

Willamette University celebrates completion of merger with Pacific Northwest College of Art

PNCA becomes an independent college within the university

June 30, 2021-- Willamette University and the Pacific Northwest College of Art today finalized their merger, officially making the Northwest's oldest school of art and design an integral part of the region's leading liberal arts university.

"After many months of hard work and planning, I am thrilled that we can celebrate the formal completion of this merger and welcome the Pacific Northwest College of Art into Willamette University," said Willamette President Stephen Thorsett. "I am so grateful to our two communities, whose hard work and dedication made this a reality, and I am especially excited for our students, who will see immediate benefits as we further advance our plans for collaborative opportunities and cross-disciplinary programs that will be the trademark of this union as it deepens the connection between art, design and the liberal arts and sciences."

Willamette and PNCA - united in their dedication to providing a high-quality education - will reimagine arts and design instruction for students. PNCA students will have access to the breadth of curricular offerings at Willamette, including business and science courses, and benefit from its proximity to policymaking and government in Salem. Willamette students will benefit from the broader fine and visual arts and design offerings provided by PNCA, as well as the culture and creativity of its community in Portland. Together, they will build a foundation for new thought and expressions in subjects such as racial and social justice, climate change and health.

"As we enter this new era for both institutions, we are confident that PNCA and Willamette's distinguished legacies, our commitment to students and our contributions to the cultural vibrancy of the Pacific Northwest will be strengthened and enhanced by this relationship," said PNCA Board Chair Scott D. Musch. "Now that the merger is finalized, we're eager to see what our students will accomplish with the broader curricular offerings and opportunities this presents them."

The coming-together of Willamette and PNCA will be supported by a \$2 million gift from the late Arlene Schnitzer, which will create the Arlene and Harold Schnitzer PNCA Dean's Initiative Fund. This incredible gift will provide the new PNCA dean with resources to test new initiatives, facilitate collaboration between the PNCA and Willamette faculties, and more. This week, Willamette will launch a search to retain a nationally recognized educator and leader in art and design to serve as PNCA's dean.

"Our ability to understand the world, to grow as people and to strengthen our humanity hinges on artists," said Jordan Schnitzer, philanthropist and son of the late Arlene Schnitzer. "The joining

of PNCA and Willamette stands to elevate the next generations of artists – and their central importance in society – by reimagining what an arts education can be. This gift will support innovation, reinforcing and building Willamette and PNCA as top models of art education.”

“We’re profoundly thankful for the Schnitzer family’s confidence and trusted partnership as we welcome PNCA into our community,” said recent Willamette Board of Trustees Chair Lynne Saxton. “The joining of these two institutions will create tremendous new opportunities for student artists and ensure that they have tools they need to leave a mark on the world through their art, at a time when the world needs them most. We’re so pleased that this merger is officially complete and to move forward with our exciting plans.”

PNCA will remain an independent college within Willamette University and will maintain its name, faculty and campus in Portland. The Center for Contemporary Art & Culture, as well as PNCA’s other academic centers and collections, are also now a part of the university.

PNCA is the fourth college within the university, joining the Willamette University College of Law, the College of Arts & Sciences and the Atkinson Graduate School of Management. It also joins the affiliated Claremont School of Theology and Tokyo International University of America.

ABOUT WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY

Based in Salem, Ore., Willamette University is the premier private liberal arts university in the Pacific Northwest—the only university in the country that appears on both the U.S. News Best National Liberal Arts Colleges list and the Forbes and Businessweek best business schools list. With its unique proximity to the state capitol, Willamette is a national leader in civic engagement, delivering an “Only at Willamette” education.

ABOUT PNCA

Pacific Northwest College of Art empowers artists and designers to reimagine what art and design can do in the world. Founded in 1909 as the Museum Art School in Portland, Ore., PNCA offers 11 art and design Bachelor of Fine Art programs, eight graduate programs including Master of Arts and Master of Fine Arts programs within the Hallie Ford School of Graduate Studies, a Post-Baccalaureate program, and Community Education courses for artists and designers of all ages.

For the latest information, please visit willamette.edu and pnca.edu.

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