

PRESS RELEASE

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DEVOS INSTITUTE OF ARTS MANAGEMENT WILL CONDUCT ARTS ECOLOGY STUDY IN ORANGE COUNTY

ORLANDO, Fla. - June 2, 2022 — United Arts of Central Florida announced today that the DeVos Institute of Arts Management will complete an Arts Ecology Study in Orange County starting the first week of June 2022. This audit of the local arts ecology will be performed by the DeVos Institute of Arts Management at the University of Maryland and will be funded by United Arts of Central Florida, Orange County, the Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation, and the Dick & Betsy DeVos Family Foundation.

“As the local arts agency for Orange County, it is critical for United Arts to have a clear understanding of the current state of the entire arts ecology as well as where the gaps are in the health of the sector,” said Jennifer Evins, president and CEO of United Arts. “We are thrilled to have an international leader in arts management like the DeVos Institute of Arts Management as a partner. This information will help our entire sector be able to respond to the growing demands in the region for more arts and culture as well help us to deploy our resources to have the greatest impact in our efforts to increase access for all people to arts and culture.”

Orange County, Florida is a vibrant and diverse region with a significant number of arts institutions. While there is a mix of venerable institutions and newer, fresher organizations, there are a few donors who are called upon to provide most arts funding. This study will include an evaluation of the quality and financial capabilities of local arts institution, the arts education provided in local public schools, the strength of governing boards, the quality of artistic and administrative management, audience profiles, the scope of local arts institutions, the sources of funding, accessibility of arts for all segments of the community, and much more.

“Central Florida’s cultural sector of artists and organizations are stepping out into the spotlight, post pandemic,” said David A. Odahowski, president and CEO of the Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation. “The rapid growth of organizations, offerings and audience is a good sign and a good time to access our future with this research. Like the “conductors score” it will lead to great performances, at the box office, on stage and on the financial statements.”

This project will require six months to complete and will focus on a range of inquiries and questions that will provide Orange County with valuable insight once assessed. This includes measuring how Orange County’s arts ecology compares to other American cities, looking into why local arts organizations are facing challenging economic circumstances, evaluating how local arts play a vital role in attracting tourists to Orange County, estimating if residents have fair access to the visual and performing arts and that is just the tip of the iceberg. By auditing the arts ecology of Orange County and suggesting models for the future, this study will maximize sustainable arts access, arts education and impact.

“The Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs was formed after a study 20 years ago,” said Terry Olson, director of the Orange County Arts and Cultural Affairs Office. “It is time to, once again, take a serious, scientific look at our arts and cultural community to see where we are and what targets we should be aiming for in the future. We’re excited to have the experienced team from the DeVos Institute at the University of Maryland working on this plan.”

Michael M. Kaiser, chairman of the DeVos Institute, will lead the team responsible for developing this plan. He will be assisted by Matthew Kacergis, senior consultant, and Dmitry Samogray, research analyst. After this study is complete, strategies will be presented for building larger, more diverse and younger audiences, creating a less concentrated donor base, maximizing arts-related tourism, building stronger boards and providing board training, building a larger, stronger pool of management, creating a stronger regional, state-wide and national presence and for reducing costs through collective action and more.

“It is a great honor to be selected to study the arts ecology of Orange County,” said Michael M. Kaiser. “It does not take a study to know that Orange County has a remarkably diverse, rich set of cultural offerings. Our study will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of local cultural organizations. We will also study whether arts experiences are equitably available to all and how well the quality of Orange County’s cultural offerings are known outside of the County and the State. Ultimately, we hope our work results in sector-wide strategies for attracting more resources to the arts of Orange County.”

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About United Arts of Central Florida

United Arts of Central Florida is the local arts agency uniting the community and fueling the arts. With the help of individual donors, corporations, foundations and public funding, United Arts inspires creativity, builds community and strengthens the economy in Central Florida. United Arts is proud to facilitate arts education programs for all ages and provide critical funding and comprehensive marketing for local art, science, and history organizations and individual artists. Leading the second largest collaborative fundraising campaign in the country and uniting over 30 of the region’s cornerstone arts and cultural organizations, United Arts is dedicated to ensuring the arts are for all.

For more information, visit <http://www.UnitedArts.cc> or call 407.628.0333.