

Class of 2029 kicks off Tulane journey with Hullabaloo Hello

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bbronst@tulane.edu



With plenty of fanfare and activities, first-year students enjoyed a warm Tulane welcome at this year's Hullabaloo Hello orientation. (Photo by Kenny Lass)

Sitting in McAlister Auditorium, attending one of dozens of welcoming events during Hullabaloo Hello, Alija Colón of Chicago couldn't believe he was really on campus at Tulane University — not as a visitor, but as a student.

"Calling this my new home is so surreal," he said. "I love the sense of community that you just don't find at a lot of bigger schools. That was a huge draw for me."

Colón is one of about 1,900 students — out of a field of 32,000 applicants — who is

now part of Tulane's Class of 2029.

Luz Schubert of Santa Barbara, California, is another of the 2029 cohort. She echoed Colón's enthusiasm. "I toured as a high school freshman and immediately told my parents, 'This is where I want to go.'"

The week of Aug. 10, students from 50 states and territories and more than 40 countries arrived on the uptown campus, moved into their residence halls and gathered for Hullabaloo Hello events. Rosie Yates, director of College Programs, said Hullabaloo Hello is about students "exploring campus and New Orleans and discovering connections and resources that will shape their next four years, inside and outside of the classroom."

The event was organized by Newcomb-Tulane College (NTC) Programs. NTC is the academic home for all undergraduates when they enter Tulane. Hullabaloo Hello encompassed Move-In, programming and New Orleans excursions, with students divided into groups named for some of the city's favorite foods — Gumbo, Po-Boy and Beignet. The week culminated with the President's Convocation for New Students on Aug. 17.

In her welcoming speech to students attending Hullabaloo Hello, Mollye Demosthenidy, the dean of NTC, called Tulane a "place of possibility" and challenged first-year students to be adventurous in the classes they take, the programs and events they attend and the goals they set.

"I want you to be intentional about this experience," she said. "You are starting college in arguably one of the most interesting moments in American history. In these times, campuses aren't just places of learning; they're microcosms of the broader debates shaping our societies."

As members of the Hullabaloo Hello Board of Directors, Stephanie Okereke, a junior from Shreveport, Louisiana, and Kyanne Flores, a junior from San Antonio, Texas, encouraged students to step outside their comfort zones by trying a new class or sport and introducing themselves to someone new each day.

"College is about challenges and challenging yourself," Okereke said.

With those words, students poured out of McAlister and began rotating through various get-to-know-you sessions on such topics as advising, student success and health.

A session titled “Ripple Effect” addressed Tulane’s commitment to civic engagement in New Orleans, the Gulf South and the world. Another session titled “Live Well” covered general wellness resources available at Tulane. For early risers, “Roll Into Rec” offered a high-intensity training class at the Reily Student Recreation Center and a morning run through campus and Audubon Park. There were programs for students and parents alike.

Each of Tulane’s undergraduate schools held open houses, where students met faculty and learned about majors, minors and academic research opportunities. The Campus Cup on Brown Field featured a night of games and challenges as residence halls competed for prizes, points and bragging rights.

Beyond the Bubble gave students an opportunity to explore their new city, with outings to some of the most popular tourist attractions in New Orleans, from Mardi Gras World and Vue Orleans to the National World War II Museum and Audubon Aquarium of the Americas.

New to this year’s Hullabaloo Hello were pre-departure faculty lectures before excursions, which gave students a preview of what they would be seeing and learning at the various landmarks. Also new was a series of faculty lectures designed to connect students with research opportunities in their fields of interest.





Families joined the Move-In efforts, helping first-year students turn their new dorm rooms into homey enclaves. (Photo by Kenny Lass)

Students found plenty of opportunities to gather and make new friends throughout the week. (Photo by Kenny Lass)

A variety of excursions, including a swamp tour by boat, introduced students to Louisiana culture and local charm. (Photo by Kenny Lass)