

Our Opinion: Take a bow; back to work

Tallahassee ranks among 'best cities'

Tallahassee has landed as No. 15 in a listing of the 25 Best Cities for College Grads that was reported Wednesday by Richard Florida, a frequent visitor here and an inspiration behind the Knight Creative Communities Institute (KCCI) that is at work improving the vitality of life in our community, and others.

Mr. Florida is an economist at the University of Toronto and professor of business and creativity who in 2002 published the book that's inspired many communities to rise and shine: "The Rise of the Creative Class." His column, published online in *The Daily Beast*, gave Tallahassee some bragging rights.

"Tallahassee has a lot to offer. The Nature Conservancy calls it one of 'America's last Great Places,' and rightly so," his report said. "The area has one of the world's deepest freshwater springs, a wildlife habitat and year-round outdoor activities. Its population is small, but growing fast, with the most highly educated population in Florida."

Mr. Florida and his colleagues used nine indicators to evaluate more than 350 metropolitan areas, and college towns like ours did very well.

They're equipped with many of the qualities that are attractive to new or recent college grads and young professionals. They have a strong presence of twentysomethings and singles, college-educated folks and youth-oriented amenities such as bars, restaurants, cafes, sports facilities and other entertainment venues.

They also capture the creative energy of a place, as measured by the number of employed artists, musicians, actors, dancers, writers, designers and entertainers in the work force. Ithaca, N.Y., ranked No. 1, followed by Madison, Wis., Ann Arbor, Mich., Durham, N.C., Austin, Texas, Boulder, Colo., and so on.

But there is plenty of work to be done right here in No. 15 — and realities to be faced.

We know that our community could do better at retaining graduates of Florida State or Florida A&M universities, for example. A relaxing, outdoorsy, fun lifestyle isn't enough to balance the costs of getting that degree.