

# **Tulane earns 2026 Carnegie classification for community engagement**

February 09, 2026 9:00 AM Kimberly Steinmetz  
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Tulane student Nemat Iddisah leads an interactive chemistry and forensics lesson with fifth graders from Esperanza Charter School as part of a service-learning project. (Photo by Kenny Lass)

Tulane University recently earned the 2026 Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement designation, which recognizes universities and colleges where community-engaged work is deeply interwoven into the institution's fabric.

According to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the classification reinforces Tulane's role as an anchor institution in New Orleans, highlighting the university's emphasis on long-term, reciprocal partnerships that

connect academic excellence with public purpose. It reflects a shared understanding that Tulane's success is deeply tied to the well-being of the community it calls home.

"The future of New Orleans and the future of Tulane are linked to a degree shared by few other communities and universities in the country," said President Michael A. Fitts. "Carnegie's Community Engagement designation reflects our foundational and ongoing mission to improve the lives of our neighbors and extend that impact regionally and globally. We were first established to rid the New Orleans region of the threat of yellow fever epidemics, and we continue to use our research, scholarship and service to make a real, positive and lasting impact in our hometown."

The Carnegie classification is based on how engagement shows up across an institution and whether that work is embedded in a community and sustained over time.

"This is one of the most rigorous assessments we participate in," said Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Robin Forman. "The Carnegie Foundation reviews how community engagement is threaded through every aspect of our mission. That the foundation has continually affirmed our status as a truly 'community-engaged university' is a valuable affirmation of our core commitment to this work and our relationship to New Orleans and the Gulf Coast."

Service learning takes many forms at Tulane. Architecture students collaborate with local organizations on affordable housing. Public health and medical students work alongside community partners in student-run clinics and applied research, addressing local health priorities. Across the university, students connect classroom learning to real-world challenges through service-learning courses, internships and long-term partnerships.

"At Tulane, community engagement is truly a campus-wide effort," said Agnieszka Nance, executive director of the Center for Public Service, which supports and helps coordinate Tulane's curriculum-based community service. "Tulane has been a national and global leader in this work for decades. Service learning has long been a priority on campus and has been embedded into the undergraduate core curriculum since 2006. The Carnegie classification underscores our long-standing commitment to education that emphasizes leadership, civil dialogue, empathy and critical

thinking — all in service of strengthening our communities and society as a whole.”

The university’s application for Carnegie designation reflected that breadth, Nance said, documenting how civic and community-based work connects classrooms, research and institutional decision-making with local, national and global communities. The submission also highlighted Tulane’s work in civic education and dialogue, underscoring the university’s commitment to preparing students not only for careers, but for thoughtful, engaged citizenship.

The designation, administered by the American Council on Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, will remain in effect through 2032.