

Marcia Walker-McWilliams named executive director of the Tulane History Project

February 28, 2023 12:15 PM Tulane Today staff
today@tulane.edu



Marcia Walker-McWilliams, PhD, will lead the Tulane History Project as executive director. Walker-McWilliams was most recently executive director of the Black Metropolis Research Consortium at the University of Chicago, an association of 22 Chicago-based libraries, museums, community groups and cultural heritage organizations that house Black historical collections.

Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Robin Forman has announced that Marcia Walker-McWilliams, PhD, will lead the Tulane History Project and its effort to develop a detailed history of Tulane with respect to its racial history and

founding, including the impacts from slavery and segregation. Walker-McWilliams brings a wealth of experience in engaging stakeholders both within and beyond the academy in carrying out challenging, meaningful scholarship, according to Forman.

Walker-McWilliams was most recently executive director of the Black Metropolis Research Consortium at the University of Chicago, an association of 22 Chicago-based libraries, museums, community groups and cultural heritage organizations that house Black historical collections. Prior to her position with the consortium, she taught courses in American history and African American Studies at several universities, including Rice, where she also served as an associate director in the Center for Civic Leadership.

Walker-McWilliams is the author of *Reverend Addie Wyatt: Faith and the Fight for Labor, Gender, and Racial Equality* and co-author of the upcoming book *The New Civil Rights Movement Reader: Resistance, Resilience and Justice*. She earned a PhD in American history from the University of Chicago and an undergraduate degree in Social Policy and African American Studies from Northwestern University.

At Tulane, Walker-McWilliams will work with researchers, historians, archivists and community members to conduct a deep, honest and rigorous historical study of Tulane from its founding as the Medical College of Louisiana in 1834 to the present. The Tulane University History Project will help Tulanians understand the institution's past with an eye toward creating a guide to a better future. The History Project was first announced by President Fitts in 2021 as part of [A Plan for Now](#). To support this effort, Tulane has joined [Universities Studying Slavery](#) (USS), a collaborative international consortium of over 90 colleges and universities researching and documenting their institutional ties to the legacies of slavery and racism.

Created and led by the University of Virginia, USS is a leading resource for universities to share best practices and guiding principles for efforts such as The History Project. The consortium also provides a framework for member institutions to work together to address both historical and contemporary issues dealing with race and inequality.

Tulane's membership in the USS and its institutional commitment to its goals provide a great platform for Walker-McWilliams as she begins her work at Tulane. The Tulane History Project will also be overseen by an advisory group co-chaired by

Sally Brown Richardson, A.D. Freeman Professor of Civil Law and vice dean for Academic Affairs at Tulane Law School, and Halima Leak Francis, PhD, professor of practice and Public Administration Program director at the School of Professional Advancement.