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The Washington Center Honors the School of the Art Institute of Chicago with the 2017 Higher Education Civic Engagement Award

CHICAGO—The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), a global leader in art and design education, was honored with the 2017 Higher Education Civic Engagement Award from The Washington Center. The school was selected for its leadership and innovation in civic engagement and was presented with the award during The Washington Center’s annual awards luncheon in Washington, D.C., at the National Press Club on October 2.

The Washington Center recognized SAIC’s efforts to bring its art and design education to the communities of Chicago and beyond. These initiatives include:

- **Opening its first satellite classroom outside of its downtown Chicago campus:** In November 2015, SAIC joined with other local nonprofit organizations in the historically underserved West Side neighborhood of North Lawndale to create a community resource in the historic Nichols Tower at Homan Square. SAIC provides free art and design workshops and classes to the community, engagement-based courses for SAIC students and an Artist-in-Residence program for socially engaged artists.
- **Launching its College Arts Access Program (CAAP):** CAAP is a three-year college bridge program developed to provide access to art and design education to Chicago Public Schools high school students. The program prepares students with the skills and preparation needed for admission to and success in college and provides support to students and their families regarding academics, financial planning and mentorship to create a holistic program dedicated to the success of each student. Scholarships are provided to cover all program tuition, fees, art supplies, transportation and meal costs.
- **An annual summer course for veterans of the US military:** Veterans from across the country travel to SAIC for a three-week art intensive offered in collaboration with CreatiVets, an organization founded to help veterans use the arts to address and heal from combat-related trauma.
- **The Girl/Friends Summer Institute:** Hosted each summer by SAIC and led by Chicago-based organization, A Long Walk Home, the course is an art-based sexual assault prevention summer program for adolescent girls who have been impacted by violence. Students work with mentors and receive comprehensive training in sexual assault counseling, reproductive justice and medical and legal advocacy. SAIC provides dual high school and college credit to all participants to help make the transition to college more feasible.

“The work we do with our community partners is central to how we teach citizen artists, and we are honored to have been selected for this award,” said Elissa Tenny, President of SAIC. “Being a citizen artist means that we strive to instill an awareness of our interconnectedness as people and our shared responsibility to do good in each emerging artist, designer, and scholar we educate.”

Civic Engagement at SAIC

In 2016, SAIC created the Office of Engagement to lead all civic engagement initiatives and serve as the first stop for any parties interested in creating new civic projects. The Vice Provost and Dean of Community Engagement leads the office, which houses the Continuing Studies program and the Shapiro Center for Research and Collaboration. Continuing

Studies offers a wide variety of courses and educational opportunities for children, teens and adults across the city (including CAAP), and the Shapiro Center's mission is to connect the SAIC community to civic, academic and industry organizations. Students and faculty may participate in engagement efforts individually through groups such as Student Government and the Diversity Advisory Group, enrolling in or teaching community-based courses, or by proposing their own ideas.

The 2017 Higher Education Civic Engagement Award

The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars established this award to celebrate institutions in higher education where the commitment to leadership extends into civic roles in the communities beyond their own campuses. The award aims to highlight institutions that are forging transformational partnerships beyond campus to define and address issues of public concern, whether at the local, regional or international level.

About the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

For 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 consistently ranking among the top three graduate fine arts programs 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. For more information, please visit saic.edu.

About The Washington Center

The Washington Center for Internships and Academic seminars is an independent, nonprofit organization that serves hundreds of colleges and universities in the United States and other countries by providing selected students challenging opportunities to work and learn in Washington, D.C. for academic credit. The largest program of its kind, The Washington Center has over 50,000 alumni who have become leaders in numerous professions and nations around the world. It was established in 1975. www.twc.edu

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