

# Future Ready

## Strategic Plan 2023-2027



**RIT**

Croatia



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# About Us

Welcome to RIT Croatia, a global campus of the prominent American university, Rochester Institute of Technology from Rochester, NY. As pioneers of private higher education in Croatia, we have been delivering RIT's programs in this part of Europe since 1997. We are a diverse and engaged community of students, alumni, faculty and staff that is built on collaboration, partnership, friendship, and respect.

We have grown into a strong brand for quality higher education in Croatia, and abroad. RIT's programs, delivered on our campuses in Dubrovnik and Zagreb, have been completed by more than 2,800 graduates who are now building careers and setting trends in various industries in more than 40 countries around the world. We create an environment that helps our students become the best versions of themselves and take on the challenges of a modern workplace through:

- // Top quality career-oriented US education that regularly meets rigorous European and American quality standards
- // Education that rests on a multidisciplinary approach
- // Experiential learning: applying and testing everything you learn in class – in practice
- // Unique studying opportunities offered by a truly global university
- // Individualized approach to each student, and
- // Qualified, caring faculty and administration

Our commitment to building a better tomorrow is to be the best at what we do best - guiding and preparing future global leaders.



# Building for the Successful Future

In 2022, RIT Croatia celebrated 25 years of operating in Croatia. We have come a long way since our modest beginning of offering one degree program to now delivering six. Also, our student population has grown to over 800, and our faculty and staff to 93. As well, the successful attainment of research institute status will allow future growth in research and projects, key components for our pursuit of Croatian university status. Our core values of excellence, global mindedness, inclusiveness, integrity, open-mindedness, team spirit, and trust remain at the heart of RIT Croatia. We know with these values and our commitment to the 13 goals identified in Future Ready 2023-2027, RIT Croatia will thrive and build upon the foundation that has been established. In 2027 we will celebrate our 30th year. I am confident by then, due to our wonderful faculty and staff, our incredible students and alumni, and all of our other stakeholders, we will be in the final stages of attaining our 13 goals. At that time, we will be well positioned for further growth and the next chapter of the RIT Croatia success story. I invite you all to join us on this exciting journey!

**Don Hudspeth, MS**  
President and Dean

# Vision and Mission

Through future-ready education and research excellence, we add **value to society**. We inspire a growth mindset, preparing individuals to become **leaders, lifelong learners and responsible global citizens.**



# Preparing Future-Ready Leaders:

# Our Four Pillars to Success

In order to successfully prepare students for the future, our strategic plan rests on four key pillars: the right people, top-quality programs, enhanced research, and top-quality standards. The holistic approach to the college experience we nurture relies on contemporary study programs delivered in a highly stimulating environment and complemented with intriguing research. Excellence is simply an expectation from every RIT Tiger! Our faculty and staff are very diverse in their areas of expertise, personalities, professional backgrounds, and hobbies, and, at the same time, united in their values and passion for students and their success. In their very personal, and individualized, approach to students, our professors not only build relationships with students that enable them to learn with joy and master the skills necessary to start their professional careers, but also equip them with many life lessons. Our students are creative, curious and capable young people, and we expect great results from them in college and later in their careers and life. Based on numerous alumni success stories, they do make us proud. Together we will continue to meet the highest quality standards, refine our education system and produce future-ready leaders, lifelong learners and happy global citizens.

**dr. sc. Irena Guszak**  
Associate Dean



# Plan Areas

Programs

Standards



People

Research





# People

## GOALS

1. Increase internationalization of student body
2. Improve student retention rate
3. Increase student satisfaction
4. Attract & retain strong faculty & staff
5. Increase international faculty & industry adjuncts
6. Increase alumni engagement

” People are what makes the RIT Croatia community so warm, welcoming, and stimulating. Passion, dedication, and thirst for knowledge foster an environment of cooperation and ingenuity that is authentic and inspiring. We take pride in our achievements, and yet we recognize that there is always more to learn and accomplish. That is why we are constantly striving to improve, enhance, and continue growing. It is our engagement, common values, and shared growth mindset that binds us together in our recognizable and robust organizational culture. We are strong-minded, and it showcases our diversity. We are caring, and it shows in our inclusiveness. We are dedicated, and it shines when we support each other. We are stronger together. Through this collaborative approach, we not only learn from each other but also build strong connections that last beyond graduation. Being part of such a dynamic and diverse community of students, alumni, faculty, and staff ignites our immense pride and motivation.

**dr. sc. Maja Vidović**  
Senior Lecturer

” RIT Croatia takes pride in our incredible faculty and staff. We strongly believe that our employees are our greatest asset and the key to our success, synergy and growth. Our strong faculty and staff strive for excellence in everything they do. They teach, mentor, guide and inspire students and prepare them to become leaders, lifelong learners and responsible global citizens. Each member of our team brings a strong, diverse experience as well as passion and commitment to students and their academic, professional and personal success. The faculty members are highly credentialed professionals who are committed to excellence in teaching and research. They are enthusiastic, engaged, collegial and approachable people, looking to provide the best possible experience to our students and the entire community. The staff members are professionals in the field, but also passionate, committed, knowledgeable, energetic and engaging individuals united in their efforts to provide exceptional service to our students, colleagues and college constituents. By living our values, we help students to become the best versions of themselves and prepare them to tackle the challenges of a rapidly changing global society.

**Jelena Zvono, MS**  
Human Resources Manager and Ministry Liaison

” At RIT Croatia, our people matter, and together we are better. We are a close-knit community of students, alumni, faculty, and staff. We believe in the importance of everyone feeling welcome and having their voice, as we appreciate that diversity in thought is what helps us excel and evolve. RIT Croatia strives to ensure our students are engaged and supported throughout their educational process. We are committed to designing processes and creating a learning environment that reflects the uniqueness of each student and their needs. We provide them with a safe space to grow and achieve their educational and career goals.

**Marija Šušak Mišetić, MS**  
Academic Affairs and Student Services Manager





# Programs

## GOALS

1. Attain university status
2. Launch new undergraduate & graduate degree programs
3. Establish a lifelong learning program
4. Increase experiential learning opportunities

” At RIT Croatia, we take great pride in delivering high-quality programs and continuously enhancing them to remain at the forefront of the ever-changing education landscape in the region and beyond. To expand our reach both locally and internationally, an important part of our strategic plan is to add degree programs and lifelong learning programs to our portfolio, providing students with fresh and exciting opportunities. These new programs will appeal to a diverse range of students with varying interests and career aspirations, while also supplementing the existing degree programs with even more options. Introducing new programs, both accredited and non-accredited, is crucial to our growth and success, and we are committed to innovating and expanding our offerings to meet our students' and industry's evolving needs.

We are excited to embark on this new chapter of expansion and look forward to welcoming a wider range of traditional and non-traditional learners to the RIT Croatia community and providing them with the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to succeed in their careers.

**Ivana Silić, MS**

Recruitment and Enrollment Manager

” We deliver programs that provide students with experiential learning opportunities to complement their academic studies. New programs will include an increase in international experiences: internships, co-ops, study abroad opportunities, and community projects. Our students apply their classroom learning to real-world situations, gain valuable skills, and build professional networks. With new programs, they will be able to explore different career paths and industries and develop a deeper understanding of their chosen field of study. Our programs are designed to help students become well-rounded, career-ready graduates who are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and experience needed to succeed in today's fast-paced and competitive job market.

**Petra Vodopija Borković**

Career Services, Alumni Relations and International Student Office Manager

” Our strategic plan sets goals that reflect the institution's commitment to excellence. In the study programs' area, set goals will augment educational values and synergize with the other strategic areas. University status will enhance RIT Croatia's reputation and attract more students and faculty. New degree programs will expand the institution's academic offerings. Establishing a lifelong learning program will introduce RIT Croatia to learners at all stages of their lives. Finally, increasing experiential learning opportunities prepares students for real-world contexts and successful careers.

**dr. sc. Ante Poljičak**

Associate Professor  
Area Head for the New Media Design Program





# Research

## GOALS

1. Increase research output
2. Enhance research quality

” In hiring and retaining high-quality faculty researchers, a constant increase in research output is ensured at RIT Croatia. Faculty annual evaluation criteria reflect the importance of research output and research quality, and internal funding opportunities foster the pursuit of research interests of faculty in their respective areas. Emphasizing research quality, research successes are consistently communicated and rewarded, through annual appraisals, and Excellence in Research Award. Research orientation is further apparent in honors program development, promoting research competencies among students, in research-learning collaboration with faculty experts.

**dr. sc. Vanda Bazdan**  
Lecturer

” Research is at the core of academia, and it is at the core of RIT Croatia. Our faculty carry out scientific research in four quite different areas: social sciences, technical sciences, natural sciences, and humanities. Based on its scientific output in these areas, RIT Croatia gained the status of a research institution in 2021. The wealth of individuals with particular research interests and ideas has resulted not only in numerous conference presentations and publications but has directly flowed into the classrooms and enriched teaching and student experience. In relation to the latter, one particular avenue of research that the faculty enjoy pursuing is joint research with students, which often culminates in students presenting at a conference or publishing a paper with their instructor. Continuous scientific efforts are crucial as they help our faculty stay up to date with emerging concepts, challenges, and technologies, which in turn ensures that students are receiving education with strong foundations in the real world.

**dr. sc. Jakob Patekar**  
Assistant Professor  
General Education & Research Chair

” Starting with a research project is like starting with things that you think will be a giant leap for mankind, creating new things and creating new outcomes. In addition, when talking about new technologies, one needs to predict which new technologies will be state-of-the-art in the timespan of 5-10 years, as an example of the research activities. That's why we at RIT Croatia focus on publishing at high-impact conferences and journals that prove your evidence-based reasoning and provide you with the option to discuss with top researchers the next big things that will impact us and help to make the world a better place.

**dr. sc. Martin Žagar**  
Associate Professor





# Standards

## GOAL

### 1. Attain advanced phase of quality assurance system

” Standards and quality are critical elements of any reputable higher education institution. We are committed to excellence in teaching, research, and service which requires maintaining high standards in all aspects of our institution. This includes the selection and evaluation of faculty, the development of curriculum, the assessment of student learning, and the provision of resources to support these efforts. Standards and quality assurance processes, such as accreditation and peer review processes, help us stay accountable and continuously improve. By prioritizing standards and quality, we continue to attract top talent, inspire innovation, and make a positive impact in the world.

**Ivona Labaš, MS**  
Director of Strategic Development, ITS & Facilities

” We at RIT Croatia understand that it is easier to reach the top than to permanently occupy that position. Institutions of higher education that are perceived as being of top quality are the ones with a comprehensive and robust quality assurance system. It is this system that enables them to maintain a high focus on meeting the needs of tomorrow by educating the students today. By drawing on the expertise of our researchers, and building on the feedback of our external stakeholders, we adapt our programs, grow our people, and update our facilities, so that they may respond to the challenges of the future today. A quality assurance system enables the monitoring and provides feedback so that the agile organization can respond on time, and maintain that top position, for which RIT Croatia is well known in the higher education community today, and will continue to be so in the future as well.

**dr. sc. Milivoj Marković**  
Senior Lecturer  
Degree Programs Chair

” Sustaining high academic standards is RIT Croatia's top priority. We understand that quality education provides the foundation for personal growth, professional success, and social mobility. It also fosters a sense of curiosity and a desire for lifelong learning. This approach enables our students to reach their full intellectual potential and helps them develop critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and creativity. RIT Croatia continuously and diligently monitors and improves all academic and administrative processes. For us, measurement and evaluation of teaching quality are immensely important. Attempts to advance the quality of teaching that students receive are dependent on accurate measurement of that quality.

**dr. sc. Besim Agušaj**  
Professional Studies Professor



# Our community



” RIT has always taken pride in RIT Croatia’s pioneering role in the development of private higher education in Croatia. During the past 25 years, RIT Croatia has delivered many wonderful outcomes and it is fully reflected in the success of our alumni. The RIT Croatia Board is very pleased with the direction of this new strategic plan which reflects the institute’s continued commitment to providing excellent educational experiences. I commend the efforts of the entire RIT Croatia community for ensuring that RIT’s first global campus remains the standard for top-quality education in Croatia and the region.

**Dr. James H. Watters**  
Board Chair, RIT Croatia Board of Trustees

” RIT Croatia stands out from the rest of the universities because of its opportunities not just in the field of career development, but also in personal growth. Here we are offered well-rounded education that extends beyond the classroom. The chance for networking with fellow students, professors, and alumni can provide valuable connections and resources that can benefit us, students, long after graduation.

**Marta Primorac**  
President of the Student Government

” I am thrilled to emphasize the crucial role RIT Croatia alumni play in the hospitality and tech/start-up worlds, as well as in other industries in Croatia and beyond. Our alumni are equipped with a unique blend of skills, knowledge, and resourcefulness that make them stand out. The RIT Croatia alumni community is making significant contributions to these industries, and we are proud to see them making a difference in the world.

**Zoran Pejović**  
Class of 2004  
Alumni Association President



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