

Tulane's Louisiana Promise fuels growth for in-state enrollment, first-generation students and keeps top talent here

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On Saturday, Julia Sellers of Baton Rouge and Seth Meaux of Lafayette will be among 31 students celebrating a milestone—the first graduating class of the Louisiana Promise program, an initiative that makes a Tulane degree more accessible for Louisiana residents. Photo by Kenny Lass.

For 31 new Tulane graduates, the university's Unified Commencement celebration on May 17 will be a testament to both their achievements and the power of Tulane's

[Louisiana Promise](#) program. Through the program, Tulane provides grants and scholarships to make up the difference between what Louisiana families earning less than \$100,000 per year can pay and the cost of attending Tulane.

Seth Meaux from Lafayette is proud to be among the first graduating class of the Louisiana Promise program since it began enrolling students four years ago.

"I remember the day I received my scholarship through the Louisiana Promise program. Getting accepted into Tulane was one thing but being able to afford it was the bigger challenge. In the past four years, I earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree," Meaux said. "Only at Tulane was I given this and countless other opportunities. I do not know where I would be or what I could have achieved without Louisiana Promise, so I am forever grateful for this program."

Fellow Louisiana Promise graduate Julia Sellers from Baton Rouge echoed Meaux's sentiments.

"Students from Louisiana deserve access to an education at the most academically rigorous institution in our state without being intimidated by financial concerns," Sellers said. "The Louisiana Promise scholarship has given me the opportunity to spend my undergraduate years at the university that I knew would provide the most ideal circumstances for me to learn and grow as both a student and an individual. I am appreciative of the initiative Tulane has taken to encourage more students from Louisiana to attend the university."

[Established in 2020](#) by Tulane President Michael A. Fitts, [Louisiana Promise](#) makes a Tulane education more accessible and affordable for Louisiana residents from low and middle-income backgrounds. This is particularly significant in a state whose median annual income of \$51,707 falls well below the national average of \$68,703.

"Our goal is to keep the best and brightest students from every parish right here at home," Fitts said. "Tulane would not be the university it is if it were located anywhere but in our home state of Louisiana. Louisiana Promise is about unlocking the extraordinary talent that exists in every corner of the state. By expanding access to a Tulane education, we're driving homegrown innovation, opportunity and progress for years to come."

In its fifth year, Louisiana Promise is showing tangible results, with 222 students enrolled in the program and a near record number of Louisiana students now

attending one of the country's leading research and educational institutions.

Tulane's incoming Class of 2028 includes more than 250 Louisiana students, comprising 14% of the class, up from 10% last year and double the percentage from just five years ago. Louisiana Promise students hail from 32 parishes, with the highest representation coming from Caddo, East Baton Rouge, St. Tammany, Jefferson and Orleans parishes.

The Louisiana Promise program also extends far beyond financial aid packages. The initiative includes efforts by Tulane to promote college attendance and success for students throughout Louisiana such as:

- The Louisiana Center for College Access, which provides free SAT and ACT test preparation for high school students across the state.
- A pre-college summer program which each year provides support for 50 Louisiana high school students to attend a two-week residential experience at Tulane and get a taste of university life.
- College tours and advising services to help students throughout Louisiana imagine themselves on a college campus, whether at Tulane or another institution.
- A dedicated college preparatory center to assist aspiring first-generation college students who lack access to strong college counseling programs.

"Louisiana Promise is a win-win for both Louisiana's families and Tulane," Fitts said. "As the program continues to grow each year, more students are participating in it, as well as in our college preparatory opportunities. Through our partnerships with community-based organizations we are making sure all families know about Louisiana Promise – from Shreveport to St. Rose and all points between."

The success of Louisiana Promise in enrolling more in-state students is part of the university's overall strategy to reverse the state's "brain drain" by creating more opportunities for all Louisiana residents to thrive.

In addition to conducting lifesaving research and cutting-edge scholarship that prepares Louisiana's future doctors, entrepreneurs and leaders in every field, a recent report also revealed that Tulane has a [\\$5.2 billion annual impact on the state's economy](#). This figure is a significant increase from a 2019 study that credited the university with making a \$3.14 billion annual impact to Louisiana's economy. The increased impact is due in large part to a surge in faculty research awards at

Tulane, which have risen by more than 70 percent in the last six years.

Tulane's operations — which are heavily focused on research — its campus expansions and other activities also support more than 30,000 jobs across Louisiana and generate \$88.2 million in annual state tax revenue.

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President Michael A. Fitts



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