

Service Links Campus to Community

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Alicia Duplessis aduples@tulane.edu

Half-full paint cans, unhinged doors and second-hand light fixtures crowd the main room of the Green Project's warehouse where Michael Bernstein, Tulane provost, traded in his suit and tie and joined a coterie of volunteers for a day of service on Friday (Aug.1).



Michael Bernstein, Tulane provost, does some heavy lifting during a day of service at the Green Project warehouse store, where he and his office staff joined the Center for Public Service and Americorps VISTA members to volunteer. (Photos by Alicia Duplessis)

Working alongside the staff members of the Tulane [Center for Public Service](#) and its [AmeriCorps VISTA](#) members, Bernstein and his office group hoped to commemorate the center's success in providing public service opportunities for students and volunteers throughout the year.

"We're here today to help the folks at the Green Project, but we're also here to show our support for the Center For Public Service," says Bernstein.

"They are the foundation of what we're doing in public service and service learning, which has given Tulane a distinctive signature that has doubled our applications to well over a 100 percent increase."

While a few provost's office staff members opted for a cooler in-door assignment, Bernstein took to the muggy outdoors to help reorganize large salvaged building materials in a lot just across from the warehouse.

The day of service was held at the Green Project's warehouse store at 2831 Marais St. in New Orleans, which is dedicated to helping the environment by selling reusable building materials such as doors, windows, paints and light fixtures.



Organizing paint supplies at the Green Project are Ann Salzer, left, assistant provost, and Cara Zacks, program manager in the Center for Public Service, during the community service day.

Vincent Ilustre, executive director of the Center for Public Service, said he hopes that Friday's day of service will serve as a means of leading by example.

Seeing the administration involved in public service, Ilustre said, will encourage the student body to remain eager about getting involved.

"Our staff has service days once per month during the summer and it's great to have the provost and his staff here with us today," Ilustre said.

In a quick break from his heavy-duty lifting assignment, Bernstein agreed that the service day should become the norm for more of the university's administrators.

"The day of service will at least be an annual thing for my office and likely more than that," said Bernstein. "When you are teaching and mentoring students you've got to talk the talk and walk the walk. When you are asking students to do things, it's great to be able to say that you do it or that you have done it when you were a student."

The Tulane Center for Public Service supports the university's curriculum by offering public service opportunities that coincide with coursework and gives students the chance to positively affect life in New Orleans. These opportunities are afforded through a list of community [partners](#).