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Professor Richard Florida

University Professors 2016

Rotman School of Management

Research Interests: Cities, innovation and urban economic development

Biography

Professor Richard Florida joined the University of Toronto in 2007 as the Director of the then newly formed Martin Prosperity Institute at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management. Florida's work on the contribution of creativity to the growth and development of urban economies has completely changed the perception of relationship, resulting in a burgeoning field of study and impacting the way cities and mayors approach the economic development of their cities.

At the heart of Florida's field-creating research is his thesis that links the skills of workers to the economic prosperity of cities through measurement of knowledge-intensive, or 'creative' industries by individual occupation rather than activities of the firms. His research further demonstrates that cultures of tolerance attract talented individuals who contribute to higher rates of innovation and regional development: in other words, the more open a place is to new ideas and new people, the more it attracts and activates the human talent and capabilities that spur innovation and growth.



Florida is one of the world's leading urbanists. His work has influenced the way academics think about cities and urbanization across disciplines including urban planning (his own field), urban and economic geography, urban economics, urban sociology, social psychology, architecture, public health, public policy and management among others. In addition, his work has had profound impact outside of academe in shaping the way mayors, Premiers and governors, heads of state, real estate developers, business leaders, university presidents, and urban leaders think about, act on and plan cities and urban areas. His research revolutionized the field of urbanism and has shaped the debate and conversations on cities and urban development ever since.

Florida is the author of more than ten books including *The Rise of the Creative Class* and more than one hundred books chapters and articles in peer-reviewed academic journals. Google scholar lists 45,679 citations to his books, papers, and other publications. His H-index is 68, indicating a uniquely impactful scholar. He has published in a wide variety of fields, including leading journals in geography (the *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*), urban studies, regional science, sociology (the *American Sociological Review*), and economics (*Journal of Urban Economics*).

He is a Senior Editor at The Atlantic, where he co-founder and serves as Editor-at Large for CityLab, the world's largest and leading on-line publication devoted to cities and urbanism. A 2013 MIT study named him the world's most influential thought leader, he is regularly ranked of the world's leading management thinkers, and TIME magazine recognized his Twitter feed as one of the 140 most influential in the world.

Florida's teaching includes a well-received master's level MBA course on the importance of cities and locations to business and to student themselves. He is currently one of the leaders in developing a proposal to establish a new School of Cities at the University of Toronto. He recently developed a MOOC on *The City and You*, as the leadoff to a new U of T series of MOOCs on cities and urbanism. He is also developing a large-scale, university-wide undergraduate course on the same, to expose students and the community at large to the importance of cities and urbanism in their own lives.

Florida previously taught at Carnegie Mellon, George Mason University and Ohio State University, and has been a visiting professor at Harvard and MIT and a non-resident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution. He earned his Bachelor's degree from Rutgers College and his Ph.D. from Columbia University.