

## [Tulane's historic preservation program named founding collaborator in World Monuments Fund institute](#)

February 27, 2026 8:00 AM Stacey Plaisance  
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Students in Tulane's Historic Preservation Program clean and restore castings in New Orleans' St. Louis Cemetery No. 2 during a site visit last fall. Hands-on efforts like this contributed to the program's selection as a founding academic collaborator in a global preservation initiative led by World Monuments Fund. (Photos by Catherine Restrepo)

Whether they're documenting a 16th-century Sufi complex in Cairo, surveying nearly 2,000 structures on Louisiana's only inhabited barrier island or working on historic sites shaped by conflict or climate risks, Tulane students are on the front lines of

historic preservation.

Now, that hands-on approach has earned Tulane University a role as a founding academic collaborator in the [Suzanne Deal Booth Institute for Heritage Preservation](#), an initiative of [World Monuments Fund](#) (WMF).

The collaboration formally links WMF with Tulane's [School of Architecture and Built Environment](#), and the university's engagement will be led by its nationally recognized [Historic Preservation Program](#). Faculty, graduate students and research studios will anchor Tulane's participation, integrating coursework with hands-on preservation projects at sites around the world.

Tulane joins Columbia University, the University of Pennsylvania, Carleton University in Canada and the University of Duhok in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq as academic collaborators in the institute. Launched in 2025 with a \$10 million endowment, the institute connects graduate education with active preservation projects across WMF's global portfolio.

"Tulane's Historic Preservation Program has long combined rigorous scholarship with deep field engagement in some of the most environmentally and socially complex regions in the country," said [Heather Veneziano](#), director of Tulane's Historic Preservation Program. "This partnership recognizes the strength of that model and expands it onto a global stage."

Through the collaboration, Tulane students will participate in fellowships, global documentation initiatives and site-based research studios embedded directly into the curriculum. One Master of Science in Historic Preservation student will work this summer with WMF's structural engineering team at the Takiyyat Ibrahim al-Gulshani complex in Cairo, contributing to documentation and adaptive reuse planning. Faculty and students are also discussing a documentation initiative at Old Belchite in Zaragoza, Spain.

"Our students are not learning preservation in the abstract," Veneziano said. "Through this collaboration, they are embedded in active projects while working alongside engineers, conservators and communities to address climate risk, adaptive reuse and long-term stewardship."

The initiative builds on Tulane's sustained work in the Gulf South and Caribbean, where preservation practice intersects with climate adaptation,

environmental change and community stability.

In addition to its work with WMF, the program continues research in coastal Louisiana. With support from the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service's Historic Preservation Fund, Veneziano is co-leading a comprehensive survey of approximately 2,000 structures on Grand Isle, Louisiana's only inhabited barrier island.

Working in partnership with CICADA and employing Tulane graduate research assistants, the project includes architectural documentation, GIS mapping, drone imagery and select 3D scans to create a baseline record of a community shaped by storms, land loss and a working waterfront economy.

The Grand Isle survey will also launch a broader ArcGIS database of coastal communities in southern Louisiana and beyond, creating a long-term digital record of sites at risk from erosion and climate change.

"Because of our location and sustained work in the Gulf South and Caribbean, Tulane has developed nationally recognized expertise in climate-vulnerable heritage," Veneziano said. "The Institute allows us to extend that leadership internationally while bringing global best practices back to Louisiana."

Future institute programs and convenings are expected to rotate among partner campuses, with New Orleans positioned as a hub for programming focused on climate resilience, heritage trades training and community-centered preservation leadership.

