculum appears to meet applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution.

#### **Ceramics**

##### **Bachelor of Fine Arts—4 years: Ceramics (BFA)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Bachelor of Fine Arts in Ceramics (BFA). This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.



2. **Curriculum.** The Ceramics curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs as published in the *NASAD Handbook*. The curriculum demonstrates a clear scaffolding of content and learning outcomes from initial to senior courses. The RISD Bachelor of Fine Arts in Ceramics (BFA) degree program requires a minimum of 126 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines for distribution: 75 credits or 62.5% of coursework in the Major/Studio and Supportive courses; 15 credits or 12.5% in Art/Design History; 18 credits or 15% of coursework in General Studies; 18 credits or 15% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*). The BFA Ceramics curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to cover NASAD Standards, and the essential competencies, competencies, opportunities and experiences for Ceramics.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the BFA in Ceramics appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Major in this area.
4. **Student Work.** The Visiting team reviewed work completed during all three years of a student's time in the Ceramics major. The student work was excellent as evidenced in the RISD galleries and portfolios. A clear progression of skills (both aesthetic and technical) was apparent in the ceramics projects shown. A unique aspect of this program is that the student work addressed contemporary issues in ceramics
5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website:  
<http://www.risd.edu/academics/ceramics/undergraduate/>  
 New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed from sophomore to senior year through a scaffolded set of classes leading to a Capstone project and final presentation at graduation. A comprehensive student portfolio review happens at the end of each of the three years of work within the major.
6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The Ceramics curriculum appears to meet, if not exceed, applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution. A possible concern is the limited number of full-time faculty but the student numbers in enrollments in ceramics may not support more full-time permanent faculty.

### **Film/Animation/Video**

#### **Bachelor of Fine Arts—4 years: Film/Animation/Video (BFA)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Bachelor of Fine Arts in Film/Animation/Video (BFA). This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The Film/Animation/Video curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs as published in the *NASAD Handbook*. The Film/Animation/Video students gain progressive knowledge and skills needed for application in those industries. The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Film/Animation/Video (BFA) degree program requires a minimum of 126 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines for distribution: 84 credits or 70% of coursework in the Major/Studio and Supportive courses; 15 credits or 12.5% in Art/Design History; 9 credits or 7.5% of

- coursework in General Studies; 18 credits or 15% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*) The BFA Film/Animation/Video curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to address NASAD Standards, and the essential competencies, opportunities and experiences for Film/Animation/Video.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the BFA in Film/Animation/Video appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Major in this area.
  4. **Student Work.** The Visiting team reviewed work completed during all three years of a student's time in the Film/Animation/Video major. The curriculum is based on student-driven projects that range from experimental, documentary, and more commercial and professionally driven film and video applications. There is a range of animation and live-action work. Many graduates of this program go on to positions in various film and video industries.
  5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website:  
<http://www.risd.edu/academics/fav/undergraduate/>  
 New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed from sophomore to senior year through a scaffolded set of classes leading to a Capstone project and final presentation at graduation. A comprehensive student portfolio review happens at the end of each of the three years of work within the major.
  6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The Film/Animation/Video curriculum appears to meet applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution.

### **Furniture Design**

#### **Bachelor of Fine Arts—4 years: Furniture Design (BFA)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Bachelor of Fine Arts in Furniture Design (BFA). This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The Furniture Design curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs as published in the *NASAD Handbook*. The Furniture Design students gain progressive knowledge and skills needed for application to Furniture Design for preparation in the furniture industry. The Bachelor of Fine Arts in the Furniture Design (BFA) degree program requires a minimum of 126 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines for distribution: 75 credits or 62.5% of coursework in the Major/Studio and Supportive courses; 15 credits or 12.5% in Art/Design History; 18 credits or 15% of coursework in General Studies; 18 credits or 15% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*) The BFA Furniture Design curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to cover NASAD Standards, and the essential competencies, competencies, opportunities and experiences for Furniture Design.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the BFA in Furniture Design appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Major in this area.

4. **Student Work.** The Visiting team reviewed work completed during all three years of a student's time in the Furniture Design major. The curriculum is based on a fine-arts approach to furniture design and student work was of very good quality. Students in this program explored personal expression in making highly crafted, functional wood furniture.
5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website:  
<http://www.risd.edu/academics/furniture-design/undergraduate/>  
 New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed from sophomore to senior year through a scaffolded set of classes leading to a Capstone project and final presentation at graduation. A comprehensive student portfolio review happens at the end of each of the three years of work within the major.
6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The Furniture Design curriculum appears to meet, if not exceeds, applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution. The program is well known for its students who craft high quality furniture and several alums are now teaching in the field as well as producing their own works. (Please see overall facilities concerns in Section F.)

### **Graphic Design**

#### **Bachelor of Fine Arts—4 years: Graphic Design (BFA)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design (BFA). This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The Graphic Design curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs as published in the NASAD *Handbook*. The curriculum demonstrates a clear scaffolding of content and learning outcomes from initial to senior courses. Class assignments address contemporary issues and current competencies in the field with a broad variety of application from student to student and course to course. The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design (BFA) degree program requires a minimum of 126 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines for distribution: 75 credits or 62.5% of coursework in the Major/Studio and Supportive courses; 15 credits or 12.5% in Art/Design History; 18 credits or 15% of coursework in General Studies; 18 credits or 15% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*, p. 516.). The BFA Graphic Design curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to cover the methods outlined in the recently issued NASAD Standards for Common Curricular Elements for Undergraduate Degrees in Design for Design and the essential competencies, opportunities and experiences for Graphic Design.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the BFA in Graphic Design appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Major in this area.
4. **Student Work.** The Visiting team reviewed work completed during all three years of a student's time in the Graphic Design major. The student work was broad in its application, ranging from work in typography, book design, branding, programming

and visual communication. Issues of social relevancy and contemporary professional production appeared to be thoroughly researched and considered. Many of the students go on to careers in both print and digital fields.

5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website:  
<http://www.risd.edu/academics/graphic-design/undergraduate/>  
New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed from sophomore to senior year through a scaffolded set of classes leading to a Capstone project and final presentation at graduation. A comprehensive student portfolio review happens at the end of each of the three years of work within the major.
6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The Graphic Design curriculum appears to meet if not exceed (a) applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and (b) expectations for competency established by the institution. (Please see overall facilities concerns in Section F.)

## **Glass**

### **Bachelor of Fine Arts—4 years: Glass (BFA)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Bachelor of Fine Arts in Glass (BFA). This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The Glass curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs as published in the NASAD *Handbook*. The curriculum demonstrates a clear scaffolding of content and learning outcomes from initial to senior courses. Class assignments address contemporary issues and current competencies in the field with a broad variety of application from student to student and course to course. The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Glass (BFA) degree program requires a minimum of 126 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines for distribution: 75 credits or 62.5% of coursework in the Major/Studio and Supportive courses; 15 credits or 12.5% in Art/Design History; 18 credits or 15% of coursework in General Studies; 18 credits or 15% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*, p. 516.). The BFA Glass curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to cover NASAD Standards, and the essential competencies, opportunities and experiences for Glass.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the BFA in Glass appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Major in this area.
4. **Student Work.** The student work in Glass was outstanding. The Visiting team reviewed work completed during all three years of a student's time in the Glass major. The student work showed a range of skills, with the glass blowing skills being of excellent quality.
5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website:  
<http://www.risd.edu/academics/glass/undergraduate/>  
New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also

reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed from sophomore to senior year through a scaffolded set of classes leading to a Capstone project and final presentation at graduation. A comprehensive student portfolio review happens at the end of each of the three years of work within the major.

6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The Glass curriculum appears to meet, if not exceed, applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution. The work ranged from conceptual to utilitarian and from simple to complex. The glass students in this program go on to teaching opportunities and industry opportunities.

### **Industrial Design**

#### **Bachelor of Fine Arts—4 years: Industrial Design (BFA)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Bachelor of Fine Arts in Industrial Design (BFA). This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The Industrial Design curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs as published in the NASAD *Handbook*. The curriculum demonstrates a clear scaffolding of content and learning outcomes from initial to final senior projects. Class assignments provide the majors with design thinking, materials exploration and technology skills needed to be successful in the industrial design industry. The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Industrial Design (BFA) degree program requires a minimum of 126 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines for distribution: 75 credits or 62.5% of coursework in the Major/Studio and Supportive courses; 15 credits or 12.5% in Art/Design History; 18 credits or 15% of coursework in General Studies; 18 credits or 15% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*). The BFA Industrial Design curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to cover NASAD Standards and the essential competencies, opportunities and experiences for Industrial Design.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the BFA in Industrial Design appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Major in this area.
4. **Student Work.** The Visiting team reviewed work completed during all three years of a student's time in the Industrial Design major. The student work was very good and represented an array of skills and design practices that are used currently in the Industrial Design industry. The uniqueness of this program is the variety of product designs applications: from soft goods to highly technical computer products. This variety of student work appears to be a reflection of faculty members in Industrial Design, who have a large range of professional backgrounds. This large range can be seen as strength as long as the program delivers the core industrial design content.
5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website:  
<http://www.risd.edu/academics/industrial-design/undergraduate/>  
New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed from sophomore to senior year through a scaffolded set of classes leading to a Capstone project and

final presentation at graduation. A comprehensive student portfolio review happens at the end of each of the three years of work within the major.

6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The Industrial Design curriculum appears to meet, if not exceed, applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competencies established by the institution. The program is highly effective and ranked as one of the top Industrial Design programs in the world.

### **Interior Studies**

(Listed as Interior Architecture on the website)

#### **Bachelor of Fine Arts—4 years: Interior Studies (BFA)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Studies (BFA). This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The Interior Studies curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs. The curriculum demonstrates a clear scaffolding of content and learning outcomes from initial to final senior projects. Class assignments provide the majors with design thinking, materials exploration and technology skills needed to be successful in the Interior Design industry. The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Studies (BFA) degree program requires a minimum of 126 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines for distribution: 84 credits or 70% of coursework in the Major/Studio and Supportive courses; 15 credits or 12.5% in Art/Design History; 18 credits or 15% of coursework in General Studies; 9 credits or 7.5% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016, IPP Interior Studies p. 5*). The BFA Interior Studies curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to cover NASAD Standards, and the essential competencies, opportunities and experiences for Interior Studies.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the BFA in Interior Studies appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards Standards and guidelines for the Major in this area.
4. **Student Work.** The Visiting team reviewed work completed during all three years of a student's time in the Interior Studies major. The student work was excellent and represented of an array of skills and design practices that are used currently in the Interior design industry. The student projects were of excellent quality, highly innovative, and encompassed the most forward thinking design studies in the field of interior design.
5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website: <http://www.risd.edu/academics/interior-architecture/undergraduate/>. New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed from sophomore to senior year through a scaffolded set of classes leading to a Capstone project and final presentation at graduation. A comprehensive student portfolio review happens at the end of each of the three years of work within the major.
6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The Interior Studies curriculum appears to meet, if not exceed, applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and

expectations for competencies established by the institution. The program is highly creative in its applications to interior problems, both old and new.

## **Illustration**

### **Bachelor of Fine Arts—4 years: Illustration (BFA)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Bachelor of Fine Arts in Illustration (BFA). This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The Illustration curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs as published in the NASAD *Handbook*. The curriculum demonstrates a clear sequence of content and learning outcomes from initial to senior courses. Students begin with the foundation curriculum common to all incoming RISD students before taking a sequence of courses unique to the discipline of Illustration. The inventory of required Illustration courses are weighted to drawing, color and painting. These required courses are supplemented by electives covering a range of advanced skills and methodologies. The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Illustration (BFA) degree program requires a minimum of 126 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines: 84 credits or 70% of coursework in the Major/Studio and Supportive courses; 15 credits or 12.5% in Art/Design History; 18 credits or 15% of coursework in General Studies; 12 credits or 10% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*, p. 517). The BFA Illustration curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to cover the methods outlined in NASAD guidelines for Professional Baccalaureate in Art and Design. The Illustration curriculum addresses the essential competencies, opportunities and experiences for Illustration (*NASAD Handbook 2015-16*, IX.I.).
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the BFA in Illustration appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Major in this area.
4. **Student Work.** The Visiting team reviewed work completed during all three years of a student's time in the Illustration major. RISD's Illustration building is overflowing with student work and the visitors saw abundant examples of work from the sophomore to senior year. Students in this major are clearly industrious and prolific. Student work showed a wide range of technique, strategies, experimentation and awareness of historical precedent. All work showed fluency with drawing and painting, and an understanding of color and lighting. These fundamental skills underlie student work in illustration. The program does not emphasize a particular application of illustration, commercial or fine art, and consequently, there was a wide range of practice visible. Overall the work was vibrant, adventurous and thoughtfully articulated.
5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website:  
<http://www.risd.edu/academics/illustration/undergraduate/>  
New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed through a one-year sequence of courses culminating in a thesis.

6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The Illustration curriculum appears to meet, if not exceed, applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution. (Please see overall facilities concerns in Section F.)

### **Jewelry & Metalsmithing**

#### **Bachelor of Fine Arts—4 years: Jewelry & Metalsmithing (BFA)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Bachelor of Fine Arts in Jewelry & Metalsmithing (BFA). This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The Jewelry & Metalsmithing curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs as published in the *NASAD Handbook*. The curriculum demonstrates a clear scaffolding of content and learning outcomes from initial to senior courses. The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Jewelry and Metalsmithing (BFA) degree program requires a minimum of 126 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines for distribution: 75 credits or 62.5% of coursework in the Major/Studio and Supportive courses; 15 credits or 12.5% in Art/Design History; 18 credits or 15% of coursework in General Studies; 18 credits or 15% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*, p. 516.). The BFA Jewelry and Metalsmithing curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to cover NASAD Standards, and the essential competencies, opportunities and experiences for Jewelry and Metalsmithing.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the BFA in Jewelry and Metalsmithing appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Major in this area.
4. **Student Work.** The Visiting team reviewed work completed during all three years of a student's time in the Jewelry & Metalsmithing major. The student work showed comprehensive sets of hand and machine skills needed to create jewelry and other metal objects. The student work viewed reflected projects that ranged from traditional to conceptual and was very good.
5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website:  
<http://www.risd.edu/academics/jewelry/undergraduate/>  
New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed from sophomore to senior year through a scaffolded set of classes leading to a Capstone project and final presentation at graduation. A comprehensive student portfolio review happens at the end of each of the three years of work within the major.
6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The Jewelry and Metalsmithing curriculum appears to meet, if not exceed, applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution. There was evidence of student success through the placement of students in industry.



## **Painting**

### **Bachelor of Fine Arts—4 years: Painting (BFA)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting (BFA). This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The Painting curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs as published in the NASAD *Handbook*. The curriculum demonstrates a clear scaffolding of content and learning outcomes from initial to senior courses. Students begin with the foundation sequence common to all incoming students before taking a three-year sequence of courses unique to Painting, drawing and culminating in a senior degree project. The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting (BFA) degree program requires a minimum of 126 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines for distribution: 81 credits or 67.5% of coursework in the Major/Studio and Supportive courses; 15 credits or 12.5% in Art/Design History; 18 credits or 15% of coursework in General Studies; 12 credits or 10% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*, p. 546). The BFA Painting curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to cover the methods outlined in NASAD guidelines for Professional Baccalaureate in Art and Design. The Painting curriculum addresses the essential competencies, opportunities and experiences for Painting as outlined by NASAD (*NASAD Handbook 2015-16*, IX.I.).
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the BFA in Painting appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Major in this area.
4. **Student Work.** The Visiting team reviewed work completed during all three years of a student's time in the Painting major. The work in painting showed a range of conceptual approaches and strategies. Overall, student work was abundant, boisterous, and ambitious. The work was wide ranging in conception and technique and the visitors could not detect an institutional style, a healthy reflection of the program.
5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website:  
<http://www.risd.edu/academics/painting/undergraduate/>  
New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed through a one-year sequence of courses culminating in a thesis.
6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The Painting curriculum appears to meet, if not exceed, applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution.

## **Photography**

### **Bachelor of Fine Arts—4 years: Photography (BFA)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography (BFA). This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.

2. **Curriculum.** The Photography curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs. The Photography students gain progressive knowledge and skills needed for application in a career in Photography. The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography (BFA) degree program requires a minimum of 126 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines for distribution: 84 credits or 70% of coursework in the Major/Studio and Supportive courses; 15 credits or 12.5% in Art/Design History; 18 credits or 15% of coursework in General Studies; 9 credits or 7.5% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*, p. 548) The BFA Photography curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to address NASAD Standards, and the essential competencies, opportunities and experiences for Photography.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the BFA in Photography appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Major in this area.
4. **Student Work.** The Visiting team reviewed work completed during all three years of a student's time in the Photography major. The curriculum is based on student-driven projects that range from experimental, analog and digital technologies, documentary and installation.
5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website:  
<http://www.risd.edu/academics/photography/undergraduate/>  
 New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed from sophomore to senior year through a scaffolded set of classes leading to a Capstone project and final presentation at graduation. A comprehensive student portfolio review happens at the end of each of the three years of work within the major.
6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The Photography curriculum appears to meet applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution.

## **Printmaking**

### **Bachelor of Fine Arts—4 years: Printmaking (BFA)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Bachelor of Fine Arts in Printmaking (BFA). This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The Printmaking curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs as published in the *NASAD Handbook*. The curriculum demonstrates a clear scaffolding of content and learning outcomes from initial to senior courses. Students begin with the foundation sequence common to all incoming RISD students before taking a three-year sequence of courses unique to Printmaking and culminating in a senior degree project. The sequence of required Printmaking courses include Relief, Intaglio, Silkscreen, print workshops and culminating in a senior print degree project. The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Printmaking (BFA) degree program requires a minimum of 126 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines: 84 credits or 70% of coursework in the Major/Studio and Supportive courses; 12 credits or 10% in Art/Design History; 18 credits or 15% of

- coursework in General Studies; 12 credits or 10% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*, p. 559). The BFA Printmaking curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to cover the methods outlined in NASAD guidelines for the Professional Baccalaureate in Art and Design. The Printmaking curriculum addresses the essential competencies, opportunities and experiences for Printmaking as outlined by NASAD (*NASAD Handbook 2015-16*, IX.M.).
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the BFA in Printmaking appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Major in this area
  4. **Student Work.** The visiting team reviewed work completed during all three years of a student's time in the Printmaking major. The printmaking facility was exceptionally tidy, and unlike other RISD laboratories, student work was not as visible in situ. However, there were sufficient examples of printmaking in the student show and on the website featuring student work samples. The work showed a range of technical approaches and strategies including intaglio, engraving, lithography, serigraphy, block printing and other forms of printmaking. Overall, student work was accomplished, skillful, and ambitious.
  5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website:  
<http://www.risd.edu/academics/printmaking/undergraduate/>  
 New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed through a one-year sequence of courses culminating in a thesis.
  6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The Printmaking curriculum appears to meet, if not exceed, applicable NASAD Standards and is alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution.

## **Sculpture**

### **Bachelor of Fine Arts—4 years: Sculpture (BFA)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Bachelor of Fine Arts in Sculpture (BFA). This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The Sculpture curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula and programs as published in the *NASAD Handbook*. The curriculum demonstrates a clear scaffolding of content and learning outcomes from initial to senior courses. Students begin with the foundation curriculum common to all incoming RISD students before taking a sequence of courses unique to the discipline of Sculpture. The sequence of required Sculpture courses include wood and metal fabrication, sophomore, junior and senior studio and culminating in a senior degree project. These required courses are supplemented by electives covering a range of advanced skills and methodologies. The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Sculpture (BFA) degree program requires a minimum of 126 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines for distribution: 81 credits or 67.5% of coursework in the Major/Studio and Supportive courses; 12 credits or 10% in Art/Design History; 18 credits or 15% of coursework in General Studies; 15 credits or 12.5% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*, p. 565). The BFA Sculpture curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to

- cover the methods outlined in NASAD guidelines for Professional Baccalaureate in Art and Design. The Sculpture curriculum addresses the essential competencies, opportunities and experiences for Sculpture (*NASAD Handbook 2015-16*, IX.N.).
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the BFA in Sculpture appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Major in this area.
  4. **Student Work.** The visiting team reviewed work completed during all three years of a student's coursework in the Sculpture major. Despite the space limitations of the sculpture facility and home spaces, student work in sculpture appeared robust and vibrant. Undergraduate work was experimental, ambitious and skillful. Sculpture covers all the traditional processes, both additive and subtractive, including casting, mold making, wood and metal fabrication. Student work demonstrated that Sculpture is clearly a "big tent" discipline at RISD that embraces a range of practice that does not fit easily in other departments. Sculpture's elastic definition of the discipline is clearly part of the ethic of the department and is one of its strengths.
  5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website: <http://www.risd.edu/academics/sculpture/undergraduate/>. New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed through a one-year sequence of courses culminating in a thesis.
  6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The Sculpture curriculum appears to meet, if not exceed, applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution.

## Textiles

### Bachelor of Fine Arts—4 years: Textiles (BFA)

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Bachelor of Fine Arts in Textiles (BFA). This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The Textiles curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs as published in the *NASAD Handbook*. The curriculum demonstrates a clear scaffolding of content and learning outcomes from initial to senior courses. The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Textiles (BFA) degree program requires a minimum of 126 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines for distribution: 75 credits or 62.5% of coursework in the Major/Studio and Supportive courses; 15 credits or 12.5% in Art/Design History; 18 credits or 15% of coursework in General Studies; 18 credits or 15% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*, p. 516.). The BFA Textiles curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to cover NASAD Standards, and the essential competencies, opportunities and experiences for Textiles.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the BFA in Textiles appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Major in this area.
4. **Student Work.** The Visiting team reviewed work completed during all three years of a student's time in the Textiles major. The student work provided a broad range of

skills needed in the textiles industry and was of excellent quality. The range was from handmade textiles to the very complex Jacquard loom work.

5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website:

<http://www.risd.edu/academics/textiles/undergraduate/>

New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed from sophomore to senior year through a scaffolded set of classes leading to a Capstone project and final presentation at graduation. A comprehensive student portfolio review happens at the end of each of the three years of work within the major.

6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The Textiles curriculum appears to meet, if not exceed, applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution. Student placement for internships and jobs after graduation were evidence of the excellence of this program.

### *Graduate Programs — MA*

#### **Teaching and Learning in Art + Design**

##### **Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning in Art and Design—1 year: Teaching and Learning in Art + Design (MA)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning in Art + Design (MA). This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The Teaching and Learning in Art + Design degree is the equivalent of an Art Education degree. The Teaching and Learning in Art + Design degree curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs as published in the NASAD *Handbook*. The curriculum demonstrates a clear sequence of content and learning outcomes within a quickly paced, yearlong program. The Teaching and Learning in Art + Design (MA) degree program requires a minimum of 33 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines: 12 credits or 40% of coursework in the Major/Studio courses; 21 credits or 70% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*, p. 593.). The Teaching and Learning In Art + Design (MA) curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to cover the methods outlined in NASAD guidelines for the Masters Degree in Art Education. The Teaching and Learning in Art + Design (MA) degree is a one-year program, a feature that is distinct from peer institutions. Nearly two thirds of the required credits are electives, meaning that each degree is tailored to a student's interests. TLAD students are encouraged to extend their learning through internships with local institutions and non-profits. The Masters in Teaching and Learning in Art + Design is unique in that it involves extensive research, but the culminating thesis is a visual document that could be defined as "practice based". For this reason, the degree might be considered a hybrid of NASAD's definitions for a "practice based" or "research based" curriculum. That said, the quality of thesis projects was extraordinarily high, signaling that RISD has succeeded in crafting a curriculum that allows great depth, rigor and creativity. The Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning In Art + Design curriculum addresses the essential

- competencies, opportunities and experiences for the MA degree in art education as outlined by NASAD.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the MA in Teaching and Learning in Art + Design is unique for an Art Education degree, but appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Masters in Art Education.
  4. **Student Work.** The visitors saw strong examples of student thesis projects from the Teaching and Learning in Art + Design masters degree. The theses were impressive and unique, especially given that the degree program is only one year long. In their first semester, TLDA students identify their topic and conduct research throughout the year. By the second semester, they begin the process of designing a publication that showcases their research. The theses are highly visual, and show an ability to visualize research that brings together both the academic, and art/design quotient of the degree.
  5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website: <http://www.risd.edu/academics/tlad/graduate/>. New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed through a one-year sequence of courses culminating in a thesis.
  6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The MA in Teaching and Learning in Art + Design curriculum appears to meet, if not exceed, applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution.

### **Art and Design Education**

#### **Master of Arts in Teaching—1 year plus 1 Summer: Art and Design Education (MAT)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT). This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The Master of Arts in Teaching degree curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs as published in the NASAD *Handbook*. The curriculum demonstrates a clear sequence of content and learning outcomes within a quickly paced, yearlong program. The Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree program requires a minimum of 36 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines: 33 credits or 90% of coursework in the Major courses; 3 credits or 10% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*, p. 594.). The Master of Arts in Teaching curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to cover the methods outlined in NASAD guidelines for the Master of Arts in Teaching. The Master of Arts in Teaching includes 9 credits of student teaching. The remaining curricular requirements are consistent with NASAD's recommendation that a "minimum of nine semester hours of graduate art education courses taught by art education faculty" (NASAD *Handbook 2015-16 XVI.E.2*) and "that programs should include one of more advanced seminars concerned with developments in philosophy of education and with contemporary problems in art education" (NASAD *Handbook 2015-16 XVI.E.3*) and that "at least fifteen semester hours should be required in art education and

- associated research areas (NASAD *Handbook 2015-16 XVI.E.4.b.*) The Teaching and Learning In Art + Design (MAT) curriculum addresses the essential competencies, opportunities and experiences for the Master of Arts in Teaching degree as outlined by NASAD.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the MAT in Teaching appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Masters degrees.
  4. **Student Work.** The MAT degree is focused on student teaching, pedagogy and curriculum. It is not a production-based degree, and therefore, the visitors did not see examples of student work.
  5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website: <http://www.risd.edu/academics/tlad/graduate/>. New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed through a one-year sequence of courses culminating in a thesis.
  6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The MAT in Teaching curriculum appears to meet applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution.

#### *Graduate Programs — MFA*

##### **Ceramics**

##### **Master of Fine Arts—2 years: Ceramics (MFA)**

1. **Status.** Submitted for renewal of Final Approval for the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Ceramics. This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The Ceramics MFA curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula and NASAD guidelines. The curricular tables list 66 units for completion of the 2-year MFA degree in Ceramics, which requires 45 units or 75% of Studio or related areas, 15 units or 25% in Other Studies in Art/Design and 6 or 10% units for electives (*RISD Self Study*, IPP MFA Ceramics, p. 5). The curriculum for this degree provides students with the learning process for individualized artistic development, working on their own and with academic advisors, to perfect their craft.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The degree title appears to be consistent with the content in this program.
4. **Student Work.** The student work viewed for the MFA in Ceramics was excellent. The range of expression had depth and breadth in the execution and the pieces were of exceptionally high quality.
5. **Development of Competencies.** The students in the MFA in Ceramics are introduced to graduate level design studios and graduate level design research culminating in a thesis project that requires a written paper with the final graduate exhibition of work. According to the RISD MFA Ceramics webpage, the graduate students “investigate the social, historical, philosophical and technical foundations of ceramics, critical theory and contemporary issues.” This was evident in the range and richness of the ceramics projects shown in the RISD Gallery.

6. **Overall Effectiveness.** While the work of the students ranges from very good in the first year to excellent in the second year, or final stages of the thesis, the Ceramics MFA can use more support from full-time faculty and more connections with industry. It appears as though RISD is addressing these concerns. Although the Ceramics MFA is arts-based, the students might find employment with companies who can use their skills, whether they are full-time employed or as consultants. It is also important to address the increasing role of technology in Ceramics both as a prototyping tool and as an end result.

### **Digital + Media**

#### **Master of Fine Arts – 2 years: Digital + Media**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for Listing the Master of Fine Arts degree in Digital + Media. This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The MFA in Digital + Media appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs. The Master of Fine Arts in Digital + Media (MFA) degree program requires a minimum of 66 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines: 48 credits or 80% of coursework in the Major courses; 0 credits or 0% in related Art/Design courses; 18 credits or 30% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*, p. 622).
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program title for the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Digital + Media appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Master of Fine Arts Degree.
4. **Student Work.** The student work in the MFA 2-year program in Digital + Media exhibited a high degree of student experimentation and investigation of the critical and social frameworks around media and culture. Trajectories for graduates are broad, from personal to professional practice.
5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website: <http://www.risd.edu/academics/digital-media/graduate/>. New competencies and courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and if appropriate, the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee.
6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The 2-year MFA in Digital + Media effectively prepares students for competencies in Digital Media and related fields. It appears to meet applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution.

### **Furniture Design**

#### **Master of Fine Arts–2 years: Furniture Design (MFA)**

1. **Status.** Submitted for renewal of Final Approval for the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Furniture Design.
2. **Curriculum.** The general curriculum structure and proportions of the Furniture Design MFA appear to adhere to NASAD guidelines. The curricular tables list 66 units for completion of the 2-year MFA degree in Furniture Design. The 2-year MFA requires 39 units or 65% of Studio or related areas, 9 units or 15% in Other Studies in Art/Design and 18 units or 30% for electives (*RISD Self Study 2016*, IPP Furniture Design, p. 6). The



- curriculum for the Furniture MFA: “supports each student’s artistic development and articulation of an individual design philosophy through the conception, design and construction of furniture and related objects” (NASAD website graduate furniture, [risd.edu](http://risd.edu)).
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The degree title appears to be consistent with the content in this program.
  4. **Student Work.** The student work viewed for the MFA in Furniture Design was very good but have an inconsistent quality.
  5. **Development of Competencies.** The students in the MFA in Furniture were introduced to graduate level design studios and graduate level personalized design research culminating in a thesis project that required a written paper with the final graduate exhibition of work. The developing work is continuously assessed by the faculty, students and guest lecturers, which leads to a high level of refinement in the end process and product.
  6. **Overall Effectiveness.** While the work of the students ranges from very good in the first year to excellent in the second year, the students had struggled with writing deficiencies. The facilities are in need of better space for Furniture Design and over-crowding is a problem. In spite of these issues, the overall effectiveness of the Furniture Design program is very good. (Please see overall facilities concerns in Section F.)

## **Graphic Design**

### **Master of Fine Arts – 2 years: Graphic Design**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for Listing the Master of Fine Arts degree in Graphic Design. This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The MFA in Graphic Design appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs. The stated rationale for the program is to “prepare students for professional critical practice by emphasizing the roles of social context, media and aesthetics in the production of visible language systems.” The Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design (MFA) degree program requires a minimum of 66 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD’s recommended guidelines: 39 credits or 65% of coursework in the Major courses; 9 credits or 15% in related Art/Design courses; 18 credits or 30% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*, p. 634).
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program title for the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Graphic Design appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Master of Fine Arts Degree.
4. **Student Work.** The student work in the MFA 2-year program in Graphic Design exhibited a high degree of student collaboration as well as opportunities for students to develop their own personal voice and focus. This give and take between joint and individual work is in line with current professional practice.
5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website: <http://www.risd.edu/academics/graphic-design/graduate/>. New competencies and courses are developed by the faculty and

chair of the department, and if appropriate, the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee.

6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The 2-year MFA in Graphic Design effectively prepares students for competencies in Graphic Design and related fields. It appears to meet applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution.

### **Glass**

#### **Master of Fine Arts–2 years: Glass (MFA)**

1. **Status.** Submitted for renewal of Final Approval for the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Glass.
2. **Curriculum.** The curricular tables list 66 units for completion of the 2-year MFA degree in Glass. The 2-year MFA requires 39 units of Studio or related areas, 12 units in Other Studies in Art/Design and 15 units for electives (*RISD Self Study*, IPP MFA Glass, p. 6). The general curriculum structure and proportions of the MFA in Glass appears to adhere to NASAD guidelines.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The degree title appears to be consistent with the content in this program.
4. **Student Work.** The student work viewed for the MFA in Glass was excellent. The graduate work moved students from, in some cases, rudimentary skills to excellent craft. The conceptual process and the aesthetic execution of the students' work were of exceptional quality.
5. **Development of Competencies.** The students in the MFA in Glass “develop a distinctly personal aesthetic through source research, vigorous studio experimentation, regular critiques and a series of graduate seminars on contemporary art theory and criticism” ([www.risd.edu/graduate/glass](http://www.risd.edu/graduate/glass)). This array of activities in the MFA Glass program was evident in the work that was shown in the RISD Gallery and on their website page. The students are introduced to graduate level design studios and graduate level personalized design research, culminating in a thesis project that required a written paper with the final graduate exhibition of work. The developing work is continuously assessed by the faculty, who are practicing artists, leading to a high level of refinement in the end product and the practices that students take forward into their careers.
6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The MFA Glass is an exceptional program with a lot of energy from both the students and faculty. Faculty are professionally practicing glass artists and their students go on to hold faculty positions in other universities or work as individual artists. Facilities for the glass program appear to need additional or proper ventilation. (Please see overall facilities concerns in Section F.)

### **Jewelry & Metalsmithing**

#### **Master of Fine Arts–2 years: Jewelry & Metalsmithing (MFA)**

1. **Status.** Submitted for renewal of Final Approval for the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Jewelry and Metalsmithing. The program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The general curriculum structure and proportions of the MFA in Jewelry and Metalsmithing appears to adhere to NASAD guidelines. The curricular tables list 66 units for completion of the 2-year MFA degree in Jewelry and Metalsmithing. The

- 2-year MFA requires 51 units or 85% of Studio or related areas, 9 units or 15% in Other Studies in Art/Design and 6 units or 10% for electives (*RISD Self Study 2016*, IPP, p. 5). The curriculum builds on earlier classes that focus on the basics and/or refresher of skills needed to create jewelry or metalwork and builds toward the final year where a thesis and exhibition of a student's work is required.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The degree title appears to be consistent with the content in this program.
  4. **Student Work.** The student work viewed for the MFA in Jewelry and Metalsmithing was very good. Some of the student work viewed was uneven in quality but it is understood that some graduate students new to jewelry and metalsmithing needed more time to hone their skills.
  5. **Development of Competencies.** The MFA in Jewelry and Metalsmithing "cultivates individual excellence by emphasizing rigorous research, material experimentation and creative practice" ([risd.edu/academics/jewelry-metalsmithing/graduate](http://risd.edu/academics/jewelry-metalsmithing/graduate)). The students develop a distinctly personal aesthetic through many studio hours of practice with various materials. The work shown in the RISD Gallery and on their website indicates a range of skills and practices that prepare the students for professional work with a company or as their own shop. The developing work is continuously assessed by the faculty, who are practicing artists, leading to a high level of refinement in the end product.
  6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The graduate MFA Jewelry and Metalsmithing program is going through changes in leadership and jewelry making processes. The program has brought on more instruction for new practices that involve 3-D printing, digitally realized artworks. The program would like to explore more connections with design but it is still a very artistic and individualistic curriculum. The student work is very conceptual and experimental in nature and evidence of professional practice pieces would be needed to indicate a more design-oriented program.

## Painting

### Master of Fine Arts—4 years: Painting (MFA)

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Master of Fine Arts in Painting (MFA). This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The Master of Fine Arts in Painting degree curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs as published in the *NASAD Handbook*. The curriculum demonstrates a clear sequence of content and learning outcomes within a two-year program. The Master of Fine Arts in Painting (MFA) degree program requires a minimum of 66 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines: 39 credits or 65% of coursework in the Major courses; 9 credits or 15% in related Art/Design courses; 18 credits or 30% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*, p. 650). The Master of Fine Arts in Painting curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to cover the methods outlined in NASAD guidelines for graduate studio degrees. The Master of Fine Arts (MFA) curriculum addresses the essential competencies, opportunities and experiences for Painting as outlined by NASAD Standards and guidelines.

3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the Master of Fine Arts in Painting appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Master of Fine Arts degree.
4. **Student Work.** Student work from the MFA Painting program was accomplished, intelligent and adventurous. Approaches ranged from traditional representational painting to three-dimensional constructions. There was an impressive range of conventional two-dimensional practice, as well as methods and materials employed in the service of painting beyond paint and canvas. Student work showed rapid development from first to second year.
5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website: <http://www.risd.edu/academics/painting/graduate/>. New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed through a one-year sequence of courses culminating in a thesis.
6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The MFA in Painting curriculum appears to meet applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution.

### **Photography**

#### **Master of Fine Arts—2 years: Photography (MFA)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Master of Fine Arts in Photography (MFA). This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The Master of Fine Arts in Photography degree curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs as published in the NASAD Handbook. The curriculum demonstrates a clear sequence of content and learning outcomes within a two-year program. The Master of Fine Arts in Photography (MFA) degree program requires a minimum of 66 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines: 39 credits or 65% of coursework in the Major courses; 9 credits or 15% in related Art/Design courses; 18 credits or 30% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*). The Master of Fine Arts in Photography curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to cover the methods outlined in NASAD guidelines for graduate studio degrees. The Master of Fine Arts (MFA) curriculum addresses the essential competencies, opportunities and experiences for Photography as outlined by NASAD.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the Master of Fine Arts in Photography appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Master of Fine Arts degree.
4. **Student Work.** Student work from the MFA Photography program was excellent. Students develop bodies of work connected to thesis research, often leading to a publication format for final presentation. Many of these "books" have been subsequently published by photography and art presses. The student work was

varied and although generally personal rather than commercial, was of a high professional quality.

5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website: <http://www.risd.edu/academics/photography/graduate/>. New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed through a one-year sequence of courses culminating in a thesis.
6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The MFA in Photography curriculum appears to meet applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution.

### **Printmaking**

#### **Master of Fine Arts—2 years: Printmaking (MFA)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Master of Fine Arts in Printmaking (MFA). This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The Master of Fine Arts in Printmaking degree curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs as published in the NASAD *Handbook*. The curriculum demonstrates a clear sequence of content and learning outcomes within a two-year program. The Master of Fine Arts in Printmaking (MFA) degree program requires a minimum of 66 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines: 39 credits or 65% of coursework in the Major courses; 9 credits or 15% in related Art/Design courses; 18 credits or 30% in electives (RISD Self-Study 2016, p. 656.). The Master of Fine Arts in Printmaking curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to cover the methods outlined in NASAD guidelines for the graduate studio degrees. The Master of Fine Arts (MFA) curriculum addresses the essential competencies, opportunities and experiences for Printmaking as outlined by NASAD.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the Master of Fine Arts in Printmaking appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Master of Fine Arts degree.
4. **Student Work.** Student work from the MFA Printmaking program employed the essential techniques of the discipline including lithography, intaglio, screen-printing and book arts. Most of the work seen by the visitors employed strong drawing and painting skills, providing a continuum with Painting and Illustration. Overall, the work from the MFA printmaking program is strong and well executed.
5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website: <http://www.risd.edu/academics/printmaking/graduate/>. New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed through a one-year sequence of courses culminating in a thesis.

6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The MFA in Printmaking curriculum appears to meet applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution.

## **Sculpture**

### **Master of Fine Arts—4 years: Sculpture (MFA)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the degree Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture (MFA). This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture degree curriculum appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs as published in the NASAD *Handbook*. The curriculum demonstrates a clear sequence of content and learning outcomes within a two-year program. The Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture (MFA) degree program requires a minimum of 66 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD's recommended guidelines: 51 credits or 85% of coursework in the Major courses; 9 credits or 15% in related Art/Design courses; 6 credits or 10% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*, p. 661). The Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to cover the methods outlined in NASAD guidelines for the graduate studio degrees. The Master of Fine Arts (MFA) curriculum addresses the essential competencies, opportunities and experiences for Sculpture as outlined by NASAD Standards and guidelines.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Master of Fine Arts degree.
4. **Student Work.** Student work from the MFA Sculpture showed a range of approaches and conceptual frameworks. Overall, the MFA work in sculpture is exceptionally strong and showed a fluid combination of processes and media. The work seen by the visitors was sophisticated, irreverent and playful. Of particular interest was work that fused the traditional analog techniques of sculpture with digital fabrication techniques.
5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website: <http://www.risd.edu/academics/sculpture/graduate/>. New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the

Curriculum Committee. Students proceed through a one-year sequence of courses culminating in a thesis.

6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The MFA in Sculpture curriculum appears to meet applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution. (Please see overall facilities concerns in Section F.)

## **Textiles**

### **Master of Fine Arts–2 years: Textiles (MFA)**

1. **Status.** Submitted for renewal of Final Approval for the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Textiles. The program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The general curriculum structure and proportions of the MFA in Textiles appears to adhere to NASAD guidelines. The curricular tables list 66 units for completion of the 2-year MFA degree in Textiles. The 2-year MFA requires 42 units or 72% of Studio or related areas, 9 units or 15% in Other Studies in Art/Design and 15 units or 25% for electives (*RISD Self Study 2016*, IPP Textiles, p. 6).
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The degree title appears to be consistent with the content in this program.
4. **Student Work.** The student work viewed for the MFA in Textiles was excellent. Overall, it showed a maturity of a program through the high quality and variety of student projects.
5. **Development of Competencies.** The MFA in textiles seeks to cultivate students who have work that “reflect the values of both individuals and communities while serving human needs” ([risd.edu/academics/textiles/graduate product](http://risd.edu/academics/textiles/graduate/product)). Projects take students through drawing, color, CAD and the technical knowledge of various looms. The student should be able to articulate the purpose and context of their work, in addition to effectively creating and displaying their work. Aesthetic, cultural assessment and technical skills allow students to enter the textiles, fashion and design industries upon graduation.
6. **Overall Effectiveness.** RISD should be proud that “vital connections to the profession are maintained through a required internship, seminar speakers, field trips, visiting critics and communications with experts in the field” for their textile graduate students ([risd.edu/graduate/textiles](http://risd.edu/graduate/textiles)). Keeping students close to industry experts has resulted in a notable program with an excellent curriculum, even though the self-study reports it as possibly over-scheduled. The instructors were found to be experts in their own right and passionate about their work and program. The self-study noted that graduate student writing skills need improvement. This is mentioned throughout several graduate programs at RISD and should be considered an issue that needs addressed through pre-admittance requirements or specialized writing classes for graduate students.

## **Industrial Design**

### **Master of Industrial Design–2 years: Industrial Design (MID)**

### **Master of Industrial Design–2.5 years: Industrial Design (MID)**

1. **Status.** Submitted for renewal of Final Approval for the Master of Industrial Design (MID). The general curriculum structure and proportions of the MID in Industrial Design appears to adhere to NASAD guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The general curricula structure and proportions of Industrial design courses and supporting studio art and design courses appear to adhere to NASAD guidelines. The curricular tables list 66 units for completion for the 2-year MID degree, and 84 units for completion of the 2.5 year MID. The 2.5 MID degree is for graduate students who need additional design studios. The 2-year MID requires 36 units or 60% of Studio whereas the 2.5-year MID requires 54 units or 90% in MID Studio. The 2-year MID requires 6 units or 10%, and Electives listed at 24 units or 40% (*RISD Self Study 2016, IPP MID, p. 6*). The curriculum for this degree builds on general graduate content in design and research and moves the student through a process where completion of the degree results in a design project, written thesis and year end graduate thesis exhibition.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The degree title(s) appear to be consistent with the content in this program.
4. **Student Work.** The student work viewed for the MID 2-year and 2.5 year degree ranged from very good to excellent. Again, students coming into the degree with an undergraduate degree in Industrial Design exhibited excellent skills, whereas those students from adjacent disciplines needed more units/credits to bring their skills to graduate level.
5. **Development of Competencies.** The students in the 2-year, and 2.5-year MID were introduced to graduate level design studios and graduate level design research. The studios and supporting courses are used to develop the individual interests of the students and for them to analyze the impact of their designs. They learn to frame problems and solutions, apply prototyping skills and refine their own methods for design processes and research. The MID website page states that the students': "work independently under the guidance of a faculty advisor and thesis committee, and present their final work verbally, visually and in writing."
6. **Overall Effectiveness.** This program has a justified reputation as one of the top Industrial Design programs in the country. The graduate thesis work is of excellent intellectual quality and excellent visual quality when the graduate student comes to the program with industrial design skills. As with most programs who accept graduate students from tangential fields, an additional semester (or quarters) are required to bring them partially up to speed with those who do have a prior ID degree. The work from students accepted from tangential fields is very good but not often of the quality of those students who have come directly from an industrial design industry or an industrial design program.

## **Glass**

### **Post-Baccalaureate Program – 1 year: Glass**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting renewal of Final Approval for the Post-Baccalaureate Program in Glass. This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.



2. **Curriculum.** The Glass curriculum provides individualized learning to combine technical glass working and art concepts in a studio format. The Post-Baccalaureate 1-year program requires a minimum of 33 units for completion with 27 units taken in Studio or Related Areas, 3 units taken Other Studies in Art and Design, and 3 units in Electives, for a Technical Concentration. The Conceptual Concentration is also a minimum of 33 units, with 18 units in Studio or Related Areas, 9 units in Other Studies and 6 units in Electives. The Post-Baccalaureate 1-year Glass curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to cover NASAD Standards, and the essential competencies, opportunities and experiences for Glass.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the Post-Baccalaureate in Glass appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the degree in this area.
4. **Student Work.** The student work in the Glass program is outstanding. Whether the students take the Technical Concentration or the Conceptual Concentration, the work is of superior quality.
5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website <http://www.risd.edu/academics/glass/undergraduate/>. New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Students proceed from sophomore to senior year through a scaffolded set of classes leading to a Capstone project and final presentation at graduation.
6. **Overall Effectiveness.** This Post-Baccalaureate Glass curriculum appears to meet, if not exceed, applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution. The students come to this degree with a robust set of skills and knowledge in design and have the ability to focus on glass as a medium of expression.

**Programs or degrees for which renewal of Plan Approval for Listing is sought.**

**Jewelry and Metalsmithing**

**Post-Baccalaureate Program – 1 year: Jewelry and Metalsmithing**

1. **Status.** RISD is seeking renewal of Plan Approval for the Post-Baccalaureate Program in Jewelry and Metalsmithing. This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** This Jewelry and Metalsmithing curriculum provides individualized learning experience for students to develop the technical and theoretical grounding to pursue an advanced degree in the field. This program also seeks to develop competence for students' independent practice as a jewelry designer. The Post-Baccalaureate 1-year program requires a minimum of 24 units for completion with units taken in Studio or Related Areas, with 0 units taken in Other Studies or Electives. The Post-Baccalaureate 1-year Jewelry and Metalsmithing curriculum appears well conceived and adequate to cover NASAD Standards, and the essential competencies, opportunities and experiences for Jewelry and Metalsmithing.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program Title for the Post-Baccalaureate in Jewelry and Metalsmithing appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes

in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the degree in this area.

4. **Student Work.** No students have graduated from this program.
5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website: <http://www.risd.edu/academics/jewelry-metalsmithing/graduate/>. New courses and changes to existing courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and approved by the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee.
6. **Overall Effectiveness.** This Post-Baccalaureate in Jewelry and Metalsmithing curriculum appears to meet NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution. The students will come to this program with a robust set of skills and knowledge in design and have the ability to focus on jewelry and metals as a medium of expression.

### **Programs or degrees for which Final Approval for Listing is sought.**

#### **Graphic Design**

##### **Master of Fine Arts – 3 years: Graphic Design (MFA)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting Final Approval for Listing the Master of Fine Arts degree in Graphic Design. This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The MFA in Graphic Design appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs. The stated rationale for the program is to “prepare students for professional critical practice by emphasizing the roles of social context, media and aesthetics in the production of visible language systems.” The Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design (MFA) degree program requires a minimum of 66 credits for completion. The distribution of requirements falls within NASAD’s recommended guidelines: 39 credits or 65% of coursework in the Major courses; 9 credits or 15% in related Art/Design courses; 18 credits or 30% in electives (*RISD Self-Study 2016*).
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program title for the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Graphic Design appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Master of Fine Arts Degree.
4. **Student Work.** The student work in the MFA 3-year program in Graphic Design exhibited a high degree of student collaboration as well as opportunities for students to develop their own personal voice and focus. This give and take between joint and individual work is in line with current professional practice.
5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website: <http://www.risd.edu/academics/graphic-design/graduate/>. New competencies and courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and if appropriate, the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee.
6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The 3-year MFA in Graphic Design effectively prepares students for competencies in Graphic Design and related fields. It appears to meet applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution.

## **Furniture Design**

### **Master of Fine Arts – 3 years: Furniture Design (MFA)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting Final Approval for Listing the Master of Fine Arts degree in Furniture Design. This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The MFA in Furniture design appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs. The curriculum for this degree is very robust to allow students who have not worked in Furniture Design to become expert in their craft. The 3-year MFA in Furniture requires 96 units with 69 units or 115% in Studio or Related Areas, 9 units in Other Studies in Art/Design and 18 units in Electives (*RISD Self Study 2016*, IPP MFA Furniture, p. 6).
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program title for the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Furniture Design appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Master of Fine Arts Degree.
4. **Student Work.** The student work in the MFA 3-year program is adventurous, innovative and expressive. The work across the board covers artistic expression and intentions for mass produced pieces. The work in this program is excellent.
5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website: <http://www.risd.edu/academics/painting/graduate/>. New competencies and courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and if appropriate, the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. The 3-year MFA in Furniture Design is for exceptional students who want a studio concentration. Recent improvements to the curriculum have been for graduate writing and the written thesis requirement.
6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The 3-year MFA in Furniture design effectively prepares students for competencies in the Furniture industries. It appears to meet applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution. This degree is well respected in the furniture industry and with other academic programs teaching similar content. (Please see overall facilities concerns in Section F.)

## **Interior Studies (Adaptive Reuse)**

### **Master of Arts – 1 year plus 1 summer: Interior Studies (Adaptive Reuse)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting Final Approval for Listing the Master of Arts degree in Adaptive Reuse. This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The MA in Adaptive Reuse appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs. The 1-year, 1 summer MA in Adaptive Reuse requires 45 units minimum, with 33 units or 110% in Studio or Related Areas, 3 units or 10% in Other Studies in Art/Design and 9 units or 30% in Electives (*RISD Self Study 2016*, Final Approval MA Adaptive Reuse, p. 2). The curriculum for this program is somewhat unique and is tailored to students with an architecture undergraduate degree.
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program title for the Master of Arts (MA) in Adaptive Reuse appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the

- specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Master of Arts Degree.
4. **Student Work.** The student work in the MA 1-year, 1 summer is thoughtful, inventive and reflects the theory and practice of this field. The work in this program is very good.
  5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website: <http://www.risd.edu/academics/adaptivereuse/graduate/>. New competencies and courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and if appropriate, the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. The 1-year, 1 summer MA in Adaptive Reuse is for architectural students who want a concentration in sustainability through reuse.
  6. **Overall Effectiveness.** The 1-year, 1 summer MA in Adaptive Reuse effectively prepares students for competencies in the Architecture and Interior Design industries. It appears to meet applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution.

### **Interior Studies (Adaptive Reuse/Narrative Environments)**

#### **Master of Design – 2 years, 1 summer: Interior Studies (Adaptive Reuse/Narrative Environments) (MDes)**

1. **Status.** RISD is requesting Final Approval for Listing the Master of Design degree in Adaptive Reuse/Narrative Environments. This program appears to meet appropriate NASAD Standards and guidelines.
2. **Curriculum.** The MDes in Adaptive Reuse/Narrative Environments appears to be consistent with NASAD criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs. The 2-year, 1 summer MDes in Adaptive Reuse/Narrative Environments requires 66 units minimum, with 27 units or 45% in Studio or Related Areas, 27 units or 45% in Other Studies in Art/Design and 12 units or 20% in Electives (*RISD Self Study 2016, Final Approval MDes Adaptive Reuse/Narrative Environments*). The MDes program “provides a unique design education on the alteration of existing structures through interior interventions and adaptive reuse, outside the confines of professional architectural licensure (<http://www.risd.edu/graduate/adaptivereuse>).
3. **Title/Content Consistency.** The Program title for the Master of Design (MDes) in Adaptive Reuse/Narrative Environment appears to be consistent with the content and student outcomes in the specific content area and with NASAD Standards and guidelines for the Master of Arts Degree.
4. **Student Work.** The student work in the MDes 2 year, 1 summer is of exceptional quality. It is innovative and highly professional.
5. **Development of Competencies.** Formal Program Learning Outcomes have been developed and are posted on the website: <http://www.risd.edu/academics/adaptivereuse/graduate/>. New competencies and courses are developed by the faculty and chair of the department, and if appropriate, the Dean. If necessary, new courses are also reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. The 2-year, 1 summer MDes in Adaptive Reuse/Narrative Environment is for those students who have a degree other than architectural.

6. **Overall Effectiveness.** It appears to meet applicable NASAD Standards and is in alignment with the mission and expectations for competency established by the institution.

### **3. Study of the Transcripts of Recent Graduates and Comparison with Catalog Statements**

Transcripts were supplied for all programs submitted for Final and Renewal of Final Approval for Listing in the Self-Study and student work was available for view for most majors. For those whose transcripts the NASAD visiting team was able to review on site, it appears students are required to complete programs as described in the catalog and that records are organized in a consistent and professional manner. It also appears that the Registrar and Records Office work in accordance to professional Standards and best practices.

### **4. Exhibitions**

RISD has an active exhibition program to show student work with three main galleries across campus: Gelman Gallery, Woods-Gerry Gallery, Sol Koffler Gallery. There appears to be ample opportunities for students to show work in a professional setting and the galleries appear to have adequate staff and resources. In addition to the three galleries, there are smaller venues and less formal exhibition spaces in most buildings on campus.

For the last ten years, the graduate programs have used the Providence Convention Center to mount an all-inclusive, school wide thesis exhibition. The reason for this is because there are no spaces on campus large enough to accommodate the MFA thesis shows. This has the advantage of creating a singular event, shared among disciplines that might otherwise have little reason to interact with one another. Given the featureless, formless character of the convention center exhibitor's space, students must design and construct the environments in which their work is shown, an added pedagogical dimension of the thesis shows. The Convention Center thesis shows began as a solution to a problem, but it appears that over time they have been embraced by students and faculty alike. However, the Convention Center is unable to guarantee bookings annually, and there is a question if this is a reliable, sustainable solution. For this reason, a long-term solution should be sought for mounting the MFA thesis exhibitions.

*RISD's exhibition programs and galleries appear to meet NASAD Standards.*

### **5. Art and Design Studies in General Education**

#### **Liberal Arts**

The division is divided into three departments and two programs: The Department of History of Art and Visual Culture; The Department of History, Philosophy, and the Social Sciences; The Department of Literary Arts and Studies; Science for Art and Design Education; Nature, Culture, Sustainability Studies. The Liberal Arts division has more than one hundred faculty.

The Liberal Arts curriculum is essential to the undergraduate degree programs and complements the studio activity in the majors. Students are required to take liberal arts coursework, but they have discretion in choosing their areas of study. Both graduates and undergraduates have the option to form a concentration, or minor, in one of the

departments or programs. About 150 students annually choose concentrations in Liberal Arts.

Courses in Liberal Arts are typically thematic and discipline bending. For example, new courses titles for the coming year include “The Political Economy of Global Supply Chains,” “The Anthropology of Innovation,” and “Race, Place and the City.” There are rich offerings that are surely attractive to students in the arts. Liberal Arts asserts that their courses are not intended to be integrated with studio courses, but rather that they serve to “animate” or “inspire” a student’s studio practice. Liberal Arts have an interesting series of models for describing their courses’ relationship to the majors. These possible models of the relationship between practice and academic studies are described as: “separate, realized, embedded, blurred, team, exercise, facilitated, modular and framed.” It is clear that the Liberal Arts division has brought a great deal of introspection to their place in the RISD curriculum, and it shows in the originality and thoughtfulness of their offerings.

Students generally appeared to be satisfied with the Liberal Arts curriculum. Additionally, students who took course at Brown were enthusiastic about their experience. One concern that was expressed in student meetings was that the Art/ Design major courses always took priority over Liberal Arts courses. However, it was difficult to assess if this is a pervasive problem or an anomaly. From the perspective of the Liberal Arts dean and department chairs, Liberal Arts should have a greater role at RISD, with perhaps a BA offered in the academic departments.

**NEASC Standard 5: Faculty**  
**NASAD E. Faculty and Staff**

RISD's self-study indicates that it currently employs 168 full-time faculty (155 full-time, 13 term appointments), and 475 part-time faculty members. In principle, only the former serve as advisors to students and engage in faculty governance. In practice, however, PT faculty members often do provide "informal" advising assistance to students, albeit in an ad hoc manner. FT faculty are also expected to conduct professional and/or creative research and engage in service to the institution and the community.

Faculty categories, duties, workload, and evaluation procedures are described in the RISD Faculty Handbook and the Bargaining Agreements for the Full-Time Faculty Association (FTFA) and the Part-Time Faculty Association (PTFA).

RISD has 75 full professors, 43 associate and 29 assistant professors – numbers that allow a high degree of professional specialization and differentiation. At the same time, these numbers – together with the annual six course teaching load – mean that faculty are hard pressed to find the time to advise students on academic and career issues. With only 21% of undergraduate alumni reporting satisfaction with the academic advising they received and 10% of seniors indicating they never saw an advisor at all, RISD is well-aware that it has a problem, and its self-study indicates a plan to develop more coherent and consistent structures for multi-level advising. Increased attention to advising is already happening through a more robust orientation program for new faculty.

Specialization among FT faculty at RISD, while part and parcel of their excellence, also comes with certain inflexibility: faculty do not teach different subjects to meet student demand. Nor do they leave. There is remarkable continuity among the FT faculty; of the 44 hired since 2010, only three have left, and of these two were not renewed. That faculty stay provides stability that is enviable in some respects but presents a problem with respect to creating flexibility in teaching and increasing faculty diversity. While RISD has made a commitment to create a diverse and international culture and community committed to social equity, the ethnic, cultural, gender and gender identity diversity of the student body has outpaced that of the faculty and staff, and a lack of faculty and curriculum that represent and discuss difference is a concern of the student body. Although RISD has begun to respond to this concern through programming and engagement, more should be done to address the diversity of the entire community – and particularly of the faculty. The assignment by Academic Affairs of a "Diversity Champion" to work with faculty search committees is seen as an important step in the right direction.

RISD also makes temporary FT faculty appointments for the duration of an academic year. These term appointees – like the regular FT faculty – are required to serve on one standing committee (per the FTFA Agreement) and/or serve as department head or graduate program director. The Visiting Team was surprised to learn that junior faculty members are not infrequently chairs of departments.

The Team was struck by the fact that PT faculty members teach 60% of the courses. Part-timers report that they have no role in curricular development and are integrated into the faculty community in some departments more than others. While many did indicate disappointment with their status in the eyes of their FT colleagues, there is also the perception that they feel – and are felt to be – more a part of the community at RISD than part-timers at other schools. PT faculty receive 40% of internal professional development grants.

Professional practice and research are at the heart of RISD faculty culture, and both administrators and students expect faculty to be engaged in professional practice apart from campus. The recent formation of the RISD Research Office seems to be helping FT faculty pursue research interests as applications for external grants have increased. The six-course teaching load and lack of on-campus spaces for faculty research and creative practice are two factors militating against research activity.

Of the PT faculty met by the Visiting Team, some are practitioners who teach simply because they enjoy the contact with students and with RISD; others (in the liberal arts, for instance) depend upon their teaching (up to 4.5 courses per year) to support themselves, and some of the latter report that the remuneration they receive puts them in a difficult position. It was unclear to the Visiting Team what RISD felt was the right balance of FT and PT faculty; the self-study states the intention to explore potential new models for different types of faculty to address institutional and departmental needs.

*Institutional Effectiveness (NEASC):*

Due to RISD's collective bargaining agreements with its faculty, most issues bearing on the faculty (notably support) are regularly evaluated in discussions with the FTFA and PTFA. Concerns about siloed departments and advising have come to the fore, and solutions are being discussed — all with an eye to enhancing fulfillment of RISD's mission.



## **NEASC Standard 6: Students**

### **NASAD H. Recruitment, Admission-Retention, Record Keeping, Advisement, and Student Complaints**

RISD educates its students in the creation and appreciation of works of art and design and boasts a six year graduation rate of 87% and job placement rate of 96% one year past graduation.

#### *Admissions and Financial Aid*

RISD strives to recruit undergraduate and graduate students who represent the diversity of the world and whose presence contributes to a vibrant and intellectually active artistic community. The admissions office meets or exceeds its goals for undergraduate enrollment, and while overall goals are met in graduate enrollment, the institution sometimes struggles with matching interest to spaces available in the particular disciplines. Both undergraduate and graduate student art and design interests impact the enrollment of a cohort. Matching that cohort to the resources available in each of the departments along with the priorities of balance and diversity in gender, race, ethnicity, geographical region and country of origin is challenging.

Admissions utilizes a wide range of recruitment efforts and national best practices for its need-blind selection (e.g. National Portfolio Days, Geomarket Zone Data). Half of those who are contacted in National Portfolio Days and half of those who visit campus end by enrolling at RISD. Acceptance of undergraduates is handled by a committee composed of faculty, admissions staff, and students; and a Faculty committee chooses the graduate students. There is stable enrollment in both cohorts, as shown in the enrollment data provided in the self-study.

The Campus Climate Survey notes the diversity in the student body but recognizes that the international student population is primarily from one part of the world (Asia) and that the domestic student of color population is primarily Asian American. Efforts are being made to bring the international student population down from 29.4% in 2015 to 22%-25% and at the same time recruit more students from the Middle East, India and South America (as well as California and the Southwest).

RISD offers financial aid based on financial need, not merit aid. Financial need is assessed following the completion of the FASFA and CSS profile. Acutely aware of the increasing costs of higher education, RISD has made efforts to reduce the annual rate of tuition increases and has increased the financial aid budget by nearly 27%. For students with debt, the average amount of debt upon graduation is notably high: \$32,000 for undergraduates and \$90,000 for graduate students. Concern about finances is the primary reason admitted students choose not to enroll at RISD. While the discount rate hovers in the 17% range (compared to a national average of 49%), RISD has been able to lower student loan debt by roughly 15% in recent years. Committing budget dollars to financial aid, raising development dollars for aid, and attending to the hidden costs (such as art supplies) of a RISD education will be important for the institution moving forward.

### *Retention and Graduation*

RISD's retention and graduation rates indicate that the admissions office is selecting the right type of students for the programs offered. 95% of students return for their sophomore year, and there has been a recent rise in retention rates to 91% of undergraduates and 95% of graduate students. Data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) shows that 98% of seniors participated in one of NSSE's High-Impact Practices positively associated with learning and retention, and 87% in two or more. [These practices include: learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together; courses that included a community-based project (service-learning); work with a faculty member on a research project; internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement; study abroad; or culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.)]

Diversification of incoming students has required RISD to reevaluate its support systems. Project Thrive is an example of a data informed initiative created to support incoming first-generation students and/or students from underrepresented groups. Focused information, mentorship and programming initiatives are designed to facilitate transition into the RISD community. 83% of respondents rate the program as excellent, and the data collected in assessment informs the next year's planning.

With national demographic shifts in mind, RISD should continue to review data related to its recruiting process. Admissions and financial aid might be supported with the development of an enrollment and retention strategic plan, offering an opportunity to realign efforts in light of the disparity in race and interest among applicants in the institution.

### *Student Affairs*

RISD has used recent reorganization at the institution to further restructure the Student Affairs function in order to better serve student needs. Disability Support Services, Counseling, Health Services, Title IX and Intercultural Engagement utilized data (e.g. Cultural Community Survey, information gleaned from Titanium [EMR]) to shape programming and services. Recognizing the fluidity of the changing demographics of college students, RISD responds well and is open to change.

The Student Affairs area has seen a change in administrative staffing to support the various compliance and service needs of the institution. Continuing the review of staffing should offer support to several of the functional areas that are structurally overwhelmed by the services that they need to provide with limited staffing. For example, the number of students registered with Disability Services for support and accommodation has increased from 18 to 300 in the last 10 years, but the office remains staffed with 1 FTE. Likewise, the areas of International Student Services and Project Thrive are also now supporting increased numbers of students.

Overwhelmingly the students of RISD love the institution, the faculty and staff. Student development is infused into its co-curricular programs and functions. While wellness is important to residential and co-curricular programming, student engagement seems most focused in clubs and organizations rather than specific health initiatives. RISD's culture of work is reported as intense – from the Foundation year forward. Given the rigor of RISD's

degrees, further consideration of how to maintain the rigor of the degree and set students up for healthy lives will be important moving forward.

Residential facilities are dated but well cared for. Educational programming is intentional and meets national best practices. In this regard, the institution appears to comply with applicable standards. Support of the diverse student body continues to be an active part of the conversation, and the nascent Social Equity and Action Task Force is engaged in this conversation. In the institutional framework of critique, the task force (chaired by a faculty member and with representation of faculty, staff and students) has begun developing benchmarks intended to hold the community accountable. Many of the requests for support demanded by students in the area of equity and inclusion are already being addressed. Ongoing communication with the community will be critical to the success of this process.

With regard to the institution's student compliant procedure and its effectiveness, please see Section 11 below.

*Institutional Effectiveness (NEASC):*

RISD seeks to serve and provide an educational environment that fosters intellectual and student development. The program materials, admissions process and student programs speak to the mission of creating, learning and discovering. Supporting the equity and inclusion of all RISD students through admissions, financial aid and student support services should be recognized and based in supporting data and benchmarks.

## **NEASC Standard 7: Library and Other Information Resources**

### **NASAD Standard G. Library and Learning Resources**

The Fleet Library is the flagship academic space on the RISD campus. Fleet Library occupies a historic building that was renovated in 2006. It is the primary academic archive and collections repository on the RISD campus, but also an architectural showcase that demonstrates the marriage of liberal and applied arts. The 2006 renovation deftly preserves the historic interior of the Fleet Bank while inserting contemporary functions, inviting study spaces and ADA accessibility into the building. The library is one of the few common spaces to congregate on campus, and it appears to support both focused and serendipitous research through a time-honored model of browsable stacks and physical archives.

The library emphasizes a hands-on relationship to research with special collections such as the Picture Archive, the Materials Lab, artists' books, and a collection of architectural models. Fleet Library is noteworthy for maintaining stacks and for not moving books offsite for on-call retrieval, as is the trend for campus libraries. The Materials Lab is located within the library, an ideal arrangement that suggests parity of academic research and material exploration. This "hands on" ethos may change with subsequent library administrations, but at present, it stands out among peer institutions.

RISD's collections appear to be well integrated to the curricular needs of its programs. The libraries collect extensive data on borrowing, and the annual circulation in 2014/15 was 56,623 (includes books, non-print, renewals, reserves and computers). Since 2010, the acquisitions budget has held fairly steady, averaging \$238,000. In the last five years, the overall budget, including staff salaries, has averaged around \$1,900,000, a generous amount for a small institution.

Fleet Library houses 157,000 printed collections of volumes and periodicals, an archive of 639,714 non-printed collections and 40 paid electronic subscriptions that include academic databases, dictionaries, journals, e-books, visual archives and other online resources. Notable within the non-printed collections are the Material Lab's holdings of 32,048 physical samples and the illustration and graphic design holdings (which are measured at 81 linear feet). In addition to these resources are cooperative lending privileges with Brown University and other local public and university libraries. RISD's holdings exceed the minimum requirements as specified by NASAD guidelines and compare favorably to art libraries at small liberal arts colleges.

RISD's collections, and the Fleet Library, have clearly thrived under the leadership of the current librarian throughout her twenty-nine year tenure. RISD will soon replace this position with a Dean of Libraries and the imminent succession invites speculation about the future of the library. The visitors were extremely impressed by the onsite access to the collections – their ease of use and the integration of material and textual archives – and stress the importance of this continuing such initiatives under new leadership.

## **NEASC Standard 8: Physical and Technological Resources**

### **NASAD Standard F. Facilities, Equipment, Technology, Health, and Safety**

RISD has a physical campus in downtown Providence that is made up of 51 buildings that are on average more than 50 years old. In the past year a campus master plan (CMP) was completed that established principles to be applied to all building renovations and projects and helped to prioritize campus needs over the short, mid and long term. The process also created the first detailed space inventory of the campus. This CMP is a part of an overall strategic planning effort that will serve RISD well if fully implemented. The CMP process is an example of a community wide planning process that brought in the voices and opinions of many constituencies from across the campus. Many of the building standards that will be implemented are those that will directly impact students, like integrating social spaces outside of the studios in which students can relax and have informal conversations.

Tours of campus indicated that there are multiple areas of redundancy in workspace types and equipment across the campus. Work on space utilization, course scheduling, and equipment purchasing could significantly impact the long-term costs to the institution if redundancies could be reduced by policy modification.

An area of focus from the previous accreditation report is the status of deferred maintenance needs in campus buildings. As a part of the CMP process, the campus did an assessment of the deferred maintenance on the buildings and determined that over \$175m of deferred maintenance existed and that \$8 - \$17m per year over the next 10 years would be needed to bring all of the buildings to current standards and eliminate or reduce the back log of essential projects. RISD allocates \$8.3m in its annual operating budget for capital projects, with \$2.5m of that allocable to deferred maintenance projects. The remaining funds are utilized to update building programs, which will also include some building renewal. The largest area of concern in the deferred maintenance project list is the significant number of ventilation systems that are in need of update. Due to the intense workspaces and solvents and equipment utilized in campus studios, ventilation systems should be prioritized in order to improve the safety of building users. (See specific facility references below.)

RISD has a facilities maintenance staff and program that serve its buildings well. RISD has good experience in re-utilizing space and repurposing for new initiatives as was evident from the recent renovations of 189 Canal Street and ISB. Staff overseeing facilities and operational areas appear to be competent and well respected.

Staff interviewed were aware of regulatory and safety rules and requirements and were able to point out evidence of their implementation throughout the campus. Safety around labs and studio spaces has been an area of focus for the department in recent years. During tours of campus, team members observed labs and studios in need of attention around safety and ventilation. This was further confirmed by feedback from students. (See specific facility references below.)

Environmental sustainability is implemented when appropriate, but it is not a key area of focus for the facilities overall. The sustainability strategy embedded in the last strategic plan was not implemented due to limited resources.

Technology resources for administrative support systems have been in place for a number of years. Due to a strong turn toward utilizing data more clearly in decision-making processes, current initiatives include additional focus on data extraction tools and data definitions. Discussions with the CIO indicate that the Information Technology group is focusing on this area and will continue to work with the planning office to support decision-making.

Support for academic technologies is decentralized and falls under the purview of academic departments. Individual departments support their own technology and students' use of it. It was observed that this resulted in duplication of space types, software types and staff support across various departments, and it would therefore appear beneficial for future work to be accomplished in a more centralized way. It was stated that this is a longer-term goal of the information technology group.

*Institutional Effectiveness (NEASC):*

The work RISD has done to assess and prioritize its facilities and technology needs has moved it forward significantly and is a good basis on which to make further progress.

## **NASAD Standard F. Facilities, Equipment, Technology, Health, and Safety**

**Note:** NEASC does not have specific standards in this area.

### **Specific NASAD Concerns:**

#### **Facilities Safety**

The NASAD Team met with Campus Services concerning facilities safety. RISD engages in many safety activities (EMT, Card Access, Public services, video surveillance, OSHA, EPA, and other safety regulatory activities connected with local safety groups such as police, fire, etc.). There is posted safety information throughout the institution for fire exits, materials safety handling, and other safety issue warnings. RISD has also installed and checked safety equipment such as eye wash stations, fire extinguishers and medical emergency kits. Visual evidence of this was assessed in the tours of the studio and classroom facilities, shops and labs.

#### **Overall Facilities Observations**

The facilities for the design undergraduate programs were sufficient, with some programs such as ceramics, glass and the wood and metal shops needing greater ventilation. The facilities for the undergraduate industrial design programs are adequate but the faculty and administrators believe they need more flex space due to student numbers changing each year with student program choices. The facilities for most programs were endowed with a range of equipment related to their program needs such as: looms needed for textiles, hand tools for jewelry & metalsmithing and the woodshop variety machine tools. They had an adequate number of kilns and the apparel program had an adequate number of forms for students. The facilities for the graduate program are adequate but the students and faculty call for more flex space. (See specific NASAD Standards citations below.)

#### **Individual Program Facilities Observations**

##### **Painting**

RISD's painting facilities appear meet or exceed NASAD Standards. Undergraduate painting is primarily located in Memorial Hall, a former church that includes home spaces for undergraduates, a gallery, classrooms, a wood shop and the color lab, among other spaces. The Fletcher building is home to Painting's graduate studios, along with a wood shop, computers and critique spaces.

Memorial Hall was built out specifically with the health and safety standards required for painting. Consequently, there is excellent ventilation, brush washing stations, solvent cabinets, and other health and safety measures. Signage throughout the painting facilities is clear, legible and focused on the safe use and disposal of paints and solvents. Labels are provided to identify whether liquids pose dangers with regard to health, flammability or reactivity. Additionally, the Color Lab is a unique resource in Memorial Hall that and appears to be well integrated with the painting curriculum.

##### **Printmaking**

The Printmaking facilities appear to meet NASAD Standards. Benson Hall's printmaking laboratories include dedicated space for serigraphy, intaglio and lithography. The

printmaking facilities include specialized spaces such as a rosin room, a silkscreen screen washout room and a critique space. There are abundant presses, litho stones and associated equipment to service all forms of printmaking. Material safety data sheets are clearly posted and signage is displayed throughout the labs addressing safety protocol. Eyewash stations are near hazardous chemicals. Overall, this is one of the tidiest printmaking facilities the visitors have ever witnessed. As a consequence, it wasn't visibly overflowing with student work as is typical in many of the other RISD facilities.

### **Individual Program Facilities Observations of Specific Concern**

#### **Illustration**

The illustration program is housed in a recently renovated, multi-story building that is solely dedicated to illustration (ISB). The ISB has clean, well-lit and ventilated classrooms and home spaces for sophomores and seniors. The classrooms have a state of the art system where artificial light can be adjusted for color temperature, a great benefit for teaching painting and the use of color.

The ISB is well loved, and nearly every bit of space was occupied by student work, class meetings or cluttered home space desks. The facility has adequate health and safety standards with excellent accompanying signage. Notable spaces include a wood shop, a prop storage room with walk-in lockers for individual faculty, student common spaces and a workshop for puppet making and other three-dimensional fabrication.

Overall the ISB is an excellent facility with one exception. The Illustration program has home spaces for sophomores and seniors, but not juniors. There isn't enough space to accommodate juniors. Because sophomores spend so much time working with paint, which requires proper ventilation, they are prioritized over juniors. Dedicated home spaces are a hallmark of the RISD facilities, and lack of space for illustration juniors is something that clearly holds the program back.

RISD Illustration facility does not appear to be in compliance with the following NASAD Standard: "The number of studio and classroom spaces and the amount and availability of equipment must be adequate to serve the scope of the program and the number of students enrolled." (NASAD *Handbook 2015-16*, II, F, 1. c.)

#### **Sculpture**

The Sculpture facilities **do not appear** to meet NASAD Standards (see Standards citation below). Sculpture occupies space in Metcalf Hall and graduate studios in the Fletcher building. In particular, the Sculpture shop in Metcalf Hall poses health and safety risks. The sculpture shop has equipment for woodworking, welding and casting. All of these processes are in such close proximity, that it is hard to imagine how students can work safely in such a cramped space. The wood and metal tools share an open space, and it was easy to imagine the hazards created when welding and grinding are comingled with wood and dust. To use a machine safely, such as the MIG welder or the table saw, you need unobstructed space around the tool. The sculpture shop was so cluttered, that no single tool was afforded this safety zone.



Also, casting is done in the same open air space, and when the visitors walked into the studio, there were overwhelming fumes generated by the lost wax process. The second floor of the shop, open to the space below, is where students create their wax models for casting, hence the fumes. Also, it was alarming to witness a class of nearly twenty students working in such a tight space. The sculpture shop suffers from a lack of space, making it a hazard for dangerous tools and processes to be so close together. The sculpture shop also suffers from a lack of air circulation and exhaust. Given the volume of use in the sculpture shop, these health and safety issues need to be addressed immediately.

Sculpture's home spaces for its majors are located on one floor of Metcalf Hall, next to Glass and near Ceramics. The proximity of these related disciplines has a pedagogical advantage for Sculpture. For their home spaces, Sculpture has an ingenious solution of providing each major with a rolling workbench/ storage chest. This allows the open space to be reconfigured easily and provides a safe place for majors to lock their tools. This solution appears to work well for the current number of Sculpture majors, but next year the number of majors will jump exponentially, and the existing space will be pushed beyond the limits of productivity and safety.

Metcalf Hall has other challenges for Sculpture. While it is a great example of 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial architecture, egress and pathways for transporting materials are cumbersome and circuitous. The shop is not located on the same floor as the studios and there is no drive-up access to either space. Students and faculty expressed great frustration at the difficulty of getting materials in and out of the labs and studios.

The sculpture facilities include a small digital fabrication/ physical computing lab, but students lack direct access to full size 3D printers and CNC routers. RISD Sculpture is highly ranked, and it is surprising that its students don't have easy access to full-scale digital fabrication. Some students said that they signed on as hired workers in schools' project based digital fabrication facility so they would have access to those machines, but this is not an ideal workaround. Sculpture has a legitimate need for direct access to digital fabrication facilities in or near Metcalf Hall.

RISD's Sculpture facilities do not appear to be in compliance with the following NASAD Standards: (II, F, 1, b) – "Space, equipment, and technology allotted to any art/design unit function must be adequate for the effective conduct of that function."; (II, F, 1, g) – "Ventilation and safety treatments appropriate to art/design facilities shall be provided."; and (II, F, 1, h) – "All instructional facilities shall be accessible, safe, and secure, and shall meet the standards of local fire and health codes." (*NASAD Handbook 2015-16*, II, F, 1 b, g, and h).

### **Furniture Design**

The Furniture Design facilities **do not appear** to meet NASAD Standards (see Standards citation below). Furniture is housed in three separate facilities, two buildings of which include extensive fabrication labs, with the third building housing the home spaces for majors. There is a metals machine shop, a metals lab, a wood lab, an upholstery lab, a spray booth and other specialized workspaces. The array of equipment of technique the facilities

afford is truly encyclopedic and impressive. While it isn't ideal for students to work across three buildings, the wealth of fabrication possibilities might mitigate this inconvenience.

Many of the labs felt cramped, but overall, they are well organized and maintained. However, it is Furniture's primary wood shop that presents an obvious health and safety risk. When the visitors entered the wood shop, there was a heavy concentration of particulate in the air that immediately made one's lungs constrict. Although there are multiple dust collection systems in place, the airborne particulate was immediately evident to the visitors. This is a problem that needs to be addressed immediately.

RISD's Furniture facilities do not appear to be in compliance with the following NASAD Standards: (II, F, 1, b) – "Space, equipment, and technology allotted to any art/design unit function must be adequate for the effective conduct of that function."; (II, F, 1, g) – "Ventilation and safety treatments appropriate to art/design facilities shall be provided."; and (II, F, 1, h) – "All instructional facilities shall be accessible, safe, and secure, and shall meet the standards of local fire and health codes." (NASAD Handbook 2015-16, II, F, 1 b, g, and h).

## **NEASC Standard 9: Financial Resources**

### **NASAD Standard B. Size and Scope**

### **NASAD Standard C. Finances**

RISD has sufficient financial resources to carry out its mission and support the needs of the institution. The institution is tuition dependent but has a substantial endowment for a school of its type as well as profitable auxiliary enterprises to help support its overall financial goals. In FY2015, net student fee revenue was \$113.4m or 76% of its operating revenue. RISD posted a \$14.3m increase in net assets from operating activities. The endowment was valued at \$325m at 6/30/15 and contributed \$14.28m in operating support in FY2015.

RISD has recently developed an “all funds” financial model that helps to integrate operational, capital, designated and restricted budgets and provide an overall financial picture of the institution to aid in decision making. RISD has enjoyed healthy operating surpluses per financial statements in the recent three-year period growing from \$8.2m in FY2013 to \$8.4m in FY2015. These surpluses have allowed the institution to invest in building purchases and capital projects.

The institution has focused recently on increasing access to a RISD education. This focus has resulted in a lower than originally planned increase in the comprehensive fee and a planned increase in scholarship aid. These actions have resulted in a discount rate of 17%, and the goal is to grow the discount rate in the coming years.

In addition, the institution has modified its endowment spending policy by reducing the spending rate from 5.75% to 4.75% with an upper band not to exceed 5% in light of reduced return expectations. This coupled with the increase in the discount rate will result in reduced growth in operating revenues in the coming years. RISD has reset its expenditures and plans for capital improvements to reflect this potential additional pressure in the coming years.

The institution has a relatively high debt level at \$162.3m of bond liability and \$157.3m bonds outstanding, but has appropriately budgeted for debt service. The institution doesn't anticipate additional debt in the near future, further limiting opportunities for funding of deferred maintenance.

The finance operation is overseen by a CFO who has adequate experience and knowledge to oversee the finances of the institution. A reorganization of the finance staff to support the complexities of the organization was made recently.

RISD will be undertaking a strategic planning process that will identify key priorities for the institution as it goes forward. Some of these priorities will carry forward from the last strategic plan and were discussed in depth during the Team visit. They include a focus on increasing the funding for financial aid in order to diversify the class, facilities investments that are needed around program and deferred maintenance, and the support of faculty. Due to increasing pressure on operating revenues projected, prioritization will be needed to achieve these institutional goals.

An outcome of strategic planning will be a stepped up effort around fundraising. Gifts to the institution over the past 3 years have been less than \$10m annually. The institution has recently hired a new leader for institutional engagement in order to increase giving to RISD in conjunction with stated priorities. This appears to be an area of growth potential in the financial resources of the institution.

The Budget Advisory Committee was formed by the CFO in 2015-16. The CFO has stated that he plans to establish an oversight committee in the coming year.

The institution is audited annually by an independent audit firm. RISD's Board has an audit committee that reviews the audit and any management letters provided by the firm.

#### *Institutional Effectiveness*

The implementation of an all funds budget model, the upcoming strategic planning process and the campus master plan all give focus to planning and prioritizing of financial resources – indicating institutional effectiveness in this area.

**NEASC Standard 10: Public Disclosure**  
**NASAD Standard I. Published Materials and Websites**

**Note:** Also included in NEASC Standard 11: Integrity

The RISD website serves as a comprehensive repository of information about the institution. Much of the academic information is also printed annually in the RISD Course Announcement and the Annual Grad Book. The Division of Media assumes responsibility to ensure that College communications “provide complete, accurate, timely, accessible, clear and sufficient information.”

RISD’s primary website is maintained by the Media Group, and the print materials and subsidiary webs and blogs offer challenges in maintaining consistently accurate and timely information. A goal for data to live in one place and serve as a feeder to the other sites is a best practice the Media Group strives toward; achieving this will offer the opportunity for publications to work towards reaching students with the “right touches at the right points” for purposes of recruitment, enrollment and the sharing of information with the public.

Publically presented print and digital marketing materials appear to be clear and comprehensive, with defined requirements and program/degree descriptions. Promotional materials represent the majors in contemporary terms, with no apparent misrepresentations of the profession or stated promises of immediate employment.

The website has a forward thinking design and innovative digital interface, and represents RISD’s commitment to high levels of design integrity. Print materials are equally engaging and match the brand identity of the website.

Prospective students can obtain information about RISD at the <http://www.risd.edu> external web site. The website allows for the ability to do the following:

- Find information on how to apply
- Link to academic catalogs in pdf format
- Find information on student outcomes and admissions requirements
- Review the size and characteristics of the student body, campus setting and curricular and co-curricular opportunities offered by the institution
- Determine tuition, room and board, and fees for the current year for each academic area with information on methods of payment
- Find information about student art and research
- Review accreditation status, names of faculty, staff, and trustees
- Find information about student services and support

The academic catalogs provide:

- General Information
- Registration Policies
- Academic Policies and General Graduation Requirements – Undergraduate
- Academic Policies and General Graduation Requirements – Graduate

- Off-campus Programs
- Other Programs on Campus
- Guide to Reading Course Descriptions
- Curricula for Undergraduate Degree Programs
- Degree Requirements and Course Descriptions

The Media Group functions in the capacity of being “on the lookout” for changing information. Content change sought by a department or function of the institution comes through a request for information change (“ticket system”). The Media Group is in the midst of reorganizing and reconsidering their process of content management. With information changing there is not always the clarity the institution wishes for with respect to how content is disseminated to the world. The desire for a “Policy on Policies” is believed to offer systemic consistency.

While RISD’s home website ([www.risd.edu](http://www.risd.edu)) serves as the comprehensive resource for the public and prospective students, the creation of the INFO portal ([www.info.risd.edu](http://www.info.risd.edu)) hopes to create an internal location for all policy and day-to-day operations information for the RISD community of faculty, staff and students.

#### *Institutional Effectiveness*

The workload of the Media Group proves to be substantial, and the question of priorities is imperative. To that end the Group remains focused on streamlining content for the website redesign, then will move towards creating an identity system and editorial style guide to support the creative, critique culture of RISD. The overall goal of the public face of RISD is truth and integrity based in a comprehensive communication plan, which is streamlined and strengthened by the communication vehicles offered.

## **NEASC Standard 11: Integrity**

### **NASAD Standard I. Published Materials and Websites**

“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.” The mission is clear and articulated in each of the aspects of the college and offers space for interpretation across the institution. A commitment to clarity in institutional learning outcomes, intentional governance decision making processes, and an empowered community committed to compliance will support RISD’s engagement and implementation of its strategic planning process.

RISD is a teaching institution that creates artists and designers and has an important place in the city of Providence, Rhode Island. It proudly showcases the art of its faculty, staff and students and offers displays of art and culture through its museum and galleries to the public. This distinctive character is honored by the presentation of the web and print materials. Special attention should be and is being considered for consistency and transparency of the materials and structure of the institution (e.g. reorganization of the Dean of Graduate Programs position remains confusing to the community). The website redesign, and content management review and update process, will better serve the community in supporting institutional integrity of the materials made public.

The policies and procedures of RISD are available to faculty, staff and students (as appropriate) through the website ([www.risd.edu](http://www.risd.edu)) and in appropriate handbooks. Federal disclosures are easily accessible and complete. Specifically the Title IX, Clery information, grievance processes and non-discrimination policies are accessible and utilized appropriately. RISD is considering a Policy on Policies to support the integrity of the institution’s policies and procedures, offering the opportunity for review and commitment to appropriate decision-making processes.

The President and cabinet use data driven planning to direct the institution. The Campus Master Plan serves as an outstanding example of using data and mapping to prioritize facilities work. This exercise may be helpful to keep in mind in the broad strategic planning process as the institution develops community goals and priorities for the next 10 years across the governance structure, academic program and student support services.

Faculty governance remains important to the institution though the unions do not seem to offer clarity and efficiency to the decision making processes of the faculty. A comprehensive critique clarifying the role of faculty governance and the development of a clear process in decision making would offer RISD the opportunity for further institutional integrity in its policies, curriculum and learning outcomes.

The governance structure of the Board of Trustees operates under charters and conflict of interest policies appropriate for its enterprise. The Board of Trustees has reviewed its by-laws, reorganized its committees and considers its work plan annually. The goals of the Board of Trustees are aligned with those of the President’s cabinet.

The areas of compliance and risk management are vetted regularly by key stakeholders at the institution. Safety, security and federal compliance are taken seriously. RISD's goal of integrated risk management and compliance is necessary in the work of higher education. RISD does not wish to be risk-avoidant, but rather wishes to empower its community to be responsible reviewers and stewards of risk management which development of a compliance team could possibly promote.

#### *Institutional Effectiveness*

RISD has an appropriate set of policies and procedures in place to maintain the integrity of the institution and support the functionality of the student, faculty and staff experience. A systematic and regular review of these policies through a comprehensive integrated enterprise risk management and compliance system and a "policy on policies" could offer opportunity for more consistency and transparency.

#### **NEASC Affirmation of Compliance**

To document the institution's compliance with Federal regulations relating to Title IV, the Team reviewed RISD's Affirmation of Compliance form signed by the CEO. RISD publicly discloses on its website and in its Course Announcement its policy on transfer of credit and articulation agreements. Public notification of the evaluation visit and of the opportunity for comment was made by the School prior to the visit in its XYZ alumni magazine and for the public on its website. Copies of the institution's grievance procedures for students can be found in the RISD Title IX Initiative brochure that is available online. The School does not offer distance or correspondence education. The Team's discussion of RISD's credit hour policy can be found in Standard 4: The Academic Program.



## NEASC Summary

The Visiting team was impressed, though not surprised, by RISD's many strengths. The Team's interlocutors were knowledgeable and forthcoming and the conversations engaging and productive. The RISD tradition of "critique" was evident everywhere.

RISD has reflected on its mission and purposes in the past and used those reflections to plan for the future. The Team has every confidence that the current rather extended period of reflection will result in an increased self-awareness that will enhance institutional effectiveness going forward.

Despite the recent loss of key personnel in Institutional research, RISD has a strong commitment to planning and evaluation – as well as resources (in place or expected) sufficient to support this endeavor. While the current strategic plan seems to have been relatively helpful in a time of turbulence, it is hard to know how consistently it has been used to determine the allocation of resources, and the Team heard often that the methods used to develop that plan had bred distrust. More importantly, there is now a strong desire to develop a new roadmap for strategic decision-making in concert with all the key constituencies of the RISD community. The breadth and depth of the self-study provides the school with a good foundation for this work, though the Team notes that the "projections" section of the document paints a very optimistic picture in many sections without a clear sense of costs or trade-offs.

The Team feels strongly that a Campus Master Plan must be integrated more fully with the outline of strategic goals that emerges from this process. The integration of facilities, including labs, studios, tools, and the schedule of classes in studios, should be brought together within the new planning process so that priority setting and the allocation of resources become clear to the entire community.

In its review of RISD by-laws, the Team found guidelines that ranged from the very general (for example, the Board appoints a president who will hire the staff necessary to run the institution) to the overly prescriptive (for example, a Board committee seems to have a role in program review that crosses the line between oversight and management). It would be helpful for the Board and the President to work together (with appropriate legal counsel) to create clear guidelines for board structure and practice.

In many respects, RISD is a highly decentralized institution, and governance of disconnected entities presents challenges when one is striving for alignment and a culture of innovation. The Team heard the word "siloes" more times than it could count. There is, sad to say, a very deep culture of distrust for the administration among the faculty. This distrust has been calcified in structures that mix bargaining and governance in ways that undermine possibilities for work on institutional priorities.

The Team also heard — time and time again — faculty, students and staff express optimism that things will improve under the current leadership. The president and her leadership team are clearly building trust. There are also hopeful signs of movement toward integrated work that continues to respect differences of expertise and practice. For example, the

museum now seems to be well integrated as a learning space – a resource that is both outward facing and embedded in the work of students and faculty. The Team heard many thoughtful considerations on how departments and disciplines could work together to create interdisciplinary classes and even integrated planning.

RISD's academic programs are good, and the outcomes are very strong. The institution is making progress in identifying learning outcomes for individual students, and for many departments. While it will be a challenge to roll these up into some general institutional learning outcomes, RISD is clearly thinking about how to do so. Overall, the Team is impressed by the commitment of faculty, chairs and staff to RISD students; by the array of platforms for professional engagement and advancement opportunities afforded to students; by the high level of student work in all art and design areas; and by the student body's widely shared camaraderie and commitment to the value of art practice as a positive force in the world.

At the same time, in regard to academic programs, there is the problem of alignment. The programs build quality without considering how synergies might be developed among different disciplines. The Team was particularly struck by facilities redundancies and by artificial prohibitions of students from one area using resources from other areas. Individual faculty express a desire for more synergy, but the tradition of disciplinary autonomy has retarded the growing of connective tissue among the programs. Good news: all constituencies think improvement in this regard is on the way.

RISD has a devoted, talented and hardworking faculty. They believe in the mission of the institution, and their autonomy as artists, designers and scholars feeds an energy and creativity that make them effective teachers and productive makers and researchers. The structures for the faculty are very clearly written out in collective bargaining agreements. These delineate the duties, responsibilities and working conditions for the different grades of professors who teach at RISD. As noted before, thinking of governance within the lens of collective bargaining presents real challenges and sets up an adversarial relationship that makes coordinated work more difficult than it already is, given the different perspectives of administrators and faculty.

RISD has seen a growing dependence on part-time faculty, and the Team heard that in some departments they carry a key part of the work with students. It is not clear from the strategic plan and self-study if the institution wants to change this. While additional full-time lines have been added, the percentage of classes taught by part-time faculty continues to grow. Clearly this has different ramifications in different areas of professional practice.

The Team was concerned to find that some departmental chairs were junior (that is, pre-critical), and that many part-time teachers had assumed advising responsibilities, despite advising not falling into their official duties. High of the list of concerns – of both the Team and RISD – is the lack of faculty diversity with respect to gender, race and ethnicity. Given the demographics of the school and the fields at the core of the enterprise, it is clear that unless the administration takes concrete steps to ensure that women and people from other under-represented groups are over-represented in hiring in the next several years, RISD will be facing a diversity problem for many years to come.

The first thing to say about RISD students is that they love their school. Even the students planning for a protest seemed genuinely grateful to be part of such a dynamic and creative culture. They just want to make it better.

The retention of students is simply admirable. The Team did hear concerns about overwork and stress and urges RISD to continue to monitor its programs for students at risk. But what struck the Team first and foremost was how students embraced high standards and the sense – so powerful in RISD culture – that work is a joyful dimension of life.

The administration and faculty are well aware of the difficulty of matching student cohorts with resources. The frenzy around declaring one's major and the scramble for appropriate resources seems unnecessary. Many students find the decision to major cuts them off from other opportunities to explore media and classes, and some complained that their high quality liberal arts classes were not valued by the studio faculty. The Team encourages more communication with students about their issues and how to make progress on them. Enrollment management (grad and undergrad) in departments is a design challenge, and the need for swing spaces, swing tools, and flexible scheduling is something RISD can be expected to make progress on in the coming years.

The Team heard about student diversity issues (international, Black and Hispanic) and the problem of hidden costs and student debt. The Team did not get a firm handle on international student debt but was surprised and concerned by the high level of indebtedness among graduate students. RISD's expressed desire to raise the discount rate is to be applauded, but given the operating surpluses that are generated each year, it is unclear why this has not happened already. Delineating the relative importance of capital improvements and increased financial aid, for example, will be an important part of the strategic planning in coming years.

Among RISD's many wonderful resources, the Library stands out as a flagship for the marriage of liberal arts and making practices. The Team was particularly impressed by the integration of the materials lab and the picture archive. Given the great things accomplished in the library, worries about the succession plans for library leadership are understandable.

RISD should plan for significantly increased funding for deferred maintenance. Nobody seems to think that current allocations are adequate, but the Team is unclear how decisions about an increase will be made. The space inventory should help, and the Team urges the integration of sustainability principles into this planning.

The Team was troubled by serious issues of ventilation and safety in sculpture, graphic design and furniture. How appropriate officers of these departments become aware of these issues should be reviewed.

With respect to technology, RISD's decentralized approach has created many opportunities for inefficiencies. A more coordinated, centralized IT program seems to be in order. Faculty should look to IT rather than their disciplines for technological support and innovation. The Team noted equipment redundancies and was unclear on who has the power to authorize

non-trivial IT expenditures. IT should be part of the Campus Master Plan.

With respect to financial resources more broadly, it is clear that RISD is becoming more restrained about revenue expectations from tuition increases. The Team urges greater transparency with respect to who decides what to do with operating surpluses. Is there a committee that takes this on? What is the role, if any, of the Board?

RISD has financial resources that are the envy of schools in its sector but also has expensive challenges with respect to space, equipment and financial aid. Clearly, there is a great deal of hope that fundraising investments will pay off quickly. Hand in hand with a commitment to fundraising must go a clear sense of priorities for spending that don't result in new financial obligations (like the operating expenses of a new building, or a new partially funded program).

The Team sees every reason for optimism at RISD. Turbulence has given way to healing, and healing is giving way to better coordination and alignment – and soon to ambition. Led by a President trusted by the faculty and by a Board committed to expanding financial support for the institution, RISD will continue to be a leading school in the teaching of art and design, worldwide.

### **Strengths and Concerns**

In brief, the Visiting Team was impressed by the following strengths:

- the excellence of the School's academic programs and student work;
- the talent of the faculty and their commitment to their students;
- the extraordinary dedication of students to their work and the esteem in which they hold their major programs leading to high retention rates;
- the excellence of RISD's many facilities, most notably the library;
- the community's optimism regarding the work of the new president.

The Team did have a number of concerns:

- lack of clarity regarding priority setting (e.g., funding for facilities versus financial aid) and whether the new effort in integrated planning has enough support;
- high student indebtedness, especially for graduate students;
- unclear guidelines for the RISD Board structure and practices;
- lack of faculty diversity;
- de-centralized approach used by the institution that has led to inefficiencies, which include duplication of IT equipment, enrollment imbalances in majors, and possibly safety issues with respect to particular facilities controlled by departments;
- the effort to assess student learning outcomes in the majors has not yet been matched by an effort to assess general education outcomes;
- student dissatisfaction with advising.

## **NASAD Standard Q. Overview, Summary Assessment, and Recommendations for the Program**

The NASAD Visiting Team found a community of students, faculty and staff committed to excellence of practice and outcomes within all of the disciplines and departments, expressed by the mission of the Rhode Island School of Design. RISD is a large and complex organization that requires constant attention to governance and decision-making processes to ensure the success of short- and long-term planning. In conversations with the community, the Visiting Team experienced expressions of support for the new leadership of the institution and for the unique opportunity it has to review how educational, financial and facilities needs and realities can be considered in a more holistic and inclusive manner.

The NASAD Visiting Team would like to further commend RISD for its commitment to the accreditation process and the honesty and transparency evident in the Institutional Report, all related materials, and the meetings conducted during the Joint NEASC/NASAD Visit.

### Strengths

- the faculty, chairs and staff for their commitment to their students;
- the array of platforms for professional engagement and advancement opportunities afforded to students;
- the high level of student work in all art and design areas;
- the student body's widely shared camaraderie and commitment to the value of art practice as a positive force in the world.

A list of recommendations for short-term improvement beyond threshold compliance with accreditation standards:

1. It is recommended that the institution:
  - review governance structures and bylaws to ensure that levels of responsibility between and among faculty, administration and the board are clearly articulated, understood, and practiced;
  - review the ratio of full- to part-time faculty as indicated by goals in the Strategic Plan to provide consistent oversight of curriculum, student learning outcomes, and other governance and service responsibilities;
  - ensure that there exist clearly articulated and open lines of communication across all aspects of the organization;
  - RISD has made a commitment to create a diverse and international culture and community committed to social equity. However, the ethnic, cultural, gender and gender identity diversity of the student body has outpaced that of the faculty and staff, and a lack of faculty and curriculum that represent and discuss difference is a concern of the student body. Although RISD has begun to address this concern through programming and engagement, more should be done to address the overall diversity of the entire community.

2. An indication of the primary futures issues facing the art/design unit, perhaps including, but always going beyond, finances:
  - attention to the opportunities for a robust and clearly articulated shared governance process;
  - understanding of the time and support resources necessary for faculty and staff to successfully engage in department management and student advising.
  
3. Constructive suggestions for long-term development during the projected accreditation period, based on the observations contained in the Visitors' Report:
  - In both the Self-Study and in meetings with students, faculty and staff, issues were raised concerning the ongoing remodeling and maintenance of facilities. Clearly understood and communicated plans for the short- and long-term identification, prioritization and improvement of existing facilities should be established with consideration to the community's needs;
  - Also expressed by the many members of the community were issues resulting from a) the sometimes unpredictable enrollment numbers by department for the sophomore year as determined by students major selection; b) the difficulties resulting from the various sizes of departments; and c) the misalignment of the schedule contributing to an inefficient use of space and time, and the subsequent difficulties that student have in planning and registration. A review of these structures and practices, and the resulting difficulties, should be reviewed in a holistic and constructive manner.

## NASAD Appendix

*Please Note: The information in this Appendix addresses the institution's apparent compliance/non-compliance with NASAD Standards and Guidelines. It will be considered and reviewed only by the NASAD Commission on Accreditation. The information in this Appendix will not be provided to or considered by NEASC's Commission on Institutions of Higher Education.*

### **NASAD Section P. Standards Summary: NASAD Team Members Findings**

Section 1. **NASAD Team Members Finding:** *The institution appears to be in compliance with NASAD Standard A: Purpose of the Institution (Mission, Goals, and Objectives).*

Section 2. **NASAD Team Members Finding:** *The institution appears to be in compliance with NASAD Standard O: Art/Design Unit Evaluation, Planning, and Projections).*

Section 3. **NASAD Team Members Finding:** *The institution appears to be in compliance with NASAD Standard D: Governance and Administration.*

Section 4. **NASAD Team Members Finding:** The institution appears to be in compliance with NASAD Standard K (Community Involvement; Articulation with Other Schools); L (Non-Degree-Granting Programs for the Community); and N (Programs, Degrees, Curricula).

Not applicable: Standard J (Branch Campuses, External Programs, Use of the Institution's Name for Educational Activities Operated Apart From the Main Campus or the Primary Educational Program) and M (Review of Specific Organizational Standards for (1) All Institutions of Higher Education for which NASAD is the Designated Institutional Accreditor and/or (2) Proprietary Institutions).

Section 5. **NASAD Team Members Finding:** *The institution appears to be in compliance with NASAD Standard F: Faculty and Staff.*

Section 6. **NASAD Team Members Finding:** *The institution appears to be in compliance with NASAD Standard H: Recruitment, Admission-Retention, Record Keeping, Advisement, and Student Complaints.*

Section 7. **NASAD Team Members Finding:** *The institution appears to be in compliance with NASAD Standards regarding NASAD Standard G: Library and Learning Resources.*

Section 8. **NASAD Team Members Finding:** *The institution **does not appear** to be in compliance with NASAD Standard F: Facilities, Equipment, Technology, Health, and Safety.*

Section 9. **NASAD Team Members Finding:** *The institution appears to be in compliance with NASAD Standards B: Size and Scope; and C: Finances.*

Section 10. **NASAD Team Members Finding:** *The institution appears to be in compliance with NASAD Standard I: Published Materials and Websites.*

Section 11. **NASAD Team Members Finding:** *The institution appears to be in compliance with NASAD Standard I: Published Materials and Websites.*

**RISD appears to meet all applicable NASAD Standards and guidelines with the exception of the following concerns:**

Specific Department Facilities

RISD Illustration facility does not appear to be in compliance with the following NASAD Standard: “The number of studio and classroom spaces and the amount and availability of equipment must be adequate to serve the scope of the program and the number of students enrolled.” (NASAD *Handbook 2015-16*, II, F, 1. c.)

RISD’s Furniture and Sculpture facilities do not appear to be in compliance with the following NASAD Standards: (II, F, 1, b) – “Space, equipment, and technology allotted to any art/design unit function must be adequate for the effective conduct of that function.”; (II, F, 1, g) – “Ventilation and safety treatments appropriate to art/design facilities shall be provided.”; and (II, F, 1, h) – “All instructional facilities shall be accessible, safe, and secure, and shall meet the standards of local fire and health codes.” (NASAD *Handbook 2015-16*, II, F, 1 b, g, and h).

Overall Institutional Facilities

Throughout the NEASC/NASAD Visiting Team’s visit of department facilities, team members observed Health and Safety conditions in regards to safety, ventilation and dust collection, and material use and storage, including but not limited to the Graphic Design letterpress and silkscreen lab, the glass studio, the sculpture studio (cited above), the furniture woodshop (cited above), and the woodshop in the Sol Koffler Gallery building (see details above). RISD does not appear to comply with NASAD Standards concerning Health and Safety in these and possibly other facilities. (NASAD *Handbook 2015-16*, II, F, 1, b, g, and h).

The institution should review its procedures and practices towards compliance in this area and provide its findings or plans for improvement in its Optional Response. Please see the section on Facilities in the NASAD Handbook for further details (NASAD *Handbook 2015-16*, II, F, 1, a - i).