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**GROUNDBREAKING ALLIANCE BRINGS TOGETHER
TOP HIGHER EDUCATION GAME DESIGN PROGRAMS**

New Higher Education Group Will Harness Power of Video Games

Aspen, Colorado — July 1, 2014 —The Higher Education Video Game Alliance (The Alliance), launched today at the Aspen Ideas Festival, will provide a platform for leading academics to showcase the critical role video game programs are playing in educating and preparing students for the 21st century workforce. The Alliance will afford its members, including professors and other campus leadership, an opportunity to share and highlight best practices, publish research, initiate and strengthen industry connections, and educate and engage policymakers and the media.

"Video game research and design programs across top colleges and universities around the world are working on the cutting-edge of this field. I welcome other charter members to The Alliance – which currently represents a geographically diverse cross-section of the most prestigious programs – so that we can further develop this new organization and aim to present a cohesive voice spotlighting this very meaningful work," said Constance Steinkuehler, executive director of The Alliance and former Senior Policy Analyst in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

The first-of-its-kind alliance will be led by and open to university faculty, directors of game design programs, departmental heads, and other campus leadership. The founding and executive committee members include Constance Steinkuehler, associate professor and co-director of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Games+Learning+Society center; Tracy Fullerton, associate professor and director of USC Games at the University of Southern California; Andrew Phelps, professor and director of the Rochester Institute of Technology Center for Media, Arts, Games, Interaction and Creativity; Drew Davidson, professor and director of the Entertainment Technology Center at Carnegie Mellon University; and Katherine Isbister, associate professor and director of the Game Innovation Lab at New York University. The list of current charter members can be found on www.HigherEdGames.org.

"Game development programs are growing the next generation of America's STEM leaders: providing excellent career training, serving as incubators for game design and technology innovation, and advancing state of the art game research," said Mark DeLoura, Senior Advisor for Digital Media at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. "Efforts to increase the connections between educators and professional game developers will help to further strengthen American competitiveness by enhancing the collective power of these programs."

Currently, 381 colleges, universities, and trade schools across the United States offer video game design as part of their curriculum. A total of 55 schools offer associate's degrees, 226 offer bachelor's degrees, 46 offer master's degrees, and four offer doctoral degrees. The top 25 Undergraduate and Graduate programs among these are ranked by the Princeton Review (<http://www.princetonreview.com/game-design.aspx>).

"The passion of thousands of college and university students across the country is fueled by the prospects of exciting careers in the video game industry. Leading universities have responded by building very high quality game design programs," said Michael D. Gallagher, president and CEO of the Entertainment Software Association (ESA), the trade association that represents U.S. video game publishers. "The Alliance will be a critical part of driving innovation across numerous sectors of the economy and we are proud to support its mission, and applaud the leadership of its impressive founding members."

The Alliance – initially supported by ESA – will aim to achieve multiple goals:

- survey game programs, placements, and practices across membership;
- work to improve Bureau of Labor Statistics information on the games industry;
- host events such as an annual conference and convenings in the Nation's Capital to enhance the connection of higher education programs and policy makers;
- provide recognition and awards for innovations from member labs;
- encourage stronger connections between higher education and industry through things like student internship programs and trend/need discussions and reports; and
- conduct meta-analyses of the state of play along various sector issues such as health, education, technology challenges, and other pertinent issues.

Higher Education Video Game Alliance (The Alliance)

The mission of The Alliance: "To create a platform for higher education leaders which will underscore the cultural, scientific, and economic importance of video game programs in colleges and universities. The key is to create a robust network of resources – including unified advocacy, policymaker engagement, media coverage, and external funding – in order to incubate and harness the impact of this community in a 21st Century learning environment." For more information, please visit <http://www.higheredgames.org> or follow The Alliance on Twitter: @HigherEdGames.

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