

## Real March Madness

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bbronst@tulane.edu



Tulane Deputy Athletics Director and Chief Operating Officer Mónica Lebrón oversees all day-to-day operations for Tulane Athletics while specifically overseeing football, women's basketball, beach volleyball and sailing. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Mónica Lebrón (SSE '19) had been in her job as deputy athletics director and chief operating officer for just a few weeks when she learned that she would be the point person from Tulane for the NCAA Women's Final Four in New Orleans.

Little did she know then that the Final Four would never occur. On March 12, the rapidly spreading COVID-19 virus forced the NCAA to cancel all remaining winter and spring sports competitions and championships, including the Men's and Women's Final Four.

The NCAA made the right decision, she said, but that doesn't mean she doesn't feel sympathy for all the student-athletes hoping to compete in New Orleans. "I think about the seniors whose seasons and collegiate careers ended abruptly and unexpectedly, and for us here in New Orleans who were looking forward to hosting the championship and sharing our amazing city with so many out of town guests," she said.

These days, Lebrón, like the rest of the Tulane community, is getting used to a new normal. With most of Tulane's student-athletes back in their hometowns, one of her priorities is making sure they have all the resources they need to have a successful academic year.

"We're communicating with our 350-plus student-athletes every single day," she said.

Lebrón, who played softball at Yale from 1997 to 2001, oversees all day-to-day operations for Tulane Athletics while specifically overseeing football, women's basketball, beach volleyball and sailing. She never misses a competition when she is in town but knows there is a lot more to the college experience than just playing sports.

"I'm here to make sure our student-athletes have the best possible college experience that they can have, and not just from an athletics standpoint," she said. "We work with the coaching staffs every single day to make sure that happens."

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