

RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN

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STATEMENT OF ATTITUDES

In analyzing specific problems facing the school (such as the problem of scholarships) it is well that we do take a broad look at the whole picture of the school, and its role in the life of the artist-designers who come here for their education.

The significant questions to be asked are:-

What is this school?

Who do we want here as students?

How is this school to be governed?

What are we preparing our students for when they graduate?

How fast can we change toward our goals without becoming fiscally irresponsible?

This school is a design and an art school, with a professional faculty equipped to provide students with the best possible educational experience in the visual arts. Since our students also must be provided with a broad understanding of their world, we also teach English, History of Art, and other subjects which shed light on these troubled times.

The school has a fine reputation because it has kept current in a changing world. We must conduct its affairs so that it may change as the world changes. In order to do that effectively, students and faculty must have the means of making their viewpoints known, and the administration must be flexible and alert to bring desirable reforms into full flower.

In the past, this school was not racially balanced nor did it allocate large sums to aiding those who could not afford out type of education. In the last five years, we have moved rapidly; allocating twice as much to financial-aid and recruiting ad admitting to the Class of 1973 a sizable percentage of students from the disadvantaged minority. We will continue to push forward as rapidly as possible.

School governance involves basically three categories:-

Trustees (who hire an administration to act for them) who have the legal responsibility for the continuity, and for the proper use of the resources of the school. All those who gave money and buildings, and time, and effort to the school in effect put those things in the hands of the trustees to protect, and to see that the school was properly run.

Faculty who are responsible for the teaching of students. Their function is central to our whole operation, and they devote their lives and their skills and talents freely to the end that they provide the best possible education. They plan the curricula, they structure the courses, and they teach. They are in the closest possible touch with students in the latter work.

Students are the point of the whole operation. The school exists only insofar as it has value for students. Their opinions are important and should be heard.

As President, I need all the ideas and all the help I can get if all three elements are to move forward together. We should all be thinking seriously of how to set up ways and means of insuring that the administration reflects the best possible decisions of the whole RISD community.

We need to re-think continuously the whole subject of what we are preparing our students for. Each department and each committee of faculty and students must constantly hold up the goal of where are we heading. Decisions must always relate to that goal.

And, always we have to be realistic. Of course, there are many things we'd like to do now and would strain our finances to the breaking point. We must so balance our choice of alternatives that students benefit, while faculty are in agreement, and trustees can support the program. Such choices as to actions undertaken also imply a rejection of other programs since not everything can be done at once.

I sincerely hope that our choices will prove sound, and that RISD will move through the 1970's growing stronger and better as the decade flows by.

Sincerely,

Talbot Rantoul
President