

Cornell Lends a Big Hand to Tulane and New Orleans

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Less than 72 hours after Hurricane Katrina threw Tulane faculty and staff into their own storm of uncertainty, Cornell University threw out a lifeline. On Sept. 1, Cornell president Hunter Rawlings issued an open invitation for the students and faculty of Tulane University to come to Cornell; by Sept. 6, 193 Tulane students had taken him up on the offer, and a number of Tulane faculty had gone to Cornell as visiting faculty.



Attending Cornell University this semester are Tulane students Kate Schmidt '09, right, of LaCanada, Ca., and Jackie Rapp '09 of New Rochelle, N.Y., in one of the dorm rooms that has been converted for displaced students.
([Kevin Stearns/Cornell University Photography](#))

It would have been a testament to collegiality if the story had stopped there, but the Cornell community was just getting started, offering an array of aid to Tulanians and New Orleanians that Rawlings describes as "vast."

The visiting Tulane students were provided with housing, gift cards and free packages of school supplies from the Cornell Store, and, when needed, loaner computers from the university registrar's office and Cornell Information Technologies. The university library system provided Tulane students and faculty full library privileges, and study space in campus libraries.

Cornell academic units accommodated students as well. The College of Architecture, Art and Planning had prepared to accept 12 Tulane students for the fall semester, for example, but when 36 students enrolled, the school made room for them, opening up a studio that had been closed for renovation.

Cornell's generosity didn't stop with Tulanians. The university reached out to some 700 Cornell students whose homes were in the areas devastated by Hurricane Katrina, provided supplies through their veterinary college to the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine in Baton Rouge, sent emergency medicine attendings, residents and EMS providers to the hurricane relief areas, and set up a program allowing Cornell faculty and staff trained in emergency response to take three consecutive weeks off for volunteer work.

On a more personal scale, Cornell student, staff and alumni groups held fundraisers and collected relief supplies, personal care items and even children's craft kits to distribute in hurricane-stricken communities.

"I am very proud of how the Cornell community has united to support our fellow citizens from the Gulf area," Rawlings said.