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REGIONAL CULTURAL ASSESSMENT FINDINGS ANNOUNCED FOUR CULTURAL PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED

Des Moines, IA (Nov. 8, 2017): During a joint presentation on Wednesday, Bravo Greater Des Moines (Bravo) and Drake University announced the findings of a fifteen-month long Regional Cultural Assessment.

Bravo commissioned the Assessment in 2016 as a way to further strengthen the role of arts and culture as vital contributors of growth and progress in Central Iowa. Drake University President Marty Martin led a [nine-member Steering Committee](#) to help prioritize recommendations to elevate arts and culture in the sector.

Built on existing community-wide planning projects ([Capital Crossroads](#) and [The Tomorrow Plan](#)), the purpose of the Assessment was to identify opportunities to leverage arts and culture as essential drivers of economic development and quality of life.

“A great deal of work identifying regional priorities has already been done in Central Iowa,” commented Sally Dix, executive director of Bravo. “What is unique and specific to this Regional Cultural Assessment is connecting arts, culture and heritage directly to those regional priorities.”

More than 800 Central Iowans weighed in through surveys and in-person interviews to help determine where the region sits currently and provide a vision for a path forward. With feedback from these community conversations and Steering Committee meetings, four cultural priorities emerged as opportunities to advance regional planning initiatives.

- **Every Day, Everywhere Art:** *Generate more spontaneous artistic and cultural connections in new and different places.*
- **Strengthen the Creative Economy:** *Develop the talent and skillsets of creative entrepreneurs and artists.*
- **Cultural Tapestry:** *Support arts, culture and heritage as diverse, accessible, inclusive and equitable throughout Central Iowa.*
- **Youth Connections:** *Ensure that all young people in the region have access to a rich array of creative and cultural experiences through both formal and informal, education and recreational activities.*

Additionally, Bravo, members of the Steering Committee and the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines have all contributed a total \$115,000 as funds for initial project implementation, and two community action plans have been outlined to support these four cultural priorities.

“Drake University, with support from the Greater Des Moines Partnership, is conducting an analysis to identify the infrastructure needed in the community to encourage robust entrepreneurship in our

creative sector,” said President Martin. “This work is being directed by faculty in Drake’s College of Business and Public Administration in collaboration with Drake students and local artists.”

[Group Creative Services](#) — a creative placemaking and public art consultant organization — is activating three to five community art engagement experiences as ways to integrate art, culture and diversity within the region’s public spaces.

For more information, read the Regional Cultural Assessment executive summary at www.CentrallowaRCA.org.

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Bravo Greater Des Moines works to strengthen arts, culture and heritage organizations across central Iowa using an accountable, regional and collaborative model to provide funding and support. Using funds contributed by local government partners, Bravo invests in arts, culture and heritage organizations that contribute to and enhance the quality of life in Greater Des Moines for residents and visitors.

Drake University is a midsize, private university in Des Moines, Iowa, enrolling more than 3,300 undergraduate and 1,700 graduate students from 40 states and approximately 40 countries. Students choose from over 70 majors, minors, and concentrations and 20 graduate degrees offered through six colleges and schools. Drake students, faculty, and staff take advantage of the wealth of cultural, recreational, and business opportunities found in Iowa's capital city. In return, Drake enriches the city through its own cultural offerings, considerable economic impact, and many service-learning endeavors, which channel the talent and energy of the Drake students toward meeting the need of the community.