

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****HIGH MUSEUM OF ART TO PARTICIPATE IN UNCF AND AAMD INITIATIVE TO FOSTER THE NEXT GENERATION OF MUSEUM PROFESSIONALS**

*Pilot program begins January 2014 – Will provide internships, career-readiness assistance and professional development for students of color*

**ATLANTA, November 26, 2013** – The High Museum of Art will participate in the UNCF’s (the United Negro College Fund) and the Association of Art Museum Directors’ (AAMD) nationwide program to address diversity in the art museum field. Launching in January 2014, the \$100,000 pilot initiative will place 13 college juniors from private and public historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in major American art museums for semester-long paid internships, as well as support these students with career and job readiness coaching and professional development training.

Support for this pilot has been provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Henry Luce Foundation, Samuel H. Kress Foundation, and the members of AAMD.

“The High is in a city with one of the most diverse populations in the nation,” said Michael E. Shapiro, Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr. director of the High Museum of Art. “We are honored to participate in this initiative to support diversity in American art museums, which will help not only the High but museums nationwide to be more representative of our patrons and to encourage a more strongly connected community through the shared joy of experiencing art.”

“Fewer than 5 percent of our 220 member art museums have minorities in senior management positions,” said Christine Anagnos, AAMD’s Executive Director. “This initiative creates a pathway for successfully growing the percentage of minorities in the arts over time, by introducing minority students to leaders in the museum field, nurturing their interest in art and art museums, and helping to prepare them for a wide range of jobs in museums as well as future educational opportunities. AAMD is committed to increasing diversity in the field, which is one way of ensuring that our museums serve and reflect communities across the country. We commend the High Museum of Art for taking part in this initiative and sharing the expertise of the High’s staff with the next generation of museum professionals.”

“Often, the biggest barrier for minorities seeking entry to a field is the lack of a clear opportunity and the difficulty of building a network of connections,” said Larry Griffith, Senior Vice President of Programs and Student Services at UNCF. “We are thrilled to partner with AAMD and their network of member museums to help minority students gain the professional experience they need for successful careers in the arts, and hope that by continuing this initiative over time we can have a significant impact on diversity in museum management, making the field more representative of the United States.”

As a part of the program, the High, along with 12 other AAMD member museums, will provide stipends for 12 weeks of the spring 2014 semester, with Fellows expected to work a minimum of 15 hours each week. Museum staff will serve as mentors to these interns to offer an additional level of direct, personal engagement beyond their experiences in different departments. AAMD will also engage education experts from within the field to assist in the design and execution of the professional development and career-readiness training portions of the program and support the longer-term career placement requirements for Fellows, as needed.

Other participating AAMD member museums include: Arkansas Art Center, Birmingham Museum of Art, Clark Atlanta University Art Galleries, Columbia Museum of Art, Dallas Museum of Art, Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Mississippi Museum of Art, New Orleans Museum of Art, North Carolina Museum of Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Phillips Collection and Spelman College Museum of Art.

UNCF, which has more than 17 years of experience in creating pipeline programs for students of color, is providing crucial leadership in management and implementation of this initiative. This includes: recruitment of university and college partners, student outreach and recruitment, application management, and implementation of a career and job readiness component. Additionally, UNCF will act as the fiscal agent, administering the program funds and coordinating payments of stipends to the Fellows.

College and university partners include: Allen University, Arkansas Baptist University, Benedict University, Bowie State University, Cheyney University, Clark Atlanta University, Dillard University, Fisk University, Howard University, Interdenominational Theological Center, Jackson State University, Miles College, Morehouse College, North Carolina Central University, Philander Smith College, Shaw University, Southern University, Spelman College, St. Augustine's University, Tennessee State University, Texas College, Tougaloo College, University of the District of Columbia and Xavier University.

While this is UNCF's latest major arts-focused career initiative in recent years, the organization has significant experience in creating and managing similar professional programs for students of color. The UNCF/Merck Science Initiative was launched in 1995 with a \$20 million grant from The Merck Company Foundation, with the goal of increasing the number of African-American students pursuing careers in scientific research. Currently, there are 626 UNCF/Merck Fellows finishing their undergraduate or graduate studies, completing postdoctoral appointments, or working in academia and private industry. In 2009, UNCF replicated this model and piloted a similar pipeline program to increase the number of African-American students who pursue careers in K-12 education reform. Of those students who have graduated, nearly 75 percent have committed to work in the education sector and/or continue their post-baccalaureate training in the education field. Additionally, two years ago, UNCF began operating the Gateway to Leadership (GTL) program, a pipeline program designed to increase the number of minorities who pursue professional management careers in the financial services industry. In the first cohort under UNCF leadership, 12 out of 15 participants secured employment in the financial services industry, resulting in an 80 percent placement rate.

For AAMD, this new partnership represents a major step forward in developing and implementing a diversity initiative that has potential for national and even international impact—

a key element of its strategic plan. At an organizational level, the Association has increased its membership by more than 10 percent in the last five years, with a focus on recruiting members from minority-run or minority-focused institutions. Among AAMD's more than 220 members, there have also been locally driven efforts to engage minority students and others interested in the art museum field. While an important step, these programs have lacked the kind of consistent structure made possible by this partnership, and their smaller scale or less formal nature typically meant that there was little ability to track outcomes and long-term impact.

For information on how to apply for the UNCF/AAMD program, contact: Crystal Terry, UNCF Senior Relationship Manager, 202-810-0263 or [crystal.terry@uncf.org](mailto:crystal.terry@uncf.org).

### **About the High Museum of Art**

The High is the leading art museum in the southeastern U.S. With more than 13,000 works of art in its permanent collection, the High Museum of Art has an extensive anthology of 19th- and 20th-century American and decorative art; significant holdings of European paintings; a growing collection of African American art; and burgeoning collections of modern and contemporary art, photography and African art. The High is also dedicated to supporting and collecting works by Southern artists. This year, the High celebrates the 30th anniversary of the Stent Family Wing, designed by architect Richard Meier. For more information about the High, visit [high.org](http://high.org).

### **About The Woodruff Arts Center**

The Woodruff Arts Center is ranked among the top four arts centers in the nation. The Woodruff is unique in that it combines four visual and performing arts divisions on one campus as one not-for-profit organization. Opened in 1968, the Woodruff Arts Center is home to the Alliance Theatre, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the High Museum of Art and Young Audiences. To learn more about the Woodruff Arts Center, please visit [www.woodruffcenter.org](http://www.woodruffcenter.org).

### **About UNCF**

UNCF (United Negro College Fund) is the nation's largest and most effective minority education organization. To serve youth, the community, and the nation, UNCF supports students' education and development through scholarships and other programs, strengthens its 37 member colleges and universities, and advocates for the importance of minority education and college readiness. UNCF institutions and other historically black colleges and universities are highly effective, awarding 20 percent of African-American baccalaureate degrees. UNCF administers more than 400 programs, including scholarship, internship and fellowship, mentoring, summer enrichment, and curriculum and faculty development programs. Today, UNCF supports more than 60,000 students at over 900 colleges and universities across the country. Its logo features the UNCF torch of leadership in education and its widely recognized motto, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste."® Learn more at [www.UNCF.org](http://www.UNCF.org)

### **About AAMD**

The Association of Art Museum Directors, representing 220 art museum directors in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, promotes the vital role of art museums throughout North America and advances the profession by cultivating leadership and communicating standards of excellence in museum practice. Further information about AAMD's professional practice guidelines and position papers is available at [www.aamd.org](http://www.aamd.org).

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