Mission Statement

Tulane’s purpose is to create, communicate and conserve knowledge in order to enrich the capacity of individuals, organizations, and communities to think, to learn, and to act and lead with integrity and wisdom.

Tulane pursues this mission by cultivating an environment that focuses on learning and the generation of new knowledge; by expecting and rewarding teaching and research of extraordinarily high quality and impact; and by fostering community-building initiatives as well as scientific, cultural and social understanding that integrate with and strengthen learning and research. This mission is pursued in the context of the unique qualities of our location in New Orleans and our continual aspiration to be a truly distinctive international university.

History

Tulane University, one of the foremost independent national research universities in the country, is ranked among the top quartile of the nation’s most highly selective universities. With ten schools and colleges that range from the liberal arts and sciences through a full spectrum of professional schools, Tulane gives its students a breadth of choice equaled by few other independent universities in the country. Tulane University’s ten academic divisions enroll approximately 8,000 undergraduates and about 5,000 graduate and professional students. The schools of Architecture, Business, Liberal Arts, Public Health and Tropical Medicine, and Science and Engineering offer both undergraduate and graduate programs. Other divisions include the schools of Law, Medicine, Social Work and Professional Advancement.

Tulane traces its origins back to the founding of the Medical College of Louisiana, the Deep South’s first medical school, in 1834. Classes started the next year when 11 students and seven faculty members met in a rented hall; students paid for instruction by the lecture. Born of the desperate need for competent medical care in this region and of the founders’ dedication to study and treat “the peculiar diseases which prevail in this part of the Union,” the college quickly earned recognition. Soon the medical college merged with the public University of Louisiana in New Orleans, adding a law department and a “collegiate” department that became Tulane College. The university continued building a national reputation. J.L. Riddell, professor of chemistry, built the first successful binocular microscope in 1852. The medical department faculty fought for improved public health and sanitation, and, in 1857, Christian Roselius, an early graduate of the collegiate and law departments, was appointed chief justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court.

The Civil War forced the university to close. After the war, the university reopened in financial trouble. Total assets, excluding buildings, totaled $4,570.39 in 1866. In the early 1880s, merchant and philanthropist Paul Tulane provided a permanent solution by donating more than $1 million “for the promotion and encouragement of intellectual, moral, and industrial education.” Tulane had made his fortune in New Orleans before returning to his native Princeton, New Jersey; his gift expressed his appreciation to the city.

The 17-member board authorized to administer the Tulane Educational Fund decided to revitalize the struggling University of Louisiana instead of founding a new institution. Paul Tulane concurred, and in 1884, the Louisiana Legislature gave the University of Louisiana to the Administrators of the Tulane Educational Fund. Tulane University of Louisiana, a private, non-sectarian institution, was born. As a result of its new strength, the university was able to create the Department of Philosophy and Science, which later became the Graduate School, and initiate courses in architecture and engineering.

In 1886, Josephine Louise Newcomb founded Newcomb College as a memorial to her daughter, Harriott Sophie. Newcomb College was the first degree-granting women’s college in the nation to be established as a coordinate division of a men’s university. It became the model for other coordinate women’s colleges, including Barnard and Radcliffe. Newcomb’s founding is linked with the World’s Industrial and Cotton Exposition, which opened in Audubon Park in 1884. Several artisans who came to the New Orleans Exposition to exhibit their own work and see the works of others stayed to establish the arts program, which was at the heart of Newcomb’s early curriculum. By the early 1900s, Newcomb pottery had won a bronze medal at the Paris Exposition, its fame had spread across the nation and young women were engaged in the unusual task of earning an independent living.

In 1894, Tulane moved to its present campus on St. Charles Avenue, five miles by streetcar from its former site in downtown New Orleans. At about the same time, the Richardson Memorial Building was built on Canal Street to house the medical school. Some medical classes were moved to the uptown campus, but clinical teaching remained downtown. The medical school was split between campuses until a major reorganization in the 1960s. For a quarter of a century, Newcomb College was located on Washington Avenue in the Garden District. In 1918 it, too, moved uptown to join other divisions of the university. Around the turn of the century, Tulane’s curriculum grew as several new professional schools were established, including the Deep South’s first schools of architecture, business, and social work. City officials frequently consulted the College of Technology, which became the School of Engineering, on construction techniques and soil conditions. Engineering alumnus A. Baldwin Wood designed the famous Wood screw pump that helps drain New Orleans in times of torrential rains and flooding. The first student yearbook, Jambalaya, and the first Tulanian, the alumni magazine, were published. The Alumni Association was founded with 800 members, and significant contributions to the university financed new buildings, library holdings and research facilities. The Middle American Research Institute, founded in 1924, became a pioneer in Central American archaeology and anthropology, excavating and restoring the Mayan village of Dzibichaltun in the Yucatan.

Since then, research in many disciplines has flourished through the establishment of research centers including the Murphy Institute of Political Economy, Newcomb Research Center, the Roger Thayer Stone Center for Latin American Studies, the Center for Bioenvironmental Research, the Brain
Institute, the Tulane Museum of Natural History, and the Amistad Research Center—curator of one of the largest collections in the world of primary source material on American ethnic groups, especially African-Americans.

As early as the 1890s, Tulane offered free lectures and classes to the New Orleans community. This commitment to community service was reaffirmed in 1942 with the founding of University College, now the School of Professional Advancement, which offers educational opportunities for working adults.

After World War II, Tulane's Graduate School and the professional programs continued to grow. The university was elected to the Association of American Universities, a select group of over 60 universities with "pre-eminent programs of graduate and professional education and scholarly research."

In the fall of 2005, following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, Tulane University was confronted with unprecedented and existential challenges. The administration and the Board of Tulane University were faced with redefining and renewing the university for the future. President Scott Cowen called the resulting plan “the most significant reinvention of a university in the United States in over a century.”

The plan had at its center:

• a focus on an exceptional undergraduate program that is campus- and student-centric and a dedication to the holistic development of students.
• a core that is surrounded and strengthened by superb graduate, professional, and research programs that build on the university's historical strengths and distinctive characteristics.

In July 2014, Michael Fitts became the 15th president of Tulane, bringing with him a strong emphasis on heightening cross-disciplinary education and research.

Under President Fitts’ leadership Tulane’s national ranking and reputation have improved dramatically; each year’s incoming classes have broken records in terms of their academic achievements and diversity; the university's annual operating cash deficit of $15-20 million has been eliminated and the university has enjoyed record fundraising years.

President Fitts believes students and higher education institutions can set themselves apart in a fast-changing world and ever-shifting economy through the combining of different fields and skills. In his first year at Tulane, he launched task forces to lead the university in deepening its unique strengths for interdisciplinary collaboration. He sees powerful advantages in the university's manageable size, its wide selection of professional schools, the unified undergraduate college, and multiple cross-disciplinary projects already in place. He aims to create the most engaged undergraduate experience in the country through this rethinking of academic options, residential living, extracurricular activities, and more. In graduate education and research, he will foster intellectual cross-pollination that can produce solutions to some of the world's most fundamental problems.

This focus also extends to Tulane's physical campuses. President Fitts has initiated a campus master planning process with a 21st century vision of spaces redesigned to promote connections. That includes drawing people together from different parts of campus and linking different functions of the university, such as residence halls with dining hubs and academic venues.

The many major building projects under Fitts include the more than $35 million Goldring/Woldenberg Business Complex; the transformation of Mussafer Hall into the central location for services dedicated to student success; the building of new residence halls; and construction of The Commons, a three-story, $55 million, 77,000-square-foot marvel that will house a new dining hall, multipurpose meeting spaces and a permanent home for the Newcomb College Institute.

Another avenue for making connections is public service, an area where Tulane is a leader in higher education. President Fitts lauds the pursuit of community work for its power to show students how theory connects with practice. It gives them real-world experience with the concepts they study in class. His vision for the university includes enhancing the ties between public service and academics.

Accreditation

Tulane University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Tulane University is accredited by SACSCOC to award associate, baccalaureate, masters, doctorate, and professional degrees. For questions about the accreditation of Tulane University, contact SACSCOC at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500.

University Administration

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Academic Policies

Registration Policies and Procedures

All students must register by the last day to add classes each semester. Students register online by accessing Gibson Online (https://gibson.tulane.edu), which can be found via the University Registrar’s website at www.registrar.tulane.edu. Gibson Online is a gateway to online services such as registration, grades, degree audit, Canvas, and the Schedule of Classes (https://classschedule.tulane.edu/Search.aspx). Registration can also be accessed by logging directly into the Schedule of Classes (https://classschedule.tulane.edu/Search.aspx). Summer and Fall semester course offerings are typically available for review in March, and Spring semester courses are typically available in October. The Schedule of Classes (https://classschedule.tulane.edu/Search.aspx) contains live data and reflects course availability at that moment in time. The convenience of registration online coupled with the delivery of tuition bills via email greatly reduces the time each student must spend on campus dealing with administrative details. By registering for classes students assume full financial responsibility and assume the responsibility of informing the university of any changes in address via Gibson Online (https://gibson.tulane.edu) so that bills may be delivered promptly.

Students are required to confirm their attendance at the beginning of each semester. Each term, enrolled students will be notified via email when confirmation is made available on Gibson Online. In addition, they must consult the official Academic Calendar (https://registrar.tulane.edu/academic-calendar) on the University Registrar’s webpage for important registration and refund deadlines. Failure to heed the dates set forth in the official academic calendar could result in academic or financial penalty.

Grade Grievance Procedure

Students who believe a grade to be incorrect should first consult with their instructor to address any discrepancies. If questions remain or the situation is unresolved, students seeking redress should follow the official grade grievance procedure (https://advising.tulane.edu/advising-center/grade-grievance-procedure).

Address Changes

It is the responsibility of the student to keep the university notified of changes in local or permanent address. Many important notices are sent to students and parents via US mail and it is therefore important to maintain accurate mailing addresses. These notices may include: communications from individual schools within the university or Information Technology, bills (if requested via mail), and notices concerning academic action. It is therefore essential that any change in address be updated using the “Update Addresses and Phones” option found under Student Services on Gibson Online.

Name Changes

Students who wish to change their legal name must supply supporting legal documentation and complete the request for name change form with the Office of the Registrar (https://registrar.tulane.edu). Staff or faculty members who have a student record must change their legal name with the Office of the Registrar prior to making a name change request with Human Resources.

Expected Behavior at Tulane University

Tulane University expects and requires behavior compatible with its high standards of scholarship. By accepting admission to the university, a student accepts its regulations (i.e., Code of Academic Conduct (https://college.tulane.edu/code-of-academic-conduct), Code of Student Conduct (https://conduct.tulane.edu/resources/code-student-conduct)) and acknowledges the right of the university to take disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, for conduct judged unsatisfactory or disruptive.

The integrity of Tulane University is based on the absolute honesty of the entire community in all academic endeavors. As part of the community, students have certain responsibilities regarding all independent work that forms the basis for the evaluation of their academic achievement. Students are expected to be familiar with these responsibilities at all times.

The scholarly community of the university depends on the willingness of both instructors and students to uphold the Code of Academic Conduct (https://college.tulane.edu/code-of-academic-conduct). When a violation of the Code of Academic Conduct is suspected, it is the duty of every member of the academic community who has evidence to take action. Students should take steps to uphold the Code of Academic Conduct by reporting any suspected offense to the instructor or the Honor Board. Students should under no circumstances tolerate any form of academic dishonesty.

Behavior Norms

Listed below are generally accepted guidelines for student behavior in classrooms, laboratories, and studios. Instructors and schools may impose other expectations.

- Computers are to be used for class-related purposes only; instructors will specify when computers may not be used.
- Students and instructors will turn off all cell phones and electronic devices at the beginning of each class; these items will remain off for the duration of the class.
- Students and instructors are required to observe copyright laws.
• Students are responsible for checking their Tulane e-mail accounts daily when classes are in session.
• Instructors expect students to be punctual when arriving for classes and presentations; they also expect uninterrupted attendance for the duration of the class.
• Students submitting work late can expect, at the instructor’s discretion, to have the work refused or to receive a grade penalty.
• Videotaping or recording a class requires the instructor’s approval in advance.

Discipline
For all academic activities and disruptive behavior, the authority for control and discipline rests with the dean of Newcomb-Tulane College and the deans of the undergraduate schools. In all other areas, the vice president of student affairs is responsible for formulating appropriate procedures and regulations concerning student behavior and for the judicial consideration of violations. Students should refer to the Code of Student Conduct (https://conduct.tulane.edu/resources/code-student-conduct) for a full description.

Code of Student Conduct
All students are bound by the Code of Student Conduct that is administered by the Office of Student Affairs. The full text is available here (https://tulane.app.box.com/s/f5dtbwd5rtf1xg4lj9q85tnmkqrsbw).

Credit-Hour
Program Integrity Rules issued by the U.S. Department of Education require institutions to establish a definition of “credit hour.” This applies to all degree programs (including credit for full and part-time undergraduate, graduate, professional, post-baccalaureate, and online programs):

• The assignment of credit-hours to a course occurs through a formal review process conducted at the appropriate levels of faculty governance.
• For courses in lecture format, one credit-hour represents the subject content that can be delivered in one academic hour (50 min) of contact time each week for the full duration of one academic semester, typically fifteen weeks along. For undergraduate courses, one credit-hour also includes associated work that can be completed by a typical student in 1-2 hours of effort outside the classroom. For graduate and professional courses taught in lecture format, 2-3 hours of outside work is expected for each academic hour of contact time as well.
• For courses taught in other than lecture format (e.g., seminars, laboratories, independent study, clinical work, research, online courses, etc.), one credit-hour represents an amount of content and/or student effort that in aggregate is no less than that described in (2) above.

While Tulane's standard definition of a credit hour applies across the University, in some cases the definition may vary to meet specific accrediting body requirements.

General Policies
Tulane University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity institution. Consequently, its policy of nondiscrimination includes recruitment, employment, admission, retention, and promotion of the most qualified students, faculty, and staff regardless of an individual’s race, sex, color, religion, marital/ethnic origin, citizenship, marital status, sexual orientation, handicap, or veteran status. Tulane University does not discriminate in its provision of services and benefits or in its treatment of students, patients, and employees. Inquiries regarding this policy may be referred to the Office of Institutional Equity (https://equity.tulane.edu).

Tulane University is committed to a policy of compliance with Federal laws and regulations concerning nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, national/ethnic origin, religion, age handicap, or veteran status in educational or institutional programs and activities. Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the other similar legislation prohibit such discrimination.

Tulane University has implemented grievance procedures for faculty, staff, and students concerning cases of alleged discrimination, including those of alleged sexual harassment. It is the policy of the University that harassment on the basis of sex among employees constitutes an impermissible employment practice, which is subject to disciplinary action and shall not be tolerated. Complaints or confidential inquiries may be referred to the Office of Human Resources (https://hr.tulane.edu) or the Office of Institutional Equity (https://equity.tulane.edu).

Sexual harassment involving students and university personnel or among students is equally impermissible and shall not be tolerated. The University is committed to providing an environment to study free of discrimination and sexual harassment.

Reporting the Complaint: It is not necessary to first confront the harasser prior to instituting a complaint under this policy. However, it is appropriate to promptly report a complaint so that a full and complete investigation is possible. Any person designated to receive complaints from students, employees, or faculty must notify the Office of Institutional Equity within twenty-four (24) hours of receiving a harassment complaint.

Complaints by students: A student who believes she or he has been harassed or is being harassed may report the alleged harassing behavior to any of the following individuals or agencies:
• Dean of the Newcomb-Tulane College, Dean of the school, or Dean of Students (or person designated by same) with which complaining student is affiliated.
• Vice President for Student Affairs (or person designated by same), 504-865-5180
• Associate Dean for Student Affairs, Tulane University Health Sciences Center, 504-988-5668
• Office of Institutional Equity, 504-862-8083 or 504-247-1760
• Tulane University Department of Public Safety, 504-865-5381
• Tulane University Health Sciences Center Security Services, 504-988-5531
• Contact the Office of Institutional Equity for additional information about Tulane University’s Equal Opportunity and Harassment Policies. Uptown Square Suite 105, 504-247-1760.

Tulane University complies with the provision of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), which was enacted to protect the privacy of education records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their education records, and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate or misleading data. Students have the right to file complaints with the U.S. Department of Education Family Policy Compliance Office (ferpa.complaints@ed.gov) concerning alleged failures by the institution to comply with the Act. Information concerning the rights and protection under the Act, the types and locations of education records maintained, and the procedure to be used by the institution for compliance with the provisions of the Act can be obtained from the following offices: Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Student Services (https://studentaffairs.tulane.edu/contact-us/contact-us) and Registrar’s Office (https://registrar.tulane.edu/contact-us). Tulane University’s FERPA policy may be found here (https://registrar.tulane.edu/privacy-policies-forms). Grievances or confidential inquiries concerning the Act may be referred to the Office of Institutional Equity (https://equity.tulane.edu).

It is the policy and practice of Tulane University to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and all state and local requirements regarding individuals with disabilities. Under these laws, no qualified individual with a disability shall be denied access to, or participation in, services, programs, and activities of Tulane University. Accommodations are provided to those with documented disabilities through the Goldman Center for Student Accessibility (https://accessibility.tulane.edu). This office can be reached at (504) 862-8433.