

Campus trees in the national spotlight

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"We try to keep our eyes on them," says Bill Mizell. He's talking about the university's much-beloved trees, which Mizell, landscape supervisor at Tulane, and his grounds crew try to pamper. Their work is appreciated by the Arbor Day Foundation, which recently named Tulane a 2011 Tree Campus USA.



For the third year in a row, the Arbor Day Foundation has named Tulane a Tree Campus USA in honor of the university's programs on behalf of its much-beloved trees. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

The award, given to Tulane for the third year in a row, recognizes the university for its commitment to effective community forestry management. For Mizell, that means keeping a watchful eye on the many historic live oaks and other trees on the uptown campus.

"We're constantly watching our trees and detecting if something is going wrong," says Mizell, a landscape architect. "We want to keep a good canopy with all of our live oaks."

Tulane achieved the designation by meeting the required five core standards for sustainable campus forestry: a tree advisory committee, a campus tree-care plan, dedicated annual expenditures for its campus tree program, an Arbor Day observance event, and the sponsorship of student service-learning projects.

“Students throughout the country are passionate about sustainability and community improvement, which makes Tulane's emphasis on well-maintained and healthy trees so important,” says John Rosenow, chief executive of the Arbor Day Foundation. “By achieving Tree Campus USA recognition for the third year in a row, Tulane University will continue to set an example for other colleges and universities and give students a chance to give back to both their campus community and the community at large.”

Tulane “has added a good many trees to the campus since 2005,” Mizell says. “Considering all damage from our storms and building construction, I think we're doing pretty good. Anytime a tree has to come down, we plant five or six in its place.”

Tree Campus USA is a national program launched in 2008 by the Arbor Day Foundation.