RICHMOND INSTITUTE OF DESIGN AND INNOVATION (RID+I)

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1. Introduction

1.1   Mandatory Opening Statement

By virtue of their command of their disciplines, University faculty have as a unique resource, the abilities to assist in the governance of the departments in which they will exercise their respective disciplines. Faculty, therefore, should participate in the governance of their departments to create and maintain harmonious relationships among colleagues, and to fashion and maintain the departments in such a way as to make them maximally appropriate for instruction, research, service, and other professional activities of the disciplines. Fundamentally, what is desirable and what is intended by the sections that follow is to ensure meaningful participation by department faculties, with the ultimate power of decision-making by Western, but with an assurance of procedural regularity and fair play.

1.2   Mission and Vision of the Richmond Institute of Design and Innovation

The Richmond Institute of Design and Innovation (RIDI) is dedicated to fostering creativity, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary collaboration in design education. Our mission is to prepare students for professional success by integrating innovative methodologies, sustainability, and emerging technologies into design practice. Through a dynamic curriculum and industry partnerships, RIDI aims to be a leader in design education, shaping the future of creative industries.

1.3   Purpose of the Policy Statement

This document establishes the policies and procedures faculty recommend for use in governing the operations of RIDI, ensuring transparency, consistency, and faculty participation in decision-making. It serves as a reference for faculty responsibilities, governance structures, and academic policies. The policy statement aligns with Western Michigan University's guidelines while addressing the unique aspects of design education.

2. Governance

2.1 Role of Faculty in Governance

Faculty are integral to RIDI's governance, participating in decision-making through committees, advisory roles, and departmental meetings. They contribute to shaping policies, curriculum development, and strategic planning. Board-appointed tenured, or tenure-track, faculty have voting rights on key matters related to academic programs, hiring, and resource allocation.

2.2 Leadership Roles

2.2.A   Director of RIDI

As faculty, we recommend that the Director of the Richmond Institute for Design + Innovation (RID+I) be a leader who brings a strong vision for design education, a commitment to faculty and student success, and the administrative expertise necessary to advance the institute's mission. Given the complexity and ambition of RID+I's work, the selection process should involve meaningful faculty participation and administrative oversight to ensure the chosen candidate aligns with both institutional priorities and the values of the academic community.

We believe the Director should hold a terminal graduate degree in design, architecture, or a closely related field and demonstrate a distinguished record of academic leadership, professional practice, and scholarship. The ideal candidate should have substantial experience in higher education administration, including faculty development, curriculum innovation, and program management.

It is also essential that the Director foster interdisciplinary collaboration and cultivate partnerships with industry and the broader design community. The role requires strong communication, leadership, and strategic planning skills to effectively advocate for the institute, steward its resources, and support both faculty growth and student achievement. Familiarity with accreditation processes, emerging trends in design education, and evolving technological platforms will be key to ensuring RID+I's continued relevance and impact.

We strongly encourage the selection of a candidate who embodies these qualities and who is prepared to lead RID+I into its next phase of innovation and excellence.

2.2.B   Faculty Advisory Committee

Working alongside the director, the Faculty Advisory Committee is composed of faculty representatives who provide guidance on academic policies, faculty concerns, and long-term strategic planning. This committee plays a crucial role in fostering a collaborative governance structure that upholds RID+I's commitment to excellence in design education. At minimum, the Faculty Advisory Committee should have one full-time faculty member that represents the needs

and concerns of each degree provided by RID+I. At current, this would be one faculty member to represent Interior Architecture and Design and another to represent Product Design. Unless prohibitive, program coordinators should serve in this vital role of the Faculty Advisory Committee.

2.3 Departmental Meetings and Decision Making

Frequency: Regular faculty meetings will be held at least twice per semester during the academic year. Additional faculty meetings may be convened as needed by faculty members to address emerging concerns or opportunities for discussion.

Agenda Setting: Faculty are encouraged to submit agenda items in advance. The Director and Faculty Advisory Committee will finalize and distribute the agenda to ensure that key topics are addressed effectively.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory for all full-time, board-appointed faculty and the RID+I Director at scheduled faculty meetings. Part-time faculty and support staff may be invited to attend as needed to contribute to discussions and support strategic decision-making.

Voting Procedures: Major decisions require a quorum consisting of two-thirds (2/3) of board-appointed full-time faculty members.

Major decisions include, but are not limited to, recommendations on new hires, revisions to the Departmental Policy Statement (DPS), curriculum changes that would globally impact all programs offered by RID+I, major expenditures on which the Director seeks faculty recommendation (e.g., scholarships, equipment budget allocations, experiential trips).

Voting may occur during scheduled meetings or through secure electronic means, as appropriate, to ensure broad participation and efficient decision-making.

3. Faculty Policies and Responsibilities

3.1   Intent of RID+I Faculty

The Richmond Institute for Design and Innovation (RID+I) prioritizes a practice-based educational model, where students engage directly with faculty who bring current professional expertise and real-world project experience into the academic environment. This integration of design practice with instruction is foundational to RID+I's mission.

To support and sustain this model, it is recommended that full-time faculty appointments at RID+I fall under the **Faculty Specialist** classification—specifically, within the **Professional Specialist** category. This appointment structure is well aligned with the unique responsibilities and contributions expected of RID+I faculty, including curriculum delivery informed by contemporary practice, coordination of experiential learning opportunities, and active engagement with the design industry.

The scope of the Professional Specialist classification, as defined by the WMU AAUP agreement, provides an appropriate framework for RID+I faculty to engage in the planning, implementation, and support of academic programs that extend beyond traditional classroom teaching. This includes activities such as industry outreach, student recruitment, internship coordination, and capstone supervision—all of which are central to RID+I's commitment to applied, practice-based learning.

3.2   Faculty Categories

We provide the following recommendation of RID+I faculty into the following categories for operational clarity:

Faculty Specialists (Full-Time) – Full-time, board-appointed faculty members with a primary focus on teaching. They play a critical role in curriculum development, industry collaboration, and student mentorship. Since Faculty Specialists typically carry a heavier teaching load, they are not required to engage in professional practice, applied research, or creative work for tenure or promotion. However, these activities are considered positive contributions and can support the tenure review process, though the absence of such work should not negatively impact tenure evaluation.

Part-Time Faculty – Practicing professionals who bring specialized expertise to RID+I's programs on a course-by-course basis.

Visiting Faculty & Industry Experts – Temporary or guest instructors who contribute to specific courses, workshops, or lectures, enriching student learning with unique insights from professional practice.

3.3 Expectations for Faculty

It is recommended RID+I faculty are expected to:

Deliver high-quality instruction by incorporating industry-relevant skills, tools, and methodologies into coursework.

Mentor and advise students, providing guidance on academic and professional development.

Contribute to curriculum development to ensure alignment with contemporary industry trends and accreditation standards as defined by CIDA and NASAD.

Engage in interdisciplinary collaboration within the university and with external partners.

Participate in faculty governance and committee work to support the strategic goals of RIDI.

3.4 Appointment and Search Procedures

As current faculty we offer the following recommendations for conducting search procedures in the appointment of new faculty:

Faculty Specialist Hiring – The appointment of full-time Faculty Specialists follows a competitive search process, ensuring alignment with RID+I's practice-based mission. Candidates must demonstrate significant industry experience, teaching effectiveness, and a commitment to design education.

Adjunct & Visiting Faculty Selection – Part-time and visiting faculty are selected based on professional expertise, portfolio quality, and teaching ability. These appointments are reviewed annually to maintain alignment with program needs.

Search Committee Involvement – Faculty will participate in the hiring process through structured search committees, ensuring that new hires reflect RID+I's academic and professional values.

3.5 Faculty Evaluation

We advise and recommend faculty performance be evaluated as outlined:

Teaching Effectiveness – Evaluated through student evaluations, peer observations, postgraduate and internship placements, and faculty self-assessment to ensure continuous improvement in instructional methods and student engagement.

Given RIDI's focus on practice-based education, professional peer observations and students securing professional opportunities serve as the most significant indicators of teaching effectiveness, reflecting the real-world impact of faculty instruction.

Professional Service– Faculty appointed as Professional Specialists are expected to maintain active engagement in professional practice, applied design research, or creative scholarship that directly informs and enhances curriculum development. This ongoing connection to the design fields reinforces RID+I's practice-based mission and ensures that instruction remains current,

relevant, and aligned with industry standards. Professional engagement may also include contributions to community-facing initiatives, participation in industry organizations, or leadership in projects that bridge academic and professional contexts.

Peer Review – Faculty are responsible for initiating at least one observation and review per semester from fellow faculty members and industry practitioners to gain constructive feedback on teaching methods and professional integration. Faculty should work the department Director to select the classroom observers. Tenured faculty are not required to engage with these annual peer review classroom observations.

Service to RID+I – Contributions to curriculum development, student mentorship, faculty governance, and strategic initiatives that support RID+I's long-term vision and operational success.

Annual Performance Review – Faculty Specialists will conduct a self-assessed annual review to evaluate their contributions to RID+I's academic mission, reflect on teaching and professional development, and identify areas for growth and improvement.

4.   Tenure and Promotion Policies

4.1   Tenure Policy and Review Process

RID+I's recommended tenure process is designed to ensure faculty excellence, professional engagement, and long-term contributions to the institute's mission. Tenure serves as a recognition of sustained teaching effectiveness, professional engagement, and service to RIDI while reinforcing the institute's commitment to practice-based education.

4.1.A   Tenure File Components

Faculty members under tenure review must submit a comprehensive tenure file that demonstrates excellence in the following categories:

Teaching Effectiveness

Professional Service

Service to RIDI

It is suggested these components should be evaluated based upon the criteria outlined in the Faculty Evaluation section of this document.

4.1.B   Role of the Departmental Tenure Committee (DTC)

The Departmental Tenure Committee (DTC) is responsible for reviewing tenure-track candidates, assessing tenure files, and making recommendations based on established criteria. The DTC will evaluate faculty contributions to RIDI's mission, ensuring that tenure candidates meet the highest standards of educational and professional excellence.

4.2   Promotion Policy & Review Process

It is recommended promotion within RID+I recognizes faculty members who demonstrate exceptional contributions to teaching, professional engagement, and service to the institution. Faculty members may apply for promotion following the established university timeline and review process.

4.2.A   Criteria for Promotion to Faculty Specialist II and Master Faculty Specialist

It is advised faculty seeking promotion provide evidence of:

Sustained excellence in teaching, including innovative instructional methods, student success in securing professional opportunities, and contributions to curriculum development.

Significant professional service including applied research, creative practice, ongoing involvement in professional design work, industry collaboration, or recognized contributions to the advancement of design education and practice.

Leadership and service contributions to RIDI, including mentorship, faculty governance, and strategic initiatives that enhance the department and university.

4.3   Revisions to Tenure and Promotion Policies

Revisions to tenure and promotion policies shall be undertaken in a manner that reflects the evolving needs and faculty composition of the department. Any proposed changes must be reviewed and approved by a quorum of board-appointed faculty, following the procedures outlined in Section 2.3 of this document.

While this Departmental Policy Statement (DPS) is structured around the Faculty Specialist track, any future hiring of traditionally ranked faculty shall trigger a required review and amendment of this section to ensure appropriate evaluation standards and expectations are in place. This policy is designed to support present faculty structures while allowing for timely revisions should departmental composition evolve.

All revisions must remain consistent with the terms outlined in the current WMU-AAUP Agreement.

5   Academic and Curriculum Policies

5.1   Curriculum Oversight & Development

The curriculum at RID+I is designed to align with emerging industry trends, accreditation standards, and best practices in design education. Faculty play a central role in shaping the curriculum to ensure students gain the technical skills, conceptual knowledge, and professional competencies required for success in the field.

Curriculum development is guided by faculty expertise, industry advisory input, and accreditation requirements.

Faculty are encouraged to propose new courses, program revisions, and interdisciplinary learning opportunities to maintain a dynamic and competitive curriculum.

The Faculty Committee oversees all curriculum changes, ensuring alignment with RID+I's practice-based learning model and Western Michigan University's academic policies.

Course offerings and program requirements are periodically reviewed and updated to reflect advancements in design technology, sustainability, and professional practice.

Faculty have the governing voice of curriculum development, offerings and coursework of RID+I.

5.2   Assessment and Accreditation

RIDI is committed to continuous assessment and accreditation compliance to maintain high academic standards and program credibility. The Faculty Committee, in collaboration with all faculty and administration, seeks to ensure that RIDI meets institutional, state, and national accreditation standards.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) – Faculty are responsible for assessing student performance based on predefined competency benchmarks tied to industry expectations.

Course and Program-Level Assessments –Regular evaluations of course content, instructional methodologies, and student learning outcomes are conducted to enhance teaching effectiveness and curriculum relevance. These assessments are carried out by faculty within their own courses, ensuring direct reflection on pedagogical impact and content delivery. Additionally, accreditation boards and external reviewers assess program-level effectiveness, ensuring alignment with industry standards and institutional expectations.

Accreditation Compliance – RID+I aligns its academic programs with NASAD (National Association of Schools of Art and Design) accreditation, the Council for Interior Design Accreditation, and other relevant accrediting bodies. Faculty contribute to data collection, reporting, course documentation, and curriculum improvements required for accreditation renewal.

Annual Review and Reporting – Assessment findings are documented in annual reports to identify strengths, address gaps, and enhance student success strategies.

5.3   Interdisciplinary and Industry Collaborations

RID+I recognize the importance of interdisciplinary learning and industry engagement in preparing students for professional practice. The institute fosters collaborations across disciplines and with external partners to provide students with real-world project experience and cross-disciplinary problem-solving skills.

Interdisciplinary Education – Faculty are encouraged to develop courses, workshops, and research initiatives that integrate perspectives from engineering, business, technology, and other related fields to enhance students' ability to navigate complex, multi-faceted design challenges.

Industry Partnerships – RID+I actively collaborates with design firms, manufacturers, and professional organizations to facilitate internships, sponsored projects, and guest lectures that bridge the gap between academia and industry, ensuring students are equipped with practical experience and professional networking opportunities.

Collaborative Research and Innovation – Faculty are supported in partnering with industry leaders on applied research projects that contribute to sustainable design, emerging design practices, and technological advancements, reinforcing RID+I's commitment to innovation and thought leadership in the design field.

Community and Public Engagement – RID+I promotes collaborative initiatives with civic organizations, non-profits, and local businesses, providing students with opportunities to apply their skills in real-world, socially impactful projects that contribute to community development and public well-being.

Program Advisory Boards – Each degree program within RID+I should establish and maintain an advisory board composed of industry professionals who provide insights into industry trends, curriculum alignment, and professional expectations. Each advisory board should:

- Meet annually to assess program relevance and evolving industry needs.
- Include at least five industry professionals, each serving a two-year term.

Provide feedback on curriculum development, emerging skills, and career pathways to ensure RID+I graduates remain competitive in the job market

6 Student-Faculty Interaction and Advising

RID+I is committed to fostering strong student-faculty engagement, ensuring that students receive academic guidance, mentorship, and professional development opportunities throughout their education. With a dedicated full-time academic advisor, RID+I provides structured support to help students navigate curriculum requirements, career pathways, and professional growth. Faculty also play an integral role in mentorship, skill development, and industry readiness, complementing the advising structure with discipline-specific expertise.

6.1 Academic Advising Responsibilities

It is recommended RID+I's full-time academic advisor serves as the primary point of contact for course planning, degree progression, and institutional policies, ensuring students remain on track for graduation.

The academic advisor:

- Provides guidance on course selection, scheduling, and program requirements to support timely degree completion.
- Assists students in understanding academic policies, university resources, and scholarship opportunities.
- Supports students at risk academically, working with faculty to provide intervention strategies.
- Serves as a liaison between students, faculty, and administration to address academic concerns and enhance student success.

While the academic advisor handles curriculum navigation and administrative advising, faculty provide mentorship focused on design education, internship experiences, and professional growth.

6.2 Faculty Office Hours and Availability

It is suggested RID+I faculty are required to maintain regular and accessible office hours to support students in coursework, design critique, and academic success. Faculty office hours

should be structured to ensure that students can seek guidance, receive timely feedback, and engage in meaningful academic discussions.

<u>6.2. A   Full-Time Faculty Availability:</u>

- Maintain a minimum of four office hours per week, providing availability for student questions, project guidance, and academic discussions.
- Offer a combination of in-person and virtual office hours to maximize accessibility for all students.
- Respond promptly to student inquiries via email and remain available for one-on-one discussions as needed.
- Collaborate with the academic advisor to address student concerns related to course performance, professional development, and career readiness.

This structured approach ensures that students receive consistent faculty engagement and academic support, reinforcing RID+I's commitment to a student-centered learning environment and accessible faculty mentorships.

6.3   Student Mentorship & Professional Development

Beyond coursework, RID+I we believe faculty should be expected to serve as mentors who guide students through career exploration, industry preparation, and professional growth. Consequently Faculty are advised to:

- Provide portfolio and resume reviews, helping students refine their professional materials for internships, jobs, and graduate school applications.
- Support students in securing industry connections, including networking opportunities, professional events, and mentorship programs.
- Offer advising on career pathways, including graduate school, certifications, and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- Encourage participation in competitions, exhibitions, and research projects to enhance students' professional visibility.
- Facilitate discussions on ethics, business practices, and industry expectations, preparing students for real-world challenges in design fields.

By integrating academic advising, faculty mentorship, and professional development, RID+I ensures that students are well-prepared for successful careers in design while fostering lifelong learning and professional engagement.

7 Committee Structure

RID+I's committee structure ensures faculty participation in decision-making, curriculum development, faculty evaluation, and strategic planning. These committees play a vital role in upholding academic integrity, supporting faculty and student success, and fostering continuous program improvement.

7.1 Personal Committee (Tenure and Promotion)

The Personnel Committee is responsible for evaluating faculty performance, tenure applications, and promotion recommendations, ensuring that faculty members meet the highest standards of teaching and professional service.

Responsibilities:

- Review and assess faculty tenure and promotion applications based on established criteria.
- Provide recommendations on faculty reappointments and performance evaluations.
- Offer mentorship and guidance to faculty on professional development and career advancement.

Membership:

- Composed of tenured faculty members, with representation from across RID+I's academic programs.
- The tenure review committee should be composed of tenured Faculty.
- The committee chair is elected from within the committee.

7.2 Scholarships and Awards Committee

The Scholarships & Awards Committee oversees the distribution of RID+I-specific scholarships, academic honors, and student awards, ensuring that financial support and recognition are aligned with the academic and professional development of students in Product Design and Interior Architecture and Design.

RID+I-specific scholarship allocations are supported through a combination of funding sources, including College of Fine Arts differential tuition revenue, targeted industry partnerships, and a mix of general and restricted donor endowments. All scholarship funds are administered in alignment with the department's strategic priorities, with a focus on advancing student success and ensuring equitable access to professional development opportunities.

Responsibilities:

- Review scholarship applications and nominate students for awards based on merit, need, and professional achievements.

- Establish clear and fair selection criteria for scholarships and departmental awards.
- Collaborate with external donors, industry sponsors, and alumni organizations to expand funding opportunities for students.

Membership:

- Composed of faculty members from each RID+I program, and the Academic Advisor.
- It is recommended the committee chair is appointed by RID+I's Director.

7.3   Faculty Advisory Committee

It is recommended that the Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) serves as a key conduit between faculty and administration, ensuring that faculty perspectives are meaningfully integrated into academic policy development, curriculum decisions, and strategic planning. The committee plays an essential role in upholding principles of shared governance, advocating for faculty interests, and contributing to the advancement of RID+I's mission in design education.

It is advised the FAC should work in close collaboration with the Director to provide guidance, feedback, and informed recommendations on the following key areas:

Academic Policy and Governance:

- Reviewing and advising on departmental policies, faculty workload, and institutional changes that impact teaching and professional development.
- Ensuring transparency and faculty participation in major administrative and academic decisions.

Curriculum and Program Development:

- Assessing and advising on curriculum structure, course offerings, and degree program improvements.

Faculty Concerns and Advocacy:

- Representing faculty interests in discussions related to hiring, tenure, promotion, and professional development opportunities.
- Addressing concerns related to academic freedom, workload balance, and faculty well-being.

Strategic Planning and Institutional Growth:

- Assisting the Director in long-term planning efforts, including program expansion, interdisciplinary initiatives, and resource allocation.
- Identifying opportunities for industry partnerships, research funding, and technological advancements to enhance RIDI's academic and professional footprint.

Student Experience and Success:

Collaborating with faculty and administration to improve student advising, mentorship, and career readiness initiatives.

- Ensuring that students receive holistic academic and professional support, integrating classroom learning with real-world applications.

Membership and Structure

To ensure comprehensive representation across RID+I's academic programs, the Faculty Advisory Committee must include:

One full-time faculty representative per degree program to serve as an advocate for the needs and concerns of faculty and students within that discipline.

Currently, this includes:

- One faculty representative for Interior Architecture and Design.
- One faculty representative for Product Design.

Preference for Program Coordinators:

Unless prohibitive, program coordinators should serve as FAC members, as they hold critical insight into programmatic needs, accreditation standards, and student success initiatives.

Term Length and Selection Process:

- Members serve a renewable two-year term, ensuring continuity and expertise while allowing for rotation and fresh perspectives.
- Faculty members are selected through an internal nomination and voting process.

Collaboration with the Director:

We suggest the Director of RIDI to work closely with the Faculty Advisory Committee, using their input to inform strategic decision-making, academic planning, and faculty development. Regular meetings between the Director and the FAC ensure that faculty voices are heard in:

- Budgetary and resource management discussions.
- Changes to institutional policies affecting faculty roles and responsibilities.
- Evaluation of new program proposals, curricular adjustments, and accreditation processes.

7.4   Ad Hoc Committees

Ad Hoc Committees are temporary committees formed to address specific issues, projects, or initiatives that arise outside the scope of standing committees.

Responsibilities:

- Investigate and provide recommendations on specialized topics such as new technology adoption, diversity initiatives, and special events.
- Support departmental needs that require short-term or project-specific faculty involvement.
- Disband once the assigned task is completed.

Membership:

- Determined based on faculty expertise and interest in the specific topic.
- The committee chair is appointed by the Director or elected by members.

8   Operational and Budgetary Policies

8.1   Workload Planning

8.1.A   Workload Class Calculation

RID+I offer three primary class formats, each with different suggested workload calculations to reflect teaching intensity, instructional demands, and contact hours:

Studio Courses:

Studio courses require the most in-class contact hours, meeting for at least five hours and forty minutes per week.

Faculty recommend that workload credits for studio courses should be calculated as 1.33 x the course credit hours per section.

Since most studio courses in RIDI are three-credit hours, faculty workload for these courses should typically be 4 workload credits per semester.

Immersive/Application Courses:

Faculty recommends that immersive courses focus on developing applied skills and require more instruction than seminar courses, but less than studio courses.

It is suggested workload for immersive courses be determined as 1.33 workload credits x the course credit hours for the first section.

For each additional section taught by the same faculty member in the same semester, 1 additional workload credit should be applied.

Immersive courses generally meet for a minimum of three hours and forty minutes per week.

Seminar Courses

Seminar courses are predominantly lecture-based and require fewer contact hours than studio and immersive courses.

As a result faculty recommends, seminar courses should be factored as 1 workload credit per credit hour for the first section.

Each additional section of the same course, taught by the same faculty member in the same semester, is recommended to add 1 workload credit.

Independent Studies

When an independent study course is offered, it is suggested the faulty member teaching the independent study determine how the course should be categorized in terms of workload planning and present that recommendation to the Director of RID+I. It is also recommended, by faculty, independent studies also have a critical mass of students enrolled in the course to be considered for workload allocation.

8.1.B   Additional Activities

Faculty responsibilities beyond classroom instruction contribute to workload and faculty recommend that high service load or non-instructional roles be formally recognized by the Director along the following lines:

- Program Coordinators may receive up to a 3 workload credits per academic year and an additional 3 workload credits per semester during an accreditation review year. Specific workload credit for Program Coordinators should be determined through mutual agreement between the impacted faculty and the RID+I Director on a semester-by-semester basis.
- Additional workload credits for marketing, recruitment, internship coordination, applied research, and course development should be determined through mutual agreement between the impacted faculty and the RID+I Director on a semester-by-semester basis.

8.2   Resource and Budget Planning

RID+I is committed to strategic resource and budget planning to support faculty development, technology integration, and facility enhancements that foster innovative teaching and student success. In consultation with the Director and contingent upon the availability of funds, RIDI faculty suggest budget allocations that are managed transparently and equitably ensuring alignment with the needs of each academic program, faculty support initiatives, and departmental growth strategies.

8.2.A   Professional Development

Faculty professional development is essential for maintaining expertise in emerging design practices, technologies, and pedagogical strategies.

The Director should seek to allocate funding for:

- Conference attendance, workshops, and continuing education to support faculty engagement with industry trends, accreditation standards, and academic research.
- Training on new software, fabrication tools, and design technologies to ensure faculty can effectively integrate state-of-the-art methodologies into teaching.
- Memberships to professional and educational organizations that directly enhance RIDI's reputation and enrich the student learning experience.

Funding for professional development should be allocated annually, with priority given to faculty whose participation has a direct impact on curriculum enhancement, student success, and RID+I's industry network expansion.

8.2.B   Faculty Technology & Equipment

To maintain cutting-edge design education, the Director shall seek to provide faculty with:

- Updated software and hardware necessary for instruction, research, and industry collaboration.
- Access to design visualization, 3D modeling, rendering, and digital fabrication tools.
- Regular assessments of faculty technology needs, ensuring that all full-time and part-time faculty have the necessary resources to teach effectively.

Faculty technology upgrades should be reviewed annually, with funding allocated based on priority needs and instructional impact.

8.2.C   DREAM Lab Management & Technology

The DREAM Lab serves as a core fabrication and technology hub for RID+I students and faculty, housing digital fabrication tools, CNC equipment, wood working instruments, laser cutters, and 3D printing technology.

Effective management and budget planning are critical to ensuring:

- Sustained operations and maintenance of equipment to keep the lab fully functional and up to date.
- Investment in new technologies that align with industry advancements in design, prototyping, and digital manufacturing.
- Staffing and technician support to assist students and faculty with technical training, safety procedures, and advanced project execution.
- Periodic upgrades and expansion efforts to accommodate new methodologies in digital fabrication and emerging design tools.

Faculty suggest that a portion of differential tuition funding and external grants are allocated to support the ongoing development of the DREAM Lab. It is also believed beneficial to include faculty in discussions and planning around related expenditures to help ensure that investments are responsive to instructional goals, industry opportunities, and the evolving needs of RID+I's academic programs.

<u>8.2. D   Facility Upgrades & Technology Enhancements</u>

RID+I is committed to ongoing facility improvements that enhance the learning environment, studio spaces, and collaborative areas.

Faculty recommends regular budget planning to include:

- Upgrades to classrooms, studios, and technology labs to support evolving pedagogical approaches.
- Enhancements to shared workspaces and student collaboration areas to foster a dynamic and creative learning atmosphere.
- Regular assessment of technology infrastructure, ensuring students have access to high-performance computing, virtual reality, and immersive design experiences.
- Sustainability initiatives, integrating energy-efficient systems, adaptive workspaces, and green materials into facility planning.

Facility and technology upgrade priorities will be reviewed annually, with funding allocated based on departmental needs, accreditation requirements, and student impact. It is suggested faculty will be included in financial decision-making for these expenditures, ensuring alignment with teaching, research, and programmatic goals.

9   Sabbatical and Professional Development

RID+I values faculty growth, scholarly engagement, and professional enrichment, recognizing that sabbaticals, research funding, and professional development opportunities are essential to maintaining a high standard of teaching, innovation, and industry relevance. Support for faculty development ensures that educators remain at the forefront of design education, emerging technologies, and professional practice.

9.1   Eligibility and Process for Sabbatical Leave

Sabbatical leave provides faculty with dedicated time for research, creative practice, or professional advancement, contributing to scholarly output, instructional innovation, and industry engagement. All sabbatical applications, processes and approvals are subject to Article 26 Sabbatical Leave Policy of the 2021-2026 WMU/WMU-AAUP Agreement.

Department Application Process:

Faculty are expected to submit a formal sabbatical proposal outlining the scope, objectives, timeline, and anticipated outcomes of their proposed work. For Faculty Specialists—particularly those in the Professional Specialist category—it is recommended that proposals emphasize the enhancement of professional competence and contributions to service within the design industry or design education.

Proposals framed around strengthening instructional effectiveness, advancing applied practice, or supporting programmatic and industry engagement may be especially well-suited for review.

The Ad-Hoc Departmental Sabbatical Committee and Director of RID+I will review applications based on merit, feasibility, and alignment with RIDI's mission. Research and creative projects that clearly contribute to course content, curriculum development, and professional discourse within RIDI should be rated more highly than other proposals.

Post-Sabbatical Expectations:

Upon return, faculty should present findings or outcomes to RID+I faculty and students through a lecture, workshop, or written report.

9.2   Support for Research and Creative Work

RID+I encourage faculty-led research, applied design projects, and creative scholarship, offering financial support through internal funding opportunities, grants, and institutional partnerships.

Internal Research Grants:

RID+I and Western Michigan University provide internal funding opportunities to support faculty research, interdisciplinary collaborations, and creative practice.

Proposals should align with institutional priorities, accreditation expectations, and design innovation.

External Grants & Sponsored Research:

Faculty are encouraged to apply for external research grants from foundations, professional organizations, and industry sponsors.

Faculty recommend the Director provide administrative support to facilitate applications whenever possible.

Creative Work & Exhibitions:

Faculty engaged in exhibitions, product design, or architectural installations may receive financial support for materials, travel, and publication costs in consultation with the Director

Collaborative projects that enhance RID+I's industry presence and educational offerings should be prioritized.

Conference & Publication Funding:

Faculty presenting peer-reviewed research, design projects, or industry talks at recognized conferences and symposiums may apply for funding assistance with RID+I and WMU office of research.

RIDI supports faculty efforts to publish in academic journals, professional magazines, and industry white papers.

9.3   Faculty Development Opportunities (Conferences, Grants, Fellowships)

RID+I is committed to faculty growth through national and international professional development opportunities, ensuring that educators remain leaders in design education and industry practice.

Conference Participation:

Faculty are encouraged to attend and present at leading design, architecture, and technology conferences such as:

- Interior Design Educators Council (IDEC)
- Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA)
- Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA)
- National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD)

In consultation with the Director and contingent upon the availability of funds, RID+I should seek to support faculty travel, registration fees, and presentation-related costs. We recognize the primary funding for such activities at WMU comes from the Office of Research and innovation. All funding requests will follow the application and review procedures outlined in Section 8: *Operational and Budgetary Policies* of this document.

Fellowships & Residencies:

Faculty are encouraged to pursue fellowships, artist residencies, and research residencies to deepen expertise in emerging design methodologies and applied technologies. These pursuits should be undertaken with awareness of their responsibilities to RID+I as their primary institutional affiliation and with care to avoid conflicts with the core operations and educational commitments of the department.

RID+I will assist faculty in identifying and applying for competitive fellowship programs.

Industry & Academic Collaborations:

Faculty may apply for sponsored industry collaborations, sabbatical exchanges, and visiting scholar programs with global design firms, research institutions, and universities.

Opportunities for faculty internships, consulting projects, and think-tank participation will be actively pursued.

Institutional Grants & Teaching Innovation Awards:

RID+I will support faculty in applying for university-level teaching innovation grants that enhance course delivery, technology integration, and student engagement strategies.

Faculty may propose new pedagogical models, interdisciplinary initiatives, and experimental design courses for institutional funding.

10   Amendments and Policy Review Process

The Richmond Institute of Design and Innovation (RID+I) Policy Statement is a living document that reflects the evolving needs of faculty, students, and the design profession. To ensure continued relevance, transparency, and alignment with Western Michigan University (WMU) guidelines, this document will be subject to regular review and amendment.

10.1   Process for Proposing Changes

Faculty, administration, and relevant stakeholders may propose amendments to this policy statement through the following process:

Proposal Submission:

Any full-time faculty member, program coordinator, or the RID+I Director may submit a written proposal for amendments, revisions, or additions to the policy statement.

Proposals should include:

- A clear explanation of the proposed change.
- A rationale for the amendment, citing alignment with WMU policies, accreditation requirements, or institutional priorities.
- Any anticipated impact on faculty, students, or program operations.

Faculty Review & Discussion:

The proposal will be reviewed by the Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) and discussed during scheduled faculty meetings.

Faculty will have an opportunity to evaluate the proposed changes, suggest revisions, and assess their implications.

Committee Approval & Vote:

If the proposed amendment affects faculty workload, governance, or program structure, it must be reviewed by the appropriate committee.

After faculty discussion, a formal vote will be held among board-appointed faculty members, requiring a simple majority for approval.

10.2   Policy Review Schedule

To maintain relevance and effectiveness, the entire RID+I Policy Statement will undergo a formal review every three years.

This review will:

- Assess the effectiveness of current policies in meeting faculty, student, and institutional needs.
- Ensure alignment with university policies, accreditation requirements, and industry trends.
- Identify areas for improvement in faculty governance, curriculum development, and resource allocation.

The Faculty Advisory Committee, in collaboration with RID+I administration, will lead the policy review process, ensuring that all faculty have an opportunity to provide input.

10.3 Commitment to Transparency and Adaptability

This document serves as a framework for faculty governance, academic excellence, and institutional growth. RIDI remains committed to collaborative decision-making and continuous improvement, ensuring that its policies reflect the dynamic nature of design education while remaining aligned with WMU guidelines and accreditation standards.

10.4 Record of Departmental Policy Revisions and Approvals

10.4.A 2025-2028 Version

Date	Action	Notes and Comments
3.14.2025	Date of Ratified Vote by Majority Faculty	Dustin Altschul, Kim Buchholz and Michael Kahwaji confirmed vote.
3.15.2025	Provided to Department Director	Transmitted to Phil Repp
3.26.2025	Program Director Feedback Received	Comments received in email with PDF attachment.
3.27.22025-4.01.2025	Revisions made and accepted by RIDI faculty	Approach to responding to and reviewing director feedback was through email and working meeting that led to slight revisions to DPS.
4.02.2025	Provided to Dean of Fine Arts, Director of ACM and WMU-AAUP	Dean Guyette (Dean of the College of Fine Arts) Chris Cheatham (Interim Director of Academic Labor Relations) Brian Horvitz (WMU-AAUP Contract Administrator)
5.08.2025	Comments Received by Matthew Mingus (Director, Academic Labor Relations)	Revisions to be made to DPS to create contractual alignment with AAUP and match recommendation tone

5.16.2025	Revised DPS provided to Matthew Mignus (Director, Academic Labor Relations) by RIDI faculty.	
6.27.2025	Comments provided by Brian Horvitz (AAUP Contract Administrator)	Suggestions provided on AAUP agreement and university policy alignment.
7.21.2025	Faculty provided revised DPS to Matthew Mingus and Brian Horvitz	