**PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**2020 Imagining America National Gathering to be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, in partnership with Tulane University**

New Orleans, LA – Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life and Tulane University are pleased to announce that Imagining America’s 2020 National Gathering will be held October 9-11 in New Orleans, less than one month before the national Presidential election. The two organizations will work with local institutions and leaders in organizing this dynamic national conference.

The Imagining America (IA) Gathering is an annual convening of public scholars, artists, students, designers, and leaders who are addressing critical public issues through creative cultural organizing, collaborative research, and engaged learning. The conference offers participants a three-day immersive experience in which to connect, dialogue, learn, and strategize around the ways to build new knowledge and inspire collective imagination towards transformative education and action.

New Orleans will serve as a powerful context in which to showcase local and global work around this year’s Gathering themes of displacement and movements. “The last time IA hosted a Gathering in New Orleans was in 2009, when New Orleans was grappling with recovery and questions about its future,” said Imagining America Faculty Director Erica Kohl-Arenas. “Eleven years later in 2020 we are even more acutely aware that the climate crisis is displacing communities and threatening entire regions around the world. Our New Orleans organizing team deeply understands displacement, from sea level rise and coastal degradation, to housing insecurity, to histories of Native removal and slavery and their continuing legacy in our country’s carceral and immigration systems. New Orleans is also home to long standing creative movements that hold the key to organizing a more hopeful future. We look forward to working with Tulane University and our local steering committee to shape a Gathering that centers these urgent challenges while lifting the thriving cultural movements from the region and our national consortium.”

“Our commitment to community engagement is at the core of Tulane University, and we are a national leader in bringing interdisciplinary teams into conversation with community partners to address our most pressing challenges. We are excited to be partnering with Imagining America to bring this national conference back to New Orleans, a gathering that resonates deeply with our mission and our values,” remarked Tulane University Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost Robin Forman.

Ashé Cultural Arts Center, a nonprofit organization that creates and supports programs, activities, and creative works emphasizing the contributions of people of African descent, will serve as another key member of the planning team. “Ashé Cultural Arts Center is deeply appreciative of our long-time partnership with Imagining America, which has generated opportunities for us to push past envisioning a more equitable and just world, into co-creating one with collaborators across the country who share our dream and our mission,” said Asali DeVan Ecclesiastes, CEO of Ashé Cultural Arts Center. “Under the leadership of our Chief Creative Officer, Frederick Delahoussaye, Imagining America board member and Tulane Mellon Fellow, we have connected with national and local movements for the innovation of art and culture and are profoundly invested our collective capacity for transformation. We eagerly await our colleagues and welcome them to an immersive experience in our great city.”

To stay informed on news of the gathering, follow Imagining America’s [**newsletter**](https://list.robly.com/subscribe?a=ec5a76d53eb3c57775f884e9dc34ec82) and Twitter handle, [**@ImaginingAmer**](https://twitter.com/imaginingamer).

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**About Imagining America**

The Imagining America consortium brings together scholars, artists, designers, humanists, and organizers to imagine, study, and enact a more just and liberatory ‘America’ and world. Working across institutional, disciplinary, and community divides, Imagining America strengthens and promotes public scholarship, cultural organizing, and campus change that inspires collective imagination, knowledge-making, and civic action on pressing public issues.

**About Tulane University**

In 2006 Tulane became the first major research university in the country to integrate public service into its core curriculum. Their commitment to community engagement unites academics and action, classrooms and communities. Numerous community projects running throughout the year benefit the city, region, and world, as well as Tulane students themselves. Tulane regularly tops rankings for participation in the Peace Corps and other measures of socially conscious graduates.