

A New Day in Social Entrepreneurship

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After gaining a national reputation for civic engagement and public service for its post-Katrina recovery efforts, Tulane is expanding into social entrepreneurship initiatives led by Stephanie Barksdale.



Stephanie Barksdale is leading the university's expanding initiatives into social entrepreneurship. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Barksdale, special assistant to the university president, manages a new Office of [Social Entrepreneurship Initiatives](#) that will sponsor a speaker series, business plan competitions and enrichment programs to support social entrepreneurship ventures on campus and beyond. Social entrepreneurship is the process of using innovation and creativity to develop sustainable, scalable solutions to our most pressing social challenges.

"Social entrepreneurs use innovative ideas to address the root causes of social problems," Barksdale says. "This approach to problem solving is incredibly empowering at a time when conventional resources and opportunities seem to be

waning. Our goal is to offer students the interdisciplinary skill set, experiences and knowledge needed to create sustainable social change."

Barksdale has several initiatives lined up, including the [Ashoka U Changemaker Campus partnership](#); the New Day Social Entrepreneurship [Distinguished Speakers Series](#), which will bring in national figures like TOMS Shoes founder Blake Mycoskie; and the New Day Social Entrepreneurship Challenge, a competition for \$20,000 for business ventures by Tulane students whose primary goal is to effect social change in New Orleans.

Next week, Barksdale and the Tulane Entrepreneurs Association will host a workshop for students interested in competing in the New Day Challenge. The "Business Planning 101" workshop is scheduled for 10 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 9, in room 3110 in Goldring/Woldenberg II on the uptown campus.

Tulane also plans to bolster its social entrepreneurship curricula. The university will begin a national search for the Sacks Endowed Distinguished Chair in Civic Engagement and Social Entrepreneurship at Tulane, who will oversee the development of the university's social entrepreneurship programs.

Tulane also will raise funds for at least five professorships to support social entrepreneurship on campus. The professorships will be granted to any faculty whose interests can be linked to social entrepreneurship, regardless of school or discipline.