



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

San Francisco Art Institute freezes tuition for 2019-2020 year in response to national crisis in rising college costs

San Francisco, CA, December 5, 2018 —On Tuesday, December 4, 2018, the Board of the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI) approved a tuition freeze for the 2019-2020 school year as a first step towards addressing within its own community the alarming nationwide trend of growing higher education costs and increased student loan debt.

College tuition in the US has more than doubled since the 1980s, a rate of increase that has well outpaced increases in wages. 44 million Americans now hold \$1.5 trillion in student loan debt, with the average debt standing at roughly \$17,000 per student.

“This is an untenable path,” says Pam Rorke Levy, Board Chair, SFAI. “The rising cost of higher education is a national crisis that undermines fundamental principles of accessibility, inclusion and opportunity, and has become a major contributing factor to our country’s growing income gap. The current trend of passing along rising costs to our students is clearly unsustainable, and anathema to who we are — and have been for the last 148 years — an arts institution committed to fostering the unique and diverse perspectives of artists.”

“We believe that a quality fine arts education should be accessible to anyone with the courage, creativity, talent, and curiosity to be an artist,” says Gordon Knox, President, SFAI. “We must reduce the portion of SFAI’s budget that is dependent upon student tuition dollars, and increase philanthropic support. And we must remove barriers to access in order to provide promising artists an opportunity to realize an SFAI education and share their unique visions and contributions with the world.”

“SFAI offers so much that you wouldn’t experience at a big school,” says Keisha Kidd (BFA, 2021), one of the many students at SFAI with financial support from the institution. “Smaller class size, an intimate setting, the opportunity to form ongoing relationships with professors and peers. And knowing about the alumni who came out of the school—I wanted to be part of all the greatness. The only obstacle to attending SFAI for me is financial. Aside from that, it’s all about the work, the community, and developing as an artist.”

Knox acknowledges that more needs to be done to make headway, particularly in San Francisco, where the high cost of living adds to the financial burden of students and their families, and says plans are underway at SFAI to launch a major campaign addressing accessibility.

“Our charge now is to find ways to provide access to SFAI for all exceptional students, including those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds,” he states. “This will require the support of the wider Bay Area community and others across the country and around the world who are inspired by our mission.”

About San Francisco Art Institute

Founded in 1871, SFAI is one of the country's oldest and most prestigious institutions of higher education in the practice and study of contemporary art. As a diverse community of working artists and scholars, SFAI provides students with a rigorous education in the arts and preparation for a life in the arts through an immersive studio environment, an integrated liberal arts and art history curriculum, and critical engagement with the world. Committed to educating artists who will shape the future of art, culture, and society, SFAI fosters creativity and original thinking in an open, experimental, and interdisciplinary context.

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