

## **Banding Together at Band Camp**

August 17, 2010 3:00 AM Alicia Duplessis Jasmin  
aduples@tulane.edu

Through summer band camp, veteran members and newbies of the Tulane University Marching Band find friendship and music as they arrive to campus several weeks before the academic semester begins. Midway through the camp's second week, clashing cymbals and the heart-thumping sounds of sousaphones have become the soundtrack as the university prepares to launch the fall semester.



Senior Steven Mills, left, and first-year student Ashley Conger are among the Tulane University Marching Band members getting ready to make music this fall. (Photo by Alicia Duplessis Jasmin)

Summer camp ends and the 2010 band debuts on Saturday (Aug. 21), when the group performs at the annual Convocation Ceremony that welcomes new students arriving to the university.

"Music allows me to calm down and relax, before and during the semester," says Steven Mills, a senior and trombone section leader from Oklahoma City. "Band camp is the most intense part of the band experience, but it's always a lot of fun to see everyone again after we've been away all summer."

Like many members of the Tulane [marching band](#), Mills has been playing musical instruments since his age was a single digit. He credits the band with heightening his collegiate experience and enthusiastically recommends joining the marching band to any musically inclined students.

Cymbal player and first-year student Ashley Conger of Foxborough, Mass., is just beginning to adjust to the long days of rehearsal crammed into the two-week camp. Conger, who is the only cymbal player in this year's band, also plays the flute and oboe.

“Band camp is really tough because we have to memorize between 10 and 15 songs in a short amount of time,” says Conger, who adds sarcastically that she's thrilled at the thought of carrying her 15-pound cymbals along the eight-mile Mardi Gras parade routes. “We don't have Mardi Gras in Massachusetts, so parades will be a new experience for me.”

The band, directed by Barry Spanier, also is gearing up for performances during the [Tulane Fan Day](#) on Aug. 25, the pep rally on Sept. 1 at 8 p.m. on the Lavin-Bernick Center Quad, and [Green Wave football](#) season, which begins on Sept. 2.