Executive Director, RISD Fund
Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, RI
https://www.risd.edu/

Send Nominations or Cover Letter and Resume to:
Lisa Abair Vuona
Vice President
617-262-1102
lvuona@LindauerGlobal.com

The Opportunity

Contemporary times call for contemporary thinkers.

Rosanne Somerson
Co-Editor, The Art of Critical Making
President, Rhode Island School of Design

The mission of Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), through its College and the RISD 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.
As RISD approaches its sesquicentennial, its Division of Institutional Engagement (IE) is making an unprecedented investment in building a best-in-class team to engage donors, alumni, parents, faculty, and staff in a new wave of philanthropic support. In the introduction to *The Art of Critical Making: Rhode Island School of Design on Creative Practice*, co-editor Rosanne Somerson, then the Provost and now the 17th President of RISD, wrote “…artists and designers manifest what has not existed previously — in many cases, what has never been imagined.” Candidates who approach their advancement careers with this spirit of innovation, entrepreneurialism, and creativity will thrive in IE’s fast-paced, collaborative, and ambitious culture.

**Position Overview – Executive Director, RISD Fund**

**Summary:**

The Executive Director leads the development of a holistic strategy of philanthropic engagement for alumni, parents, families, and friends that yields sustained participation in the RISD Fund. The RISD Fund includes all current-use unrestricted and restricted gifts to RISD, excluding gifts for capital projects. This individual forges relationships and collaborates with members of the Institutional Engagement team, such as Alumni Relations, Advancement Services, and Stewardship, and with administrative and academic department leaders. The Executive Director develops and implements a comprehensive multi-year plan and timeline with clear goals and metrics that incorporates a multi-channel strategy for solicitation and stewardship of RISD Fund donors, including more than 30,000 alumni, parents, students, faculty, staff, and friends. The Executive Director focuses on attracting leadership annual giving and expands giving to the 1877 Society ($2,500+) as a gateway for major gift support through comprehensive solicitation, programming, and personal gift solicitation. S/He partners with the Senior Philanthropy Officer responsible for Parents’ Council recruitment to organize Council meetings, prepare reports, talking points, and other materials required by Council leadership to effectively inform and engage fellow members. The Executive Director will hire, train, supervise, and evaluate professional staff. S/He also oversees the selection, management, and evaluation of any RISD Fund service providers.

**Essential Functions/Duties:**

- Plan and execute a current-use giving program, establishing segmented strategies to engage and encourage support from alumni, parents, and friends, setting dollar goals to meet or exceed while monitoring progress on an ongoing basis.
- Devise and implement an appropriately weighted multi-channel strategy including, but not limited to: telemarketing, direct mail, social media/crowdfunding, email, and text campaigns appropriate to each donor segment.
- Manage vendor relations including those contracted for student calling, direct response, and marketing.
- Recruit and grow a corps of volunteers to engage in donor cultivation and solicitation, especially for the 1877 Society leading to increased support at the $2,500+ level.
- Identify, cultivate, solicit, and steward a limited pool of leadership annual giving prospects and donors, focusing on gifts of $10,000+. The individual will conduct at least 75 personal solicitations annually.
- Partner with the Senior Philanthropy Officer responsible for Parents’ Council recruitment to organize Council meetings, prepare reports, talking points, and other materials required by Council leadership to effectively inform and engage fellow members.
- Partner with Parents’ Council volunteers to develop and implement a program that engages and attracts current use gifts from RISD student families while identifying those with major gift capacity.
- Develop plan to engage faculty, staff, recent alumni, and students in philanthropy.
- Work synergistically with Alumni Relations and Alumni Association to engage 1877 Society donors and prospective donors as volunteer leaders.
- Ensure all administrative functions relating to the RISD Fund are carefully managed and processes completed in a thorough and timely basis, including, but not limited to: developing and managing of program budgets and projections; generating and coordinating direct response campaigns; planning and implementing special events; management reports; acknowledgements of gifts; and monitoring and processing of pledge reminders.
- Hire, train, professionally develop, manage, and evaluate all RISD Fund staff.
- Select, manage, and evaluate all RISD Fund service providers.
- Work collaboratively and synergistically with the RISD Museum Deputy Director of Development and External Affairs and peers on the Institutional Engagement Senior Management Group (SMG) including: the Senior Executive Director of Development; Executive Director of Alumni Relations; Executive Director of Advancement Services; and Executive Director of Campaign Planning and Strategy to achieve organizational goals and strategies.

**Required Qualifications:**

- Bachelor’s degree in relevant field required. Master’s degree in relevant field or equivalent combination of education and experience preferred.
- Ten years+ of fundraising experience devising and managing annual giving and/or membership programs, preferably in higher education.
- Demonstrated success in devising and executing comprehensive annual giving strategies and programs including digital direct marketing.
- Personal record of prospect solicitation and securing gifts at $50,000+ level.
- Management experience and supervision of employees including hiring, training, and evaluating performance. Excellent oral and written communication and presentation skills.
- Strong organizational skills.
- Demonstrated effectiveness in outreach to volunteers and other fundraising partners.
- Interest/experience in art and design desirable.
Rhode Island School of Design does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, national origin, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law in admission to, participation in, or administration of its educational programs and activities; in employment; or in its other programs and activities.

RISD complies with all applicable state and federal statutes, including Title IX of the federal Higher Education Amendment of 1972, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex under any education program or activity receiving federal financial aid. Sexual assault and sexual harassment are forms of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX. Learn more about RISD’s commitment to Title IX.

Institutional Engagement Overview

The Division of Institutional Engagement advances RISD’s mission by strategically fostering lifelong relationships with alumni, parents, friends, and organizations to strengthen goodwill and philanthropy. Its vision is to ensure that any person or organization who engages with RISD becomes an advocate and donor. The Division includes a development team of frontline fundraisers, a campaign planning and strategy team responsible for implementation of programming and communications, an alumni relations team that engages alumni and families, and an advancement operations team responsible for data integrity and technology. Together, they are executing an IE strategic plan with the following goal:

Division of Institutional Engagement Goal: Be the BEST

- **Build** an organization and campaign that position philanthropy as a vital revenue stream for the College and Museum;
- Create sustainable opportunities to **Engage** alumni, parents, friends, students, staff, and donors in support of the priorities of the College and Museum;
- Invest in staff, systems, and processes that support a long-term performance-based, high-achieving culture, essential to the **Success** of the institution; and
- Create an IE communications organization to **Tell** the impact of philanthropy on the College and Museum, inspiring pride and advocacy.

On the heels of a record-setting fundraising year in 2018, FY19 is on track to break that threshold with a projected $30 million raised by June 30. The Division works with a prospect pool that includes more than 30,000 alumni living and working around the world amongst which are renowned artists, designers, musicians, celebrities, politicians, business people, athletes, and others who value the sense of community and commitment that are so central to their RISD experience.
In the past decade, RISD has seen a 46% increase in first-year applications and the number of students who qualify for federal financial aid has jumped by 57%. Currently, the College has an operating budget of $150 million and an endowment of approximately $350 million. Access is of critical importance as RISD looks to the future. 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 numbers of accomplished low- and moderate-income students at some of the nation’s most selective schools of higher education. The College aims to place a RISD education within reach of a larger, more diverse pool of talented students, in particular those from constituencies that are underrepresented in the fields of art and design. As such, increasing financial aid and additional support for students is an institutional priority. This past year, 100% of first-year students who demonstrated financial need received some aid, but more remains to be done.

In addition to financial aid priorities, RISD depends on high-quality facilities to provide the environments, tools, and conditions that activate student learning, enable exploration, and serve as the fundamental framework of an exceptional art and design education. RISD occupies 50 buildings located in the heart of downtown Providence and has deepened its commitment to studio-based education and to the stewardship of its campus. RISD has completed a comprehensive planning process that identifies how it can best transform its campus to energize learning, discovering, collaborating, and making. Informed by renewed commitments and planning, RISD has developed a series of capital projects for the core campus that will animate its immersive residential learning environment.

**Location**

**Providence, Rhode Island:**

Aptly deemed The Creative Capital, Providence, Rhode Island has earned a reputation for being an arts and cultural mecca. With the largest number of working artists per capita in the country, the city boasts a vibrant mix of galleries, theaters, and museums. Providence combines the accessibility and friendliness of a small city with the culture and sophistication of a bigger cultural center.

Learn More: [Providence, RI](#)
Background Checks:

Prior to submitting your resume for this position, please read it over for accuracy. Lindauer does verify academic credentials for its candidates, and our clients frequently conduct background checks prior to finalizing an offer.

To learn more, call 617-262-1102
or send nominations or cover letter and resume to:
Lisa Abair Vuona, Vice President at
lvuona@LindauerGlobal.com.

All inquiries will be held in confidence.

Setting the Standard in Nonprofit Talent

LINDAUER
420 Boylston Street, Suite 604, Boston, MA 02116
617-262-1102
Appendix

RISD Leadership:

Rosanne Somerson  
*President*

A designer, professor, and academic leader, President Rosanne Somerson has been advancing art and design since she was a student at RISD in the 1970s. She returned to the College in the 1980s to teach and in 1995 founded the Furniture Design Department before serving as Provost and chief academic officer. As RISD’s 17th President she is committed to expanding inclusion, equity, and access in order to enhance a genuinely rich learning environment. President Somerson also maintains a creative practice, designing furniture for exhibitions and commissions, and frequently speaks and writes about the power of art and design in advancing life in the 21st century.

Learn more: Rosanne Somerson

Institutional Engagement Leadership:

O’Neil A.S. Outar  
*Vice President, Institutional Engagement*

O’Neil A.S. Outar joined RISD’s leadership team in January 2018, bringing more than 20 years of fundraising and leadership experience from some of the world’s leading public and private research universities. He began his career at Tufts University, where he served as director of the Fund for Arts, Sciences, and Engineering during the university’s $609 million *Tufts Tomorrow* campaign. From there, Outar held several ascending leadership roles at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, leading the work that secured some of MIT’s largest-ever donations.

Learn More: O’Neil Outar