



Senior Director of Development, RISD Museum
Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, Rhode Island

THE SEARCH

The [Rhode Island School of Design \(RISD\)](#), known internationally as one of the leading art and design colleges, seeks a strategic, enterprising, and proven advancement professional to serve as the next senior director of development, RISD Museum (senior director). This is a unique opportunity to lead advancement efforts to support the [RISD Museum](#), one of the institution's most valued assets.

Recognized for its renowned faculty of artists and designers, RISD offers a breadth of specialized facilities and the intensity of its studio-based approach to learning—an approach where critical thinking informs the making of works by hand. Over 2,600 students from around the world study at RISD, pursuing full-time bachelor's or master's degree programs in the fine arts, architecture, or design majors, complemented by essential study in the liberal arts. The mission of RISD, through the college and the RISD 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 RISD Museum is the fourth largest university art museum in the country in terms of the size of its collections, and it believes that art, artists, and the institutions that support them play pivotal roles in promoting broad engagement and creating more open societies.

Reporting to the vice president for institutional advancement (VP) as part of her senior management group and serving as a key partner to the museum's director, the senior director will play a central role in advancing the museum's mission, visibility, and impact. This position is responsible for designing and executing a comprehensive fundraising strategy that supports the museum's operations, enhances its reputation as a cultural destination locally, nationally, and globally, and drives philanthropic growth. As the primary fundraiser for the museum, the senior director will engage a diverse network of alumni, donors, community leaders, faculty, staff, and external constituents to cultivate meaningful relationships and secure significant support. This exciting opportunity arises at a pivotal moment, following the

museum's recently released [strategic plan](#), which blends the museum experience with RISD's teaching philosophy to make art engaging and accessible to everyone.

The ideal candidate must possess at least ten years of progressive experience and a proven track record of success securing six- and seven-figure gift commitments in higher education, an art institution, or a museum. Additionally, the successful candidate will have demonstrably built and maintained strong, collaborative connections with varied internal and external constituencies and possess a sophisticated understanding of the complexities around raising philanthropic support for an art institute and/or museum. The senior director must be a collaborative team player and relationship-builder who is eager to partner with and across RISD Museum's ecosystem, including but not limited to RISD's Institutional Advancement team, museum leadership, operations, and curatorial staff, as well as the Museum's Board of Governors (MBOG), key academic leaders, and valued volunteers. The ideal candidate will possess a personal passion for the arts and connections and experiences in the arts community.

RISD has retained Jack Gorman of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of its next senior director of development, RISD Museum. Please direct all applications, nominations, and inquiries to Isaacson, Miller, as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT THE RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN

Founded in 1877, RISD is a relatively small, independent college that plays an inordinately significant role in the spheres of art and design—and doing so at the very moment when art, design, and creative thinking are ascending as essential methodologies for shaping livable futures.

RISD has always occupied a singular space in the art education sphere. The college remains deeply committed to visuality, materiality, and craft while also having one of the largest, most wide-ranging liberal arts programs of any art school in the world. RISD has an urban campus comprising a constellation of studios, shops, labs, foundries, looms, glass, metal, and wood fabrication facilities that are the platform for the intense creative energy of the place that engages *making* as an essential form of thinking.

RISD's 2,606 students come from all over the globe and are engaged in 40 full-time bachelor's and master's degree programs. Each of its 2,163 undergraduate students at RISD completes a deep and rigorous exploration of critical making through the first-year curriculum in experimental and foundation studies and varied coursework in the liberal arts. Students earn a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in a wide variety of studio-based disciplines like [apparel design](#), [ceramics](#), [film/animation/video](#), [furniture design](#), [glass](#), [graphic design](#), [illustration](#), [industrial design](#), [interior architecture](#), [jewelry and metalsmithing](#), [painting](#), [photography](#), [printmaking](#), [sculpture](#), and [textiles](#). RISD also offers a five-year professional baccalaureate degree, the [Bachelor of Architecture](#), which is a qualifying degree for a license in the field of architecture, as well as a dual-degree program with [Brown University](#).

Approximately 443 students are enrolled annually in RISD's broad array of [graduate programs](#), including a master's program in [Design Engineering](#), which was created in partnership with Brown University. Peer institutions rate RISD's graduate programs highly: top five in the most recent fine arts rankings, number one in the country for graphic design, tied for second in painting/drawing and printmaking, and tied for third in photography (*U.S. News and World Report*, 2026). The department of [Continuing Education](#) serves an additional 4,600 individual students per year.

RISD employs approximately 650 dedicated staff members and 650 full and part-time faculty. As accomplished artists, designers, architects, scholars, and educators, faculty show exceptional dedication to teaching and mentoring students. Beyond the studio and classroom, RISD's faculty are leaders in their respective fields, pursuing a fascinating array of projects and producing a tremendous range of cutting-edge work. Central to the implementation of RISD's evolving social equity and inclusion (SEI) initiatives, a recent "[Race in Art & Design](#)" cluster hire initiative was launched to grow the college's cross-institutional expertise and breadth of course offerings through the hiring of ten new faculty in areas of race, colonization, post-coloniality, and cultural representation.

In 2017, RISD became the first arts and design college to join the select ranks of the [American Talent Initiative](#), which aims to expand the number of accomplished low- and moderate-income students at some of the nation's most selective schools. RISD and other member institutions are enhancing their efforts to recruit and support lower-income students and contributing to research that will help other colleges and universities expand access. Since 2017, applications to RISD from historically underrepresented groups (American Indian or Alaska Native, Black, or African American, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific) have grown by 54 percent, which is an important sign that the work is starting to pay off.

RISD is currently in its fifth year of implementing the institutional strategic plan, [Next: RISD 2020-2027](#), which focuses on innovation, inclusion, sustainability, and institutional excellence.

RISD Museum

Established with the college in 1877, the RISD Museum currently contains more than 100,000 works of art and design from all over the world, representing diverse cultures from ancient times to the present. A strong staff and seven excellent curatorial departments ([Ancient Art](#); [Asian Art](#); [Costumes & Textiles](#); [Decorative Arts & Design](#); [Prints, Drawing, and Photographs](#); [Painting and Sculpture](#); and [Contemporary Art](#)) are a rich resource for undergraduate and graduate research. RISD's academic programs are well integrated with the museum, and the strategic plan envisions further strengthening of those ties. The director of the RISD museum reports to the [Museum Board of Governors](#), which provides oversight to the museum on behalf of and under a delegation from the RISD Board of Trustees. The museum is an important part of the bridge that RISD provides between Providence's past and its future, meaningfully connecting RISD to its local community.

In 2024, the RISD Museum completed a strategic planning process to release its [five-year strategic plan](#), setting a bold course for the future of the museum's evolving landscape of art and design. The roadmap for 2025-2030 is structured around four key pillars in alignment with RISD's institutional DNA and college mission:

- Activating the RISD Museum Way
- Engaging Our Community
- Strengthening Resources & Sustainability
- Transforming Spaces

Director, Museum of Art | Tsugumi Maki

Tsugumi Maki, who joined the RISD community in Fall 2023, brings 25 years of experience in the museum field to her role as director of the RISD Museum, including her previous role as chief exhibitions and collections officer at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA). In this role, Maki oversaw exhibitions, collection and design programs that contributed to the museum's continued status as a global leader in the art world.

During her SFMOMA tenure, Maki successfully overhauled the museum's exhibitions development strategy, resulting in captivating and groundbreaking art experiences for visitors. She also played a crucial role in revamping the accession process, ensuring the careful and thoughtful growth of SFMOMA's collection. One of Maki's primary focuses was also to foster collaboration, creativity and growth within her division, and to create a positive and inclusive work culture that values and supports professional growth.

Prior to joining SFMOMA, Maki served as chief operating officer at the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, where she focused on strengthening the museum's institutional infrastructure. She also was associate director of operations and collections management at the Davis Museum at Wellesley College, overseeing all collections and operational activities. Previous to Wellesley, Maki spent nearly 20 years at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, most recently serving as the head of gallery planning. While at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Maki played a key role in developing major expansion projects such as the Art of the Americas Wing and the Linde Family Wing galleries.

Maki holds an MFA from Tufts University/School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and a BS in Cinema & Photography from Ithaca College. Her global perspective and widespread respect within the industry further bolster her invaluable contributions to the field.

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

Institutional Advancement (IA) plays a critical role in supporting RISD's mission by fostering engagement and securing philanthropic support from alumni, parents, students, donors, foundations, and corporations. IA is comprised of over 38 staff across annual giving, major gifts, advancement services,

communications, and stewardship, aimed to build and maintain strategic relationships to generate funding that advances RISD's priorities. Those priorities are defined by RISD's president, provost, and deans—and aligned with institutional needs and long-term initiatives. RISD's fiscal year begins on July 1 and ends on June 30. In Fiscal Year 2024, RISD raised over \$19.4 million from philanthropic support with \$5.4 million raised towards annual giving. In the same year, its endowment was valued at \$277 million.

Vice President of Institutional Advancement | Amanda Clark MacMullan

Arriving at RISD in early 2024, Amanda Clark MacMullan brings more than 20 years of experience in higher education, arts and culture to her role as vice president for Institutional Advancement. Most recently serving as senior vice president of programs and external affairs at the Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS), Clark MacMullan leads RISD's philanthropic efforts toward achieving key institutional goals.

At the MHS, Clark MacMullan oversaw a broad portfolio that included communications, education, research, programs, and exhibitions. Prior to MHS, she served as chief philanthropy officer for the Peabody Essex Museum where she completed a \$650 million campaign, grew the value of the museum's endowment and was responsible for securing some of the largest gifts to the institution.

Clark MacMullan has also worked with a number of institutions as a fundraiser and philanthropic strategist, including as chief development officer for New Profit, director of major and leadership gifts for Boston University, philanthropic advisor and regional director for Massachusetts Institute of Technology and associate director of major gifts for Harvard Law School. She holds an MA from Columbia University and a BA from Bowdoin College, and completed Yale University's teacher preparation program for public school teaching certification.

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT, RISD MUSEUM

The senior director of development (senior director), RISD Museum oversees fundraising in support of the RISD Museum. Reporting to the Vice President of Institutional Advancement (VP), and in support of the priorities developed by the director of the museum, the senior director works collaboratively with partners within Institutional Advancement (IA) to develop, support, and maintain programs and activities that secure philanthropic and membership support for the museum.

In alignment with museum priorities, and under the direction of the VP, the senior director will develop, implement, and oversee a multi-year plan and timeline with clear goals and metrics for direct and indirect fundraising efforts. In partnership with the director of the museum, the senior director will support key volunteer leadership roles, including but not limited to the Museum Board of Governors (MBOG), Museum Associates, and the Fine Arts Committee. The senior director will develop productive relationships with the director and deputy director of the museum and other museum staff, as well as President Williams and the Board of Trustees, members of the cabinet, faculty, and key external partners to leverage their strategic participation in the fundraising process, as well as in constituency engagement.

Essential Functions and Responsibilities

The essential functions and responsibilities for the senior director include the following:

- Identify, cultivate, solicit, and steward 150 prospects and donors assigned in the portfolio. Create Individualized Strategic Solicitation Plans (ISSP) for each donor and share these plans with the director of the museum, the VP, and the principal gifts team in IA.
- Shape and establish fundraising priorities and goals; personally oversee staff visits by the museum director and/or VP with current and potential donors; develop individual and group cultivation and/or stewardship activities for current and potential donors. Provide periodic update reports to the VP and the museum director on progress against goals as well as projections.
- Assist the museum director and the office of the museum director in maximizing the effectiveness of the Museum Board of Governors and in planning and executing all MBOG meetings. Lead the cultivation process, including providing giving guidelines for MBOG membership, developing a multi-year plan for the MBOG through a demographic and skills audit, and articulating the roles and responsibilities of MBOG members. Identify and recommend potential new MBOG members to the museum director.
- Oversee and/or personally execute solicitations and closing gifts to secure major gifts in support of museum annual, endowment, and capital funds. Maintain a rigorous schedule of personal contacts with assigned prospects, creating moves management plans related to them that include strategies of engagement and solicitations.
- Develop and execute an annual solicitation plan for submitted proposals and gift closures providing gift projections of commitments.
- Develop an events strategy to support the development of the donor pipeline. Work collaboratively with IA staff to plan and implement RISD Museum events that build and foster deeper engagement among top prospects and philanthropists.
- Actively participate in Raiser's Edge prospect tracking/management system, which identifies, assigns, rates and tracks assigned prospects, complying with department policies and procedures.
- Serve as a representative of Institutional Advancement with other campus partners.

Qualifications and Characteristics

- Ten years of professional fundraising experience, including cultivating, soliciting, and closing major gifts, preferably in higher education or in the art industry.

- Experience designing and managing fundraising programs in an art museum setting, as well as those that have endured a successful campaign environment, is preferred.
- Ability to develop and maintain complex organizational relationships and work effectively with executive leadership.
- Must have a proven record of individual success in securing and maintaining relationships with donors capable of giving at the 7-figure level and beyond.
- A proven ability and commitment to work and communicate effectively with a broad spectrum of divisional and institutional colleagues within an environment that values diversity.
- Excellent oral and written communication and presentation skills. Demonstrated ability to write and present persuasively.
- Strong organizational skills, computer skills, and the ability to work in a fast-paced environment.
- Demonstrated ability to engage as a positive team member who establishes productive relationships, demonstrates respect, and facilitates understanding by considering and integrating diverse viewpoints.
- Demonstrated effectiveness in outreach to volunteers and other fundraising partners.
- Proven ability to develop trusted long-term relationships with partners and donors. Ability to promote and foster an environment that values diversity.
- Bachelor's degree required; a master's degree in a relevant field is preferred.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The anticipated salary range is **\$125,000 to \$140,000**. As an employer, RISD offers a supportive, collegial, and inclusive work environment and a competitive [benefits](#) package. This role operates on a hybrid schedule with various nights and weekends as needed.

Nestled in Providence, Rhode Island's historic College Hill neighborhood, RISD offers a vibrant campus setting surrounded by charming architecture and tree-lined streets. Just steps from Downtown, students enjoy easy access to diverse dining, shopping, and a thriving arts community. Outdoor enthusiasts can explore nearby parks, trails, and Rhode Island's scenic coastline—including destinations like Newport and Narragansett—all within an hour's drive. To learn more, visit: <https://www.goprovidence.com/>

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website:

[https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/rhode-island-school-design-museum/
senior-director-development](https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/rhode-island-school-design-museum/senior-director-development)

Jack Gorman, Partner
Christina Garrison, Senior Associate
Lisa Clayton, Managing Search Coordinator

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