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THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO RECEIVES \$1 MILLION GIFT TO SUPPORT DISABILITY SERVICES

- The anonymous gift will support and enhance services for students with disabilities -

CHICAGO—The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), a global leader in art and design education, has received a gift of \$1 million from an anonymous donor to establish the DLRC Endowed Fund, providing enhanced support to students through the college’s Disability and Learning Resources Center (DLRC).

Since the Americans with Disabilities Act was established 30 years ago, the demand for disability support services has grown exponentially. The anonymous gift, part of a School priority to remove barriers for students seeking an art and design education, will provide funding for programs and activities to help ensure all students have the opportunity to thrive at SAIC.

The demand for support for students with disabilities is a promising indicator that more individuals with disabilities see higher education as an attainable goal. However, with the increasing number and complexity of student disabilities served by the DLRC—including physical/mobility disabilities, learning disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, and sensory impairments—funding for innovative programming and services became an area of urgent need.

SAIC is committed to engaging meaningfully on issues faced by students with disabilities in order to ensure a sense of belonging for every student. Over the years, this objective has been met through enhancing peer support for students with disabilities and increasing faculty and staff awareness of and engagement with student disability issues. This work has culminated in several initiatives that aim to enhance a sense of belonging for all students on campus, including disability awareness and justice training; exhibitions intended to explore and critically consider disability experience; the establishment of the Alliance of Students with Disabilities, a peer support network; and strategic external partnerships.

“The universally accessible education we strive for at SAIC seeks to help all students, including those living with disabilities, thrive,” said President Elissa Tenny. “This generous gift extends the Disability and Learning Resource Center’s support of our diverse community of emerging artists, designers, and scholars.”

SAIC’s Disability and Learning Resource Center

SAIC’s Disability and Learning Resource Center (DLRC) cultivates opportunities for students to articulate their strengths, empowering them to advocate for their own learning needs and identifying and responding to the dynamic nature of student demands and educational environments. The DLRC Endowed Fund will support significant programming and partnerships,

including: jobs and paid internship opportunities on- and off-campus; student-driven initiatives that enhance peer support for students with disabilities; student art exhibitions on themes relevant to disability experience; presentations by visiting artists who work in the realm of arts and disability; and strategic collaborations with campus partners and external organizations. Previous strategic partners include the American Medical Association Journal of Ethics, Hyde Park Art Center, the City of Chicago Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, and disability arts organization Shape Arts in London.

School of the Art Institute of Chicago

For more than 150 years, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) has been a leader in educating the world's most influential artists, designers, and scholars. Located in downtown Chicago with a fine arts graduate program ranked number two in the nation by *U.S. News and World Report*, SAIC provides an interdisciplinary approach to art and design as well as world-class resources, including the Art Institute of Chicago museum, on-campus galleries, and state-of-the-art facilities. SAIC's undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate students have the freedom to take risks and create the bold ideas that transform Chicago and the world—as seen through notable alumni and faculty such as Michelle Grabner, David Sedaris, Elizabeth Murray, Richard Hunt, Georgia O'Keeffe, Cynthia Rowley, Nick Cave, Jeff Koons, and LeRoy Neiman.