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Richard Florida brings Creative Class Group project to UT Arlington, North Texas

News Release – 11 November 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ARLINGTON - Two world-renowned economic development experts are coming to The University of Texas at Arlington with plans to make North Texas their urban and economic development laboratory.



Richard Florida, Director of the Martin Prosperity Institute at the University of Toronto founder of the Creative Class Group, a global advisory services firm, and Steven Pedigo, director of Research and Communities for the Creative Class Group, join UT Arlington as visiting scholars in the School of Urban and Public Affairs during the next two years.



Richard Florida

Florida is the best-selling author of the 2005 book "The Rise of the Creative Class," 2008's "Who's Your City: How the Creative Economy is Making Where to Live the Most Important Decision of Your Life," and his 2010 release, "The Great Reset: How New Ways of Living and Working Drive Post-Crash Prosperity." Florida was among the most popular lecturers featured in UT Arlington's 2009-2010 Maverick Speakers Series.

Florida and Pedigo will visit North Texas next week, with stops planned in Fort Worth, downtown Arlington and parts of Dallas and the Oak Cliff community in southwestern Dallas.

Florida's central theory is that prosperous communities capitalize on talent, tolerance and technology. His Creative Communities Leadership Project aims to give leaders the tools they need to generate greater economic prosperity in their region. Among the clients of The Creative Class Group are the cities of Roanoke, Va.; Charlotte, N.C.; El Paso; Tacoma, Wash.; Tallahassee, Fla.; and Toronto and Ontario, Can.

"North Texas is one of the fastest-growing areas in the country and it's been left relatively unscathed from the economic turmoil that much of the rest of the country has endured," Florida said. "UT Arlington has played a significant role in helping the region sidestep some of those economic pitfalls."

Florida and Pedigo plan to collaborate with UT Arlington faculty, researchers and students, as well as regional leaders, to identify a series of research initiatives, which the local community can launch. The goal of the selected initiatives will be to leverage the existing assets and talents in North Texas to move the community forward.

"We hope to provide the UT Arlington the framework and tools to build upon the assets and talents that North Texas already has in its backyard," Florida explained.

UT Arlington President James D. Spaniolo said Florida's team will add national prominence to the School of Urban and Public Affairs, which has been recognized as one of the nation's best graduate public affairs programs by *U.S. News and World Report*.

"Richard Florida is one of the most exciting economic development thinkers of our generation," Spaniolo said. "His theories of the kind of creativity it takes to build great cities and regions fit exactly with our University's mission. We are honored that he is bringing his Creative Class approach to our institution and region."

Florida's latest book provides a sweeping examination of previous economic "resets" of the 1870s and 1920s. Florida identifies the patterns that will drive the next Great Reset - from how and where we live to how we work, how we invest in individuals and infrastructure and how we shape our cities and regions.

Florida contends that these "resets" can spur new eras of growth and prosperity.

Pedigo also serves as director of the Creative Class Leadership Program, a worldwide community engagement program. He has successfully launched programs in communities from El Paso to Vancouver, B.C., and Noosa, Australia.

Barbara Becker, dean of the UT Arlington School of Urban and Public Affairs, said the visiting scholars present great opportunities for students.

"Our students will have the opportunity to understand the theories and tools that move the region forward," Becker said. "They'll be involved in something transformative, something that will have a huge impact on our students and the community."

Florida is director of the Martin Prosperity Institute and professor of business and creativity at the Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto. He has previously held professorships at George Mason University and Carnegie Mellon University and taught as a visiting professor at Harvard and MIT. Florida earned his Bachelor's degree from Rutgers University and his Ph.D. from Columbia University.

Pedigo previously served as vice president for business attraction and research for Greenlight Greater Portland, a regional economic development organization for the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan region. He

holds a bachelor's degree from The University of Texas at Austin and graduate degrees from the H. John Heinz III School for Public Policy and Management at Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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