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SAIC PRESIDENT DELIVERS KEYNOTE AT CIC GLOBAL UNIVERSITY SUMMIT

Gives Prominent Examples from SAIC History and Community to Address Theme “Developing Talent to Drive Innovation in a Global Society”

Chicago, IL—Dr. Walter E. Massey, President of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), delivered the closing keynote address Monday, May 1 at the CIC Global University Summit held at the University Club of Chicago’s Cathedral Hall, located adjacent to the SAIC campus in the heart of downtown Chicago. Massey, a prominent physicist who has served as Director of the Argonne National Laboratory and the National Science Foundation alongside his lengthy career in higher education, called his address "The Art of Innovation."

Dr. Massey was invited to speak about how schools of art and design contribute to the theme of the 2012 conference, “Developing Talent to Drive Innovation in a Global Society.” He touched on issues including sustainability, global collaboration and partnerships, interdisciplinary perspectives, and an overriding emphasis on innovation and creativity at SAIC, which enrolls 3,200 students from every U.S. state as well as 53 countries.

Presidents of leading research universities from the U.S. and around the world attended the 5th Global University Summit in Chicago from April 29 to May 1, hosted by The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the Committee on Institutional Cooperation. The Summit’s aim is to engage university leadership at the highest levels with the major global social challenges facing higher education in the 21st century.

“We do need, indeed we must have, scientists, engineers, and mathematicians, but we are now recognizing that we may have been missing an opportunity by not more effectively engaging in the innovative process of one of the most creative groups in our society—artists and designers,” said Massey in the address.

“Our students, if they choose, have the freedom to design their own pathways. They move freely among disciplines to integrate content and technique. They cut across boundaries. They create hybrid practices, and they explore all aspects of their creativity in order to address complex issues. This kind of education is exactly what is needed to develop the talent in individuals to contribute and to drive innovation in society.”
In his address, Massey provided examples of innovation and leadership from prominent SAIC alumni. Emily Pilloton (MFA 2005), a designer, builder, and high school educator, founded the nonprofit design firm Project H to use creative capital to improve communities and public education from the inside out, and then set up Studio H, a one-year program that teaches design thinking and vocational construction skills within the public school system. In 2011 she was one of just twelve American innovators selected by the USA Network to receive the 3rd annual Character Approved Award for “Changing the Face of American Culture.”

Bo Rodda (MFA 2010, Design for Emerging Technologies) works at the Argonne National Laboratory, conducting research on a sustainability initiative for the US Department of Energy, where he is currently Building Intelligence and Energy Efficiency Specialist. Rodda is also on the faculty at SAIC, and just finished leading a class that designed a traveling exhibition for the University of Chicago’s Kavli Institute for Cosmological Physics. This summer he will co-teach an SAIC course with his own former teachers, sculptor Jaume Plensa and John Manning, about public art installations that mix traditional and technological elements.

Dr. Massey has been leading SAIC through a period marked by a number of influential achievements since he became President in September of 2010. U.S. News and World Report announced March 13 that SAIC’s Master of Fine Arts program rose to the nation’s second rank among 220 peer institutions. The Board of Trustees of the Art Institute of Chicago voted unanimously on April 11 to extend through the end of the 2015–16 academic year his appointment as SAIC President. His complete bio is available with other materials in the SAIC online Press Room.

About the School of the Art Institute of Chicago
A leader in educating artists, designers, and scholars since 1866, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) offers nationally accredited undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate programs to nearly 3,200 students from around the globe. Located in the heart of Chicago, SAIC has an educational philosophy built upon an interdisciplinary approach to art and design, giving students unparalleled opportunities to develop their creative and critical abilities, while working with renowned faculty who include many of the leading practitioners in their fields. SAIC’s resources include the Art Institute of Chicago and its new Modern Wing; numerous special collections and programming venues provide students with exceptional exhibitions, screenings, lectures, and performances. For more information, please visit saic.edu.