

Amid pandemic, Tulane shatters records for total applications, Early Decision applicants

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Amid a global pandemic, Tulane University has shattered institutional records with over 45,000 applications received for the Class of 2025, which will enter Tulane in

the fall. Tulane has now seen a 55 percent increase in total applications over the past five years. A record number of those students (4,000) indicated the university is their first choice by participating in Tulane's Early Decision admissions program.

Tulane launched its Early Decision program in 2016. In that inaugural year, 1,000 students applied to the program. In just five years, that number has tripled, and for the second straight year, half of the students who will enroll in Tulane's upcoming class are Early Decision applicants.

"While many universities have pared down their expectations and ambitions during the pandemic, Tulane continues to perform at an extraordinarily high level in all areas, including attracting the best and the brightest young scholars from around the country," Tulane President Michael Fitts said.

Fitts believes part of Tulane's success in attracting the record number of applications goes back to the university's founding mission of seeking a cure for yellow fever, cholera and other infectious diseases. Now, Tulane's position on the frontlines of treating COVID-19 patients, while seeking new treatments and better vaccines, is helping to attract a new generation of students.

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Satyajit Dattagupta, Tulane's vice president of enrollment management and dean of undergraduate admission, said receiving 45,000 applications is a feat any year but "is even more remarkable given the fact this number was accomplished amid a pandemic."

The Early Decision program at Tulane allows prospective students to indicate Tulane as their first-choice school and agree to enroll if admitted and withdraw applications from other universities.

With the university closed for much of the spring and summer recruiting season and the impact of the pandemic continuing into the fall semester, Tulane's enrollment management team was forced to completely change its approach and adapt to a new virtual world.

Over the last year, the team used a hybrid approach of hosting some prospective students on campus and talking with many others virtually. In all, the team

conducted more than 7,000 individual interviews with prospective students and engaged with more than 20,000 students virtually.

In a period when many prospective students and families were often experiencing Zoom and other virtual fatigue, Tulane's team developed quality content for [virtual visits](#) and opportunities to connect with [the student enrollment team](#). These efforts proved to be a difference-maker, according to Dattagupta.

The team also conducted smaller, socially distanced tours and other events for students and their families who wanted to visit Tulane.

"Another significant driver of the increase in applications was Tulane's decision to re-open its campuses in the fall 2020 semester for on-the-ground classes and operations," Fitts said.

"Having the campus community return with more than 80-percent of classes taught in-person sent a real message to prospective students and their parents who could see first-hand the value of what we do – the research, the hands-on teaching, the public service and the crucial social development we offer to students," Fitts said. "So, this record-setting increase in applications is really a tribute to our admissions team, as well as all the faculty, staff and administrators who worked so hard to make our return to campus possible."

Dattagupta agreed.

"Since Tulane was open last fall, and I do not want to take anything away from schools that were not able to open, the reality is a lot of students and their families were able to visit safely, and they saw first-hand the kind of precautions taken by the institution and the leadership President Fitts has provided the Tulane community. Early Decision is a big choice that families make. So being able to do that in person told me that it was such a huge relief for them to at least see the institution once and take a tour before applying for Early Decision," Dattagupta said.

The Class of 2025 will step on to a campus ranked No. 41 in the latest [US News & World Report Best Colleges 2021](#). The publication also listed Tulane No. 3 among the best schools for Service Learning and No. 20 on its list of Best College for Veterans. Tulane's undergraduate business program ranked 44th in the nation.

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