



# THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES

– PHILADELPHIA –

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact:

Drexel University  
Niki Gianakaris  
215.895.6741 (office)  
215.778.7752 (cell)  
[Ng38@drexel.edu](mailto:Ng38@drexel.edu)

The Academy of Natural Sciences  
Amy Marvin  
215.299.1013 (office)  
808.375.9123 (cell)  
[marvin@ansp.org](mailto:marvin@ansp.org)

## **THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES AND DREXEL UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCE A HISTORIC AFFILIATION**

### **Collaboration Will Further Philadelphia's Reputation as a Leader in the Natural and Environmental Sciences; The Pew Charitable Trusts Announces \$1 Million Grant**

**PHILADELPHIA** (May 19, 2011) -- The Academy of Natural Sciences President and CEO George W. Gephart, Jr., and Drexel University President John A. Fry today announced a historic affiliation between their institutions that will promote discovery, learning, and civic engagement in the natural and environmental sciences and further enhance Philadelphia's reputation as a leader in scientific research and education. Today's announcement marks the signing of a letter of intent following each organization's board approval on May 18, 2011.

"The Academy of Natural Sciences is one of Philadelphia's key resources for science and education and is globally recognized for the quality of its research," said Gephart. "We recognized that we needed a partner to help us more fully capitalize on our strengths – including our location on one of the best half city blocks in Philadelphia and a rock-solid balance sheet with a \$51 million endowment—and to grow at the rapid pace we desire.

“Several months ago, we determined that collaborating with a science-led, university-based partner would allow us to advance our science and museum more innovatively and comprehensively than we could on our own and our choice is Drexel,” Gephart said. “This innovative partnership provides the Academy with new resources for our scientists and our museum, from teaching opportunities for our scientists to tapping into Drexel’s technology and media arts programs for our exhibitions. It’s a very exciting announcement for us that secures and expands on the Academy’s future as we embark on our third century.”

The result will be a nationally recognized powerhouse for discovery in the natural and environmental sciences that fully leverages the vast intellectual and physical capital of each institution, creating value for them and for Philadelphia.

“The Academy and Drexel are complementary learning institutions with a combined 300 years of contributions to our understanding of the world around us,” Fry said. “Today we build on that history for the benefit of our community and the world.

“This affiliation will move Drexel into a national leadership position in environmental science and environmental policy. It will provide our faculty with opportunities to make even greater contributions to discovery and innovation in the natural and environmental sciences, propelling the University and our College of Arts and Sciences to the next level in research and teaching in these fields,” said Fry. “We are also excited to give our students access to Academy scientists and the Academy’s invaluable collections, and new opportunities to learn while working through our co-op program.”

To immediately jump-start the affiliation, The Pew Charitable Trusts also announced a \$1 million grant. The grant will help to cover transition costs and allow the Academy and Drexel to explore how to best leverage the assets of both organizations.

In announcing the grant, The Pew Charitable Trusts President and CEO Rebecca W. Rimel said, “The Pew Charitable Trusts is proud to partner with the leadership of the Academy of Natural Sciences and Drexel University in supporting such a bold and visionary plan. By putting the advancement of mission and programmatic excellence above institutional structure, they have ensured that the Academy’s unparalleled collections will be preserved and enhanced and Drexel’s ambitious research and educational priorities will be expanded and advanced. Others in the nonprofit sector should look to this merger as a model of sound and creative decision making, which will provide for a secure and successful future for these great institutions.”

The new relationship also positions the two institutions to work together on research into natural and environmental science issues such as environmental degradation, biodiversity, global ecosystem interactions, and sustainability. It also allows both institutions to compete aggressively for investment from government agencies such as the National Science Foundation, the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Institutes of Health, as well as private foundations and other philanthropists interested in discovery in these areas.

According to Gephart and Fry, in addition to creating a center for discovery in the natural and environmental sciences, the alliance will seek to share its great body of knowledge with individuals of all ages and from all walks of life through innovative formal and informal learning mechanisms. It will also inform the development of public policy with state-of-the-art knowledge in the natural and environmental sciences.

Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter praised the affiliation as creative and innovative. “The idea of two of our prominent organizations in science and education coming together to advance Philadelphia’s reputation as a scientific leader is one that I support fully,” Mayor Nutter said. “The advantages are clear, and the city, our citizens, and the natural and environmental sciences communities will be the beneficiaries.”

Drexel University and the Academy of Natural Sciences have a long-standing relationship, having worked together on projects such as a recent dinosaur excavation in Argentina, exploration of the fragile Pine Barrens ecosystem, and examination of environmental degradation in the Delaware Estuary.

The next step in the process is the finalization of the affiliation agreement, which is expected in the next 45-60 days. When the final agreement is executed, the Academy of Natural Sciences will become a subsidiary of Drexel and be known as the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, though its legal name will remain the same. The operations of the Academy will continue to be overseen by its own board as a non-profit affiliate of Drexel and the Academy will remain a separate 501(c)(3) organization. The Academy’s current \$51 million endowment will be managed by Drexel in a segregated fashion and continue to be wholly dedicated to the Academy.

### **About The Academy of Natural Sciences**

Founded in 1812, the Academy of Natural Sciences is America’s oldest natural history museum and a world leader in biodiversity and environmental research. For nearly 200 years, the Academy has carried out its mission to encourage and cultivate the sciences, exploring the remarkable diversity of our natural world and sharing these discoveries with the public through innovative exhibits, publications, and educational programming.

### **About Drexel University**

Founded in 1891 in Philadelphia, Drexel is the nation’s 14<sup>th</sup> largest private university and is ranked second among national universities in the U.S. News list of “Up-and-Comers.” Drexel is widely recognized for its focus on experiential learning through its co-operative education program, technology and use-inspired research.

# # #