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@saic_news

Press Contact:
John Eding
312.499.4211
jeding@saic.edu

SAIC President Delivers Kalamazoo College Commencement Address

Optimistic, heartfelt remarks address links between hard work and personal development

Chicago, IL—Dr. Walter E. Massey, President of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), delivered the Kalamazoo College commencement address on Sunday, June 16 upon receiving an honorary Doctor of Science degree. A prominent advocate of diversity in higher education and accomplished physicist who has served as Director of the Argonne National Laboratory and the National Science Foundation alongside his lengthy career in higher education, Massey called his address “Get to Work!”

Dr. Massey’s speech focused on the virtues of hard work throughout history as well as in today’s recovering economy. Dr. Massey offered an unlikely definition of “work,” stating, “…by work, I mean the commitment you make to any endeavor—in whatever form it takes—that requires you to apply the best of who you are to the pursuit of something you value.”

“Whatever job or jobs you do or do not have, you will always have work to do. Like me, and most people you know, you will work in your career. You will work in your community. You will work in pursuit of your passions and hobbies and personal goals…but the reason I want you to love all of this work is that working…ultimately, is about working on yourself. It is about working to become who you are meant to be,” said Massey in the address. “There is absolutely no limit to who you can be and what you can do,” he concluded.

Held on the quadrangle of the Kalamazoo campus, the ceremony was led by Kalamazoo College President Eileen B. Wilson-Oyelaran, who presented Massey with the honorary degree.

Dr. Massey has notably been the recipient of more than 30 honorary degrees from institutions that include Yale University, Northwestern University, Amherst College, and Ohio State University. He 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 in 2012 that SAIC’s Master of Fine Arts program rose to second in the nation among 220 peer institutions. His complete bio is available with other materials in the SAIC online Press Room.
About Kalamazoo College
Kalamazoo College (www.kzoo.edu), founded in Kalamazoo, Mich., in 1833, is a nationally recognized liberal arts college and the creator of the K-Plan that emphasizes rigorous scholarship, experiential learning, leadership development, and international and intercultural engagement. Kalamazoo College does more in four years so students can do more in a lifetime.

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.

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