

High Retention Rate Makes School History

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The first-year retention rate at Tulane University rose to 91.1 percent this year, the highest it has been in the school's history, says Newcomb-Tulane College dean James MacLaren. And the good news continues ? the retention rate from freshman year to junior year has reached a record 85 percent.



The first-year retention rate at Tulane ? the percentage of first-year students who return for their sophomore year ? is 91.1 percent, compared to only 76.6 percent nationally. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

“Newcomb-Tulane College has invested considerable efforts to boost retention in the last couple of years, both year 1 to year 2, and year 2 to year 3,” says MacLaren, who also is a professor of physics. All undergraduates enter Tulane through [Newcomb-Tulane College](#).

The first-year retention rate (referring to first-year students who return to Tulane for their sophomore year) has increased almost 10 percentage points during the last decade and has been steadily increasing since Hurricane Katrina. In comparison, the national average for the first-year retention rate is 76.6 percent.

MacLaren attributes the high retention rate to several factors including the mandatory [TIDES](#) program for first-year students, programs for at-risk students and those with undeclared majors, additional academic advisers and better coordination between those advisers, student affairs, [Educational Resources and Counseling](#) and the Student Health Center to provide help sooner to students who may need it.

In addition, scholarship probation has been extended for a year for students who participate in MAP (Maximizing Your Academic Potential), a program aimed at those who are struggling academically.

The Tulane administration is planning several additional measures that have the potential to improve future retention rates even further.

“We are planning to improve tutoring support and add supplemental instruction in key areas to improve student performance and satisfaction,” MacLaren says. “We are enhancing the honors program to provide more opportunities for this group of students.”

If the Tulane retention rate continues its upward trend, then for the first time Tulane will be in the company of elite universities throughout the country in this measure, he says.

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