

Problem solving through design

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A team of Tulane University students is collaborating with the Phyllis M. Taylor Center for Social Innovation and Design Thinking to bring hands-on, creative problem-solving opportunities to campus.

The group launched Design for America (DFA) Tulane, an interdisciplinary team of students, with the support of Tulane faculty who specialize in design thinking —a human-centered approach to addressing challenges.

The new campus organization is one of less than 40 Design for America studios nationwide, which work year-round to create positive impact in their communities.

“It’s really exciting for the Taylor Center to be able to support a group of students who are working to create change through design,” said Allison Schiller, Design Thinking instructor and SISE academic advisor. “Our students bring independence, focus, and innovation to social challenges.”

The group will work on several community projects each year centered around social and environmental change. Their first project will focus on strengthening the New Orleans community’s response to natural disasters.

“I’m particularly happy to see these undergrad and graduate students coming together to put human-centered design methods at the center of innovation,” said Laura Murphy, associate director for Taylor. “The DFA team will be applying these methods to a local challenge — helping build more resilient communities in the face of disasters.”

Outside of their design projects, DFA Tulane will also host workshops and seminars that will introduce participants to the field of human-centered design.

Samah Ahmed is a junior majoring in public health at Tulane University.

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Allison Schiller, Design Thinking instructor



Members of Design for America meet weekly on the uptown campus. (Photo from Kristen Hill)