National Association Names SAIC Lead Institution for Civic Engagement

Chicago, IL—The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) has been selected to participate in a national initiative on civic learning and democratic engagement. SAIC has been named one of 70 colleges and universities in the nation as a Lead Institution by NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, the leading voice for the student affairs profession.

As a participating institution in NASPA’s initiative, SAIC will continue to encourage students’ civic development through thoughtful community partnerships, engaging leadership opportunities, and democratic participation.

“SAIC is pleased to be selected to participate in NASPA’s network of institutions dedicated to developing students’ sense of civic identity, as civic engagement is a core value of higher education,” said Felice Dublon, SAIC Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs. “Being recognized as a national leader in this field is a reflection of the quality of our current efforts and also our ongoing commitment to inspiring students to challenge themselves through leadership.”

SAIC—its faculty, students, staff, and alumni—have a long-standing history of contributing to local and national models of civic engagement. SAIC students and faculty have worked together in and outside the classroom to develop new solutions to environmental, social, and infrastructural issues using Chicago as a laboratory for innovative engagements; SAIC alumni extend these insights and models into the world and contribute to ongoing imperatives and challenges ranging from bringing art to the developmentally disabled to urban revitalization projects.

Most recently, SAIC faculty member Frances Whitehead was selected as the Lead Artist for the design of The 606, an unused, elevated rail line that is being transformed into a 2.7-mile-long, multiuse recreational trail and park system. She is collaborating with landscape architects, engineers, designers, scientists, city officials, neighborhood
groups, and local and national agencies to reimagine the transformation of infrastructure into a new public greenway. With her work on The 606, Whitehead is bringing together art, design, science, and participation for the public good—inspiring, engaging, and educating citizens with work and ideas that are equal parts civic experiment, environmental awareness, and public art.

The examples of SAIC’s involvement in civic engagement are abundant; this is just one of the many ways that students, faculty, and alumni are living the core value: We Make History.

To learn more about NASPA’s Lead Initiative and view a complete listing of participating institutions, please visit the NASPA website: naspa.org/clde/lead_initiative.cfm

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 and graduate degrees and post-baccalaureate programs to nearly 3,200 students from around the globe. SAIC also enables adults, high school students, middle school students, and children to flourish in a variety of courses, workshops, certificate programs, and camps through its Continuing Studies program. 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.