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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Leaders from 26 Universities and 16 Research Centers Meet to Consider Next Steps for
Higher Education and Workforce Development**

Bridging sectors and disciplines, group will discuss new research that suggests that integrating learning across disciplines leads to improved workforce opportunities for college graduates and boosts civic engagement

Washington, DC— Artists, scientists, humanists, engineers and physicians, as well as leaders from industry, professional organizations, and philanthropy will participate in a think tank to consider the next steps for improving higher education in the United States, based on new research that suggests that integrating learning across disciplines leads to improved workforce opportunities for college graduates and to a more engaged citizenry.

In the month when thousands of graduates complete their higher education journey, higher education leaders will reflect on how models presented in the National Academies of Sciences, engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) [report](#) might inform their own undergraduate and graduate programs. For example, integrative fields such as bioethics; science, technology, and society; women’s studies; and sustainability—all present models of successful integrative graduate-level programs.

The new NASEM report encourages colleges and universities to develop, implement, and evaluate programs that integrate science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine (STEMM) fields with arts and humanities. Research conducted from the past two years captures more than 200 programs and courses that intentionally bridge knowledge and types of inquiry from multiple disciplines. Promising evidence suggests integration in teaching and learning improves communication skills, content mastery, teamwork skills, ethical decision-making, empathy, and the ability to translate knowledge into real-world situations.

"There has been a groundswell of interest and enthusiasm for this report among the higher education community. Now we begin the hard work of encouraging and catalyzing the implementation of the ideas and strategies in this report so that more students have experiences with integrated courses, programs, internships, and labs," according to Tom Rudin, director of the Board on Higher Education and the Workforce with NASEM, who organized the 22-person committee to produce the report.

The consensus report recommendations and findings will be used to develop next-steps for higher education and other sector partners. Participants include luminaries such as Robert Root-Bernstein, Michigan State University physiologist and creativity researcher; award-winning researcher Bonnie Thornton Dill (known for developing research on "intersectionality,") from the University of Maryland; aerospace engineer, former Under Secretary of the Army and former CEO of Lockheed Martin, Norman Augustine; Susan Albertine, senior scholar with the Association of American Colleges and Universities, an expert in college readiness and student success; and engineer and musician Youngmoo Kim (whose Music & Entertainment Technology Lab at Drexel University has conducted research on machine understanding of human-machine interfaces and robotics for expressive interaction).

Laurie Baefsky, the executive director of the Alliance for Arts at Research Universities (a2ru) who represented a2ru's network on the NASEM 22-member consensus committee explains: "We're at a critical juncture in higher education where institutions must align resources with 21st century values and needs. Fueled by the hyper-acceleration of technology and global connectivity, our institutions are now poised to build inclusive infrastructures which foster and reward collaborative and interdisciplinary work."

Organized by the Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities (a2ru) with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), this event hosts 70 executive leaders in higher education, government, philanthropy, and industry for a two-day symposium at the National Academy of Sciences.

Since collaborative work in higher education, and education policy, is often led by associations, numerous association leaders are joining this conversation to share their knowledge and experience across the United States. Such organizations include the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the American Association of Medical Colleges, Association for American Universities, The American Council on Learned Societies, the Federation of State Humanities Councils, and the International Council of Fine Arts Deans.

Universities represented at this meeting from a2ru's network include: Dartmouth College, James Madison University, M.I.T., Michigan State University, Oregon State University, Penn State University, Princeton University, Rochester Institute of Technology, University of Alabama at Birmingham, University of California Berkeley, University of Cincinnati, University of Georgia, University of Michigan, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Technology-Sydney,

University of Virginia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, UT Dallas, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Virginia Tech.

This broad interest in the NASEM report reflects shared interest in collaborative and integrative strategies to deliver a more coherent, effective, and responsive education. It is a historic moment when top scientists, engineers, and physicians collectively acknowledge the necessity of the arts and humanities to a complete education and a fuller democracy.

For more information on the study, visit

<http://sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/bhew/branches/>.

To download the report, visit <https://bit.ly/2I5kWAo>

To read the NASEM press release, visit <https://bit.ly/2I59dSr>

For more information on a2ru research, visit www.a2ru.org

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The Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities, housed at the University of Michigan, is a partnership of over 40 institutions committed to ensuring the greatest possible institutional support for the full spectrum of arts and arts-integrative research, curricula, programs, and creative practice for the benefit of all students and faculty at research universities and the communities they serve.

Copies of *The Integration of the Humanities and Arts with Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine in Higher Education: Branches from the Same Tree* are available at www.nap.edu or by calling 202-334-3313 or 1-800-624-6242.

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