

Temporary buildings offer more space for on-campus learning and dining while physically distancing

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Tulane's new temporary classrooms, pictured here while still under construction, will enable more in-person teaching for students and faculty. The university built 13 of the temporary structures on quads around campus. This one is on Monroe Quad near Weinmann Hall. (Photo by Sally Asher)

An exciting development is taking shape on Tulane's uptown campus: the construction of 13 temporary buildings that will facilitate in-person teaching and on-campus dining while observing physical distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among students, faculty and staff.

The university began building the structures in July in anticipation of the campus reopening for Fall 2020 and for classes starting on Aug. 19, 2020.

Each classroom will accommodate 50 to 80 students at a time in a fully socially distanced manner. They are located on Monroe and Newcomb quads and the Berger Family Lawn.

The Berger Family Lawn is also the site of a new dining space that will be called the Dining Pavilion. It will accommodate over 300 diners at a time and serve as another all-you-care-to-eat dining room. The Pavilion will feature menu items from Campus Services' two electric tuktuk food carts as well as a serving station featuring menu items from the Commons.

According to Patrick J. Norton, senior vice president and chief operating officer, the temporary buildings feature soundproof walls and solid flooring and are climate-controlled and ADA accessible. They will be equipped with new furnishings, and all interior and exterior surfaces are easily sanitized.

The temporary buildings that are dedicated classroom space will also be outfitted with state-of-the-art technology that both enhances the in-person experience and

enables remote learning. They will be equipped with projectors and screens, high-definition cameras, wireless microphones and speakers, and touch monitors. The university also built five additional teaching facilities for non-traditional classroom uses.

“We are committed to offering a rewarding education with significant face-to-face engagement,” said Robin Forman, senior vice president for academic affairs and provost. “But we did not have the existing classroom capacity to allow our students to attend their classes and follow appropriate social distancing norms. With these temporary classrooms, about half of our courses have now been scheduled into classrooms in which all enrolled students can safely attend at the same time. In other courses we will use technology to reduce the number of students in attendance to safe limits.”

“We are making it possible for more students to safely go to class,” Forman added. “We should be very proud of this investment that improves both the safety of our community and the quality of the Tulane education.”

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