

Tulane Receives Good Marks for Environmental Work

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A newly released assessment of the environmentally sustainable practices of universities has moved Tulane University to the top of the class. Tulane received an “A-” on the 2011 edition of the College Sustainability Report Card, improving on the “B” that it received last year. In doing so, Tulane joined a cadre of 52 institutions receiving the designation of Overall College Sustainability Leaders.



Green building projects, such as the major renovation of Dinwiddie Hall on the uptown campus, are among projects that boosted Tulane's rating on the College Sustainability Report Card. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

The [study](#) is “a very accessible snapshot of our environmental sustainability programs,” said Liz Davey, program manager at Tulane's [Office of Environmental Affairs](#). “It is a good starting point for discussions of sustainability and what universities can do to help move our society to more sustainable practices.”

The report card evaluates environmental programs at more than 300 schools in the United States and Canada by using four surveys designed to gather information

about sustainability in campus operations, dining services, endowment investment practices and student activities.

Tulane's improved grade can be attributed to improvements in several categories, including green building, transportation, endowment transparency and shareholder engagement. The report noted that the university is pursuing the U.S. Building Council's LEED Green Building certification for all major construction projects as well as planning HVAC upgrades and efficient-lighting retrofits. The report also noted improvements in transportation that include free shuttle service as well as car-sharing and student-run bike repair programs.

Monitoring academia's progress toward more sustainable campuses is important, said Davey, because universities play a key role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and using natural resources more wisely.

“Universities are large institutions, with infrastructure often similar to cities, but also they are educational institutions dedicated to research and learning,” said Davey.

The report card, which is in its fifth edition, is a project of the Sustainable Endowments Institute, a nonprofit organization engaged in research and education to advance sustainability in campus operations and endowment practices.