

Pratt Institute

Master Academic Plan

2007 – 2012



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Preface

This Master Academic Plan (MAP) is the result of an 18 month process. It has engaged our academic community in attempting to answer the questions: “What characterizes Pratt education?” and “What should Pratt education be by 2012?”

It was made possible with the community’s insight, discourse, debate, and guidance. It was further enriched with input from the divisions of Student Affairs and Information Technology.

Its completion essentially fulfills **Goal 1** of the Pratt Institute Strategic Plan 2006-2011¹:

“Create an Academic Master Plan which includes academic program assessment, appropriate faculty composition, and effective administrative structures.”

The academic community’s contributions to building this plan have been remarkable at all levels.

Strategies, goals and planning in our milieu typically begin and end in our studios, where a direct and personal aesthetic relationship between teacher and student become the basis for life-long guidance and mentoring.

Departmental chairs, along with their faculty, have created their own academic strategic plans. Deans and Directors, based on the departmental plans, have created school-wide plans that are the MAP’s foundation.

The academic planning team held numerous retreats through which Pratt’s educational vision arose. Pratt’s Academic Senate has provided insight into the how this plan will be understood and considered by our community of faculty and students.

We are an artistic environment that values the creative spirit and voice of the individual as an agent for change. So, application of consensus-based planning approaches, defined by management theory, are difficult to achieve. Yet, the institute-wide dialog that was generated by the planning process, although contentious and difficult at times, revealed that there is a shared view of our collective vision.

So it is with great honor that we present the Master Academic Plan to our community and our administration.

Regards, respect, and sunglasses ready for our radiance in the coming century.

Peter Lind Barna
Provost

Marianthi Zikopoulos
Associate Provost

¹ Pratt Five-Year Strategic Plan 2006—2011, p.8

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Background and Context

This section provides the context within which Pratt's Master Academic Plan was created. It describes where the Institute stands currently and discusses internal and external forces that will affect its future.

Institutional

Pratt Institute has evolved from a small local school founded by Charles Pratt in 1887 to train skilled artisans into an international institution that offers a broad range of undergraduate and graduate programs, primarily in art and design, expanding the vision of its founder. One of the largest schools of art, design, and architecture education in the country, it is considered a leader in studio-based education. Many of its programs, including the graduate and undergraduate Industrial Design Interior Design programs and the undergraduate Architecture program, are ranked among the best in the nation. In addition to providing excellent art and design education, Pratt also offers strong programs in library science, liberal arts, and architecture-related fields, as well as versatile continuing education programs.

Pratt education is distinguished by the centrality of studio-based learning in the art and design disciplines, placing emphasis on creating. It provides solid foundational knowledge and a strong core in the disciplines, as well as a strong grounding in the liberal arts and sciences, necessary for a critical understanding of the social contexts in which creations are made. Learning at Pratt is also distinguished by the high caliber of instruction delivered by a faculty of practicing artists, designers, architects, writers, and information professionals, many of whom have received awards for their work and are leaders in their fields. It is further notable for the depth and enrichment made possible through the use of the vast cultural and educational resources of New York City.

Faculty and academic administrators do the most with the existing resources and provide the best education possible to Pratt students. Academic conditions have improved in recent years. They include the hiring of an increasingly larger number of full-time faculty and better faculty compensation as well as enhanced administrative support and student services. However, for Pratt to become an educational leader in most disciplines in the future, more work is required. We need to be able to hire and retain the best faculty; transform curricula to respond to professional challenges; provide adequate academic staff, library, and information technology resources; and offer more support to faculty, students, and academic staff.

External

The world for which Pratt prepares students is changing very fast, providing both challenges and opportunities. Transformations of the professional fields and precipitous advancements in technology, blurring of boundaries among

disciplines and professions and increased interdisciplinarity of research and professional practice, greater reliance on teamwork for solving problems and creating products require new kinds of skills of our graduates. Globalization, rising competition from schools in the United States and abroad, changing demographics of incoming students, and public demand for accountability are challenges that need to be overcome.

At the same time, this changing landscape presents many opportunities that Pratt can take advantage of to strengthen its leadership. The Institute can become the leader in sustainable art and design education. It can explore possibilities of creating innovative new degree and non-degree programs. It can take fuller advantage of the vast resources of NYC and of opportunities for stronger external sponsorship of research and projects. It can enhance its global stature through development of strategic partnerships with key international institutions.

The Master Academic Plan is grounded in an examination of Pratt's history and internal conditions, as well as of the broader external context described above. This analysis formed the basis for the Plan, ensuring that it is aligned with the Institute's mission and vision presented below.

Pratt Institute Mission Statement²

The mission of Pratt Institute is to educate artists and creative professionals to be responsible contributors to society. Pratt seeks to instill in all graduates aesthetic judgment, professional knowledge, collaborative skills and technical expertise. With a firm grounding in the liberal arts and sciences, a Pratt education blends theory with creative application in preparing graduates to become leaders in their professions. Pratt enrolls a diverse group of highly talented and dedicated students, challenging them to achieve their full potential.

Pratt Institute Vision of 2006–2011²

One of the finest schools of art, design and architecture in the world, Pratt aspires to be and to be seen as among the best institutions of visual, critical and literary learning. This environment supports diverse perspectives, open debate, and transparent decision making. We value creativity for its own sake and as an agent of larger change. We recognize the transformative force of artistic creativity, individually and globally, as we seek new and effective ways to foster social, ethical and environmental responsibility in those who create the objects of this world. In making critical thinking and creative practice two inseparable halves of the same whole, we commit ourselves to a poetic pragmatism.

By 2011, Pratt Institute will be an educational, intellectual, and artistic community of increasingly outstanding reputation. It will support accomplishments and build collaborative relationships

among students, faculty, administrators, staff and alumni. Its learning environment will be sustained by published policies, transparent procedures and clear communication. Pratt's programs will identify and institute new concepts and technologies, fostering creative and critical thinking for leadership in professions and society. Programs and services will be supported by facilities designed to support their missions with staff, funding, and resources necessary to achieve their goals.

² Pratt Five-Year Strategic Plan 2006—2011, p.1

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Pratt's Academic Vision for 2012

Our Academic Vision expresses our view of what a Pratt education will be in the year 2012. It is a projected vision of our future.

Pratt Education in the 21st Century:

Poetic Pragmatism

Pratt's distinctive education, with its emphasis on studio-based learning and focus on poetic pragmatism, prepares artists, designers, architects, and other creative professionals and scholars to become leaders in their fields, challenging boundaries and defining new directions in their disciplines.

Pratt's education provides the highest level of professional training and a critical understanding of the historical, societal, and cultural contexts within which works are being created. It is cutting-edge, reflecting the latest developments in the disciplines with increased emphasis on **research**, variably defined within and between disciplines, integration of **sustainable** principles and practices, and use of the latest technologies and methodologies, drawing on the educational and cultural resources of **New York City** to enrich student learning. Uniting creative practice with critical thinking across the curriculum as mutually reinforcing and inseparable, it provides flexibility and enables **integration** of knowledge and practice from multiple disciplines to solve problems. Valuing **diversity**, it seeks to increase multi-cultural and **international** educational experiences.

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Strategic Directions

Pratt's major academic directions for the next five years are presented in this section. Academic efforts and initiatives will focus on accomplishing the goals presented below.

Goal I *Strengthen the curriculum and pedagogy*

For Pratt graduates to become leaders in their professions, program curricula and teaching must be of high quality and provide excellent professional and personal preparation for the rapidly changing world of the 21st century. Curriculum enhancements in the future will focus on greater flexibility and cross-discipline collaborations, increased emphasis on research broadly defined in student and faculty work, and integration of sustainability principles, and infusion with the latest technologies.

Goal II *Strengthen the recruitment and retention of highly qualified, diverse faculty*

The highly talented and dedicated faculty members are in large part responsible for the outstanding education Pratt students receive. Recruiting and retaining excellent faculty is crucial in maintaining the quality of our educational programs. Emphasis will be placed on hiring more full-time faculty and faculty with diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, improved compensation, and provision of more training and support.

Goal III *Improve student learning*

In developing their academic plans, departments and schools began a process of reflecting on and articulating their definition of quality education for their students. In the next few years, academic units will complete this process and will clearly define the characteristics of students they want to attract, as well as what they expect those who graduate from their programs to know and be able to do. An evaluation program sensitive to the culture of Pratt will be implemented to help identify areas of improvement.

Goal IV *Increase intercultural and international understanding and experiences*

In this increasingly interdependent world, cross-cultural knowledge and understanding are essential. It is the responsibility of educational institutions to prepare students for work and responsible living in a rapidly changing international community. Pratt aims to substantially expand opportunities for students and faculty to study and work abroad and to create more strategic partnerships with internationally recognized institutions here and abroad. It also seeks to increase cultural diversity and multicultural experiences on its campuses.

Goal V *Enhance academic support for students and faculty*

High quality education is primarily the result of the efforts of the very talented and hard-working faculty and students. Support for faculty and students will be strengthened in the future to maintain the excellence in teaching and learning and to enhance the level of scholarship and creative productivity. Goals include the creation of a Teaching and Learning Center, enhanced library and IT resources, and strengthening of development efforts.

Goal VI *Strengthen engagement with New York City, the professions, and the local community*

Access to and utilization of the vast educational, cultural, and professional resources of New York City enriches the education of Pratt students. In the coming years, Pratt will deepen its engagement with the international metropolis in which it is located to enhance faculty recruitment, student internship opportunities, and employment prospects for graduates.

Strategic Goals

This section presents Pratt's academic strategic goals and the major strategies that will be pursued to achieve them.

Goal I

Strengthen the curriculum and pedagogy

Objective 1: Strengthen the role of research and pedagogy at Pratt, both within the academic programs and at institute-wide units

- Revise curricula and pedagogy appropriately to provide greater opportunities for student research on issues relevant to contemporary professional practice.
- Increase externally-funded faculty research by 30 % by 2012.
- Increase external support for research at various centers to cover 20% of expenses by 2012.
- Increase the number of Pratt-supported creative and academic works by 20 % by 2012.
- Identify and make public faculty accomplishments.

Objective 2: Achieve greater integration and flexibility in the students' educational experience

- Increase interdisciplinary initiatives and collaborations among departments and schools by five annually.
- Create at least five within-department and cross-department or cross-school minors by 2012.
- Develop at least one new innovative degree program that is multidisciplinary in nature and deals with major contemporary issues.

Objective 3: Integrate cutting-edge digital and technological innovations into the curriculum more effectively

- Develop and implement an institute-wide process for updating academic computers and other information technologies.
- Update computers and software used by the academic programs on a three-year cycle in collaboration with the office of Information Technology.
- Increase the number of digital and smart classrooms by 50 % by 2012.

Objective 4: Integrate sustainable principles and practices in Pratt's curriculum and operations

- Make changes to curriculum, practices, and facilities based on environmentally responsible principles and procedures.
- Create at least three sustainability-focused minors or certificate programs by 2012.
- Establish academic vehicles for new curriculum development and interdisciplinary research and teaching on sustainability.
- Employ the college campus as a living lab for innovation, providing students with experiences in sustainable practice.

Goal II

Strengthen the recruitment and retention of highly qualified, diverse faculty

- Increase the number of full-time faculty where needed. To improve full-time faculty/student ratios, a target of 30% of the credits will be provided by full-time faculty by 2012.
- Improve compensation and benefits for full-time and part-time faculty.
- Support existing and create new training and development programs for part-time and full-time faculty.
- Increase ethnic and gender diversity of faculty.

Goal III

Improve student learning

- Develop profiles of desired attributes of incoming students for each program which will be used by the Offices of the Provost and Enrollment Management to guide admissions policy.
- Articulate by 2009 what knowledge and competencies graduates in each academic program are expected to have and how leadership is defined in each program's field.
- Conduct comprehensive analysis of student learning in each academic program and make data-based changes for improvement by 2012.
- Increase the number of students who participate in internship and other service learning programs.

Goal IV

Increase intercultural and international understanding and experiences

- Create International Education Center in charge of international and multicultural education.
- Increase the number of partnerships with prominent institutions here and abroad.
- Increase by 50% the number of students who study abroad by 2012.
- Increase international faculty exchanges.
- Foster cultural diversity among students, faculty, staff, and in academic and co-curricular programs.
- Increase involvement of minority and international students in the Pratt community.
- Increase opportunities for studying foreign languages.

Goal V

Enhance academic support for students and faculty

- Create Teaching and Learning center to provide academic support to faculty and students by 2011.
- Increase operational support for academic departments, schools, and other academic units.
- Provide students and faculty with appropriate library and information technology resources, services, and facilities.
- Increase the amount of endowment funds available for scholarships and faculty support by 10 % annually.
- Increase support, in collaboration with the office of Development, for school- and academic-program-focused fundraising efforts, including assistance with obtaining major national fellowships and other prestigious awards.

Goal VI

Strengthen engagement with New York City, the professions, and the local community

- Increase collaborations with other NYC institutions and organizations, including the development of cooperative agreements, to enhance faculty recruitment, student internship opportunities, and employment prospects for graduates.
- Review and adjust CCPS programs to best serve the changing needs of non-traditional students and amplify the offerings of the academic programs.
- Maintain and strengthen engagement with local community including outreach programs for K-12 youth.