



THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES

of DREXEL UNIVERSITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Drexel University
Niki Gianakaris
215.778.7782
ng38@drexel.edu

The Academy of Natural Sciences
Carolyn Belardo
215.299.1043
belardo@ansp.org

PHILADELPHIA MAYOR MICHAEL NUTTER JOINS PRESIDENTS OF THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES AND DREXEL UNIVERSITY TO ANNOUNCE COMPLETION OF HISTORIC AFFILIATION

PHILADELPHIA (October 24, 2011) - The Academy of Natural Sciences President and CEO **George W. Gephart, Jr.**, and Drexel University President **John A. Fry**, are pleased to join with Mayor **Michael A. Nutter** in announcing the completion of an historic affiliation between the Academy and Drexel 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.

To celebrate this milestone, the newly named Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University will host a free day for the public on Wednesday, October 26. Gephart and Fry also will conduct a ceremonial signing of the affiliation agreement.

"There's a lot to celebrate as we formalize this affiliation, including its transformative impact on natural sciences research and education and on Philadelphia's scientific and cultural resources," said Fry. "Leveraging the strengths of Drexel and the Academy, we will create a Department of Biodiversity, Earth and Environmental Sciences that, coupled with our \$70 million Papadakis Integrated Sciences Building, will establish Drexel as a research and policy leader with the standing and expertise to address major environmental issues such as gas mining in the Marcellus Shale."

Drexel's new department of Biodiversity, Earth and Environmental Sciences will accept its first students in the fall of 2012 and bring Academy and Drexel scientists together with a focus on the natural and environmental sciences.

"The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University will further establish Philadelphia, the birthplace of American science, as a city central to the advancement of the natural and environmental sciences," Mayor Nutter said. "This unique academic affiliation between two of Philadelphia's most respected research institutions also will serve as a model for similar partnerships that can be formed between not-for-profit organizations and academic institutions for the benefit of both."

Gephart said, “The Academy has long been at the forefront of scientific research and education, and our new affiliation with Drexel will undoubtedly allow us to grow to the next level. By partnering with Drexel, the Academy will be able to grow and prosper into our third century, enhancing our programs of scientific research and education with our combined resources.”

The Academy, which will celebrate its 200th anniversary in 2012, is a world leader in biodiversity and environmental research. Its collection of more than 17 million biological specimens includes Thomas Jefferson’s personal fossil collection; birds gathered and identified by John James Audubon; *Hadrosaurus foulkii*, the first dinosaur skeleton ever mounted for display; and plants from the Lewis and Clark expedition. The institution’s Ewell Sale Stewart Library and Archives is one of the most important natural history libraries in the Americas, with approximately 250,000 volumes, some dating to the 16th century.

Benefits of this new affiliation will be vast, including the enhancement of exhibits, the opportunity to work with Drexel educators to improve programming for students of all ages, access to additional resources, and innovative, new ways to access the Academy’s rich collections and science. The Academy’s exhibits and public programs teams are already collaborating with Drexel’s Westphal College of Media Arts & Design to develop new ways for visitors to access the Academy’s rich resources, from a smartphone app to new, media-rich exhibits. The Pew Charitable Trusts has pledged a \$1 million grant to support exploring how best to leverage the assets of both organizations.

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 14th 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.

###