



Rhode Island School of Design Announces 2020–2021 Reopening Plan

Campus will operate in a de-densified model with a multi-layered system of health and safety protocols

PROVIDENCE, RI (June 17, 2020) – [Rhode Island School of Design](#) (RISD) plans to open this fall with students on campus in a de-densified model. This decision comes after RISD, like many colleges and universities across the world, implemented a remote learning model for the latter half of the spring 2020 semester in response to COVID-19. Since the early stages of the pandemic, all institutional decision making has been—and will continue to be—guided by three primary goals: community health and safety, academic integrity and financial viability.

In the de-densified model, core studio and shop-based courses will be held in person and other courses will take place online or in a hybrid online-plus-embodied version. Where possible, employees will continue to work from home to keep campus density low. Students, faculty and staff that return to campus will follow a multi-layered system of health and safety protocols. Each member of the community will share responsibility for adhering to established health and safety protocols to keep each other and themselves safe. This model includes an earlier start in August to ensure time for a two-week quarantine period for all campus residents. The RISD Museum is also working toward reopening in the fall and more details will be announced soon. Further information about RISD’s 2020-21 plan can be found at [covid.risd.edu](https://www.risd.edu/covid).

“Though we continue to proceed with great caution, we are encouraged by positive trends in recent weeks as the rate of new cases of COVID-19 continues to decline in Rhode Island and the state has moved from Phase I to Phase II of economic and lifestyle reopening. While life on campus will be very different next year, I am glad we have found a deliberate way to come together again that maximizes safety during this pandemic,” notes RISD President **Rosanne Somerson**. “A RISD education is built on the rich tradition of immersive, application-and-practice-based instruction and scholarly learning. To support this model, we are working to foster in-person instruction where it is essential with a balance of online learning for courses that do not rely on studio facilities, with all forms of campus engagement centered around health and safety.”

The decision to move forward with a de-densified campus comes after extensive analysis of how each facet of academic and campus life might operate safely in the context of COVID-19, consultation with numerous experts and organizations, and participation on working groups with the state as well as peer institutions across the country. Like every institution, the challenges RISD faces in planning for the coming academic year are complex, as knowledge about COVID-19's impact and future course continues to evolve. For that reason, RISD is simultaneously planning contingencies in case events unfold either before or during the fall semester that require a transition to fully online teaching and learning.

“Planning for fall has been a monumental and complex undertaking and I would like to thank everyone who has and will continue to participate in this process,” added President Somerson. “We have much work ahead of us as we prepare to reopen the campus, but we are excited to be back together to continue our academic imperative. With our emphasis on health and safety for our students, faculty and staff at the foreground, RISD will implement the reopening plan in response to this global health challenge with all the thoughtfulness, integrity and care that defines our values and our commitment to our mission.”

About Rhode Island School of Design

RISD's mission, through its college and museum, is to educate 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 college's strategic plan *NEXT: RISD 2020-2027* sets an ambitious vision for educating students for the future and bringing creative practices to bear on the creation of just societies, a sustainable planet and new ways of making and knowing. RISD's immersive model of art and design education, which emphasizes critical making through studio-based learning and robust study in the liberal arts, prepares students to intervene in the critical challenges of our time. Working with exceptional faculty and in extraordinary specialized facilities, 2,500 students from 69 countries engage in 42 full-time bachelor's and master's degree programs. RISD's 30,000 alumni worldwide testify to the impact of this model of education, exemplifying the vital role artists and designers play in today's society. Founded in 1877, RISD (pronounced “RIZ-dee”) and the RISD Museum help make Providence, RI among the most culturally active and creative cities in the region. Find more information at risd.edu.

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