

Tulane University Focuses on Social Entrepreneurship

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Tulane University, which gained a national reputation for civic engagement and public service through its continued efforts to help New Orleans recover from Hurricane Katrina, is now expanding into the area of social entrepreneurship.

"No matter their career aspirations, we want every Tulane student to embrace and become engaged in social entrepreneurship," Tulane University President Scott Cowen said in announcing the university's plans to train the next generation of social entrepreneurs.

A social entrepreneur recognizes a social problem, such as poverty, educational disparities, health inequities, environmental degradation and more, and identifies creative and innovative approaches to address the problem.

Through several external grants, Tulane has hired Stephanie Barksdale as social entrepreneurship manager to direct its initiatives in this area. These initiatives recently received a boost when Tulane was selected by Ashoka, the world's leading network of social entrepreneurs, as a Changemaker Campus. The university is currently assembling a team of students to organize events and programs that support social innovation and entrepreneurship at Tulane. The students will also collaborate with their peers at other select universities around the country.

The university will also host a NewDay Speaker Series featuring leading social entrepreneurs Darrell Hammond, founder and CEO of KABOOM! Playgrounds (Nov. 2), Bill Drayton, founder of Ashoka (Feb. 2, 2010), and Blake Mykoskie, founder of TOMS Shoes (March 9, 2010).

This spring, Tulane will also launch the NewDay Challenge that will award a Tulane student or group up to \$20,000 in seed funding for a financially sustainable social enterprise. In addition, the university will begin a national search for the Sacks Endowed Distinguished Chair in Civic Engagement and Social Entrepreneurship at Tulane, who will oversee the development of Tulane's social entrepreneurship programs.

Tulane will also raise funds for at least five professorships to support social entrepreneurship on campus. The professorships will be granted to any faculty whose interests can be linked to social entrepreneurship, regardless of school or discipline.

"I am expecting great things from this latest Tulane venture. It will be exciting to see all the innovative ways Tulanians discover to change our community and world," Cowen said. "It also holds the promise of elevating and solidifying our national reputation for civic engagement and public service."