

Tulane Commencement: New Orleans roots, global focus

May 10, 2013 10:00 AM Carol Schlueter
cjs@tulane.edu

It's a commencement celebration in a class of its own ? year after year, the Tulane University [Unified Commencement Ceremony](#) combines New Orleans flair with celebrity keynote speakers. On May 18 it will take on a global focus when His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama addresses an expected audience of more than 30,000 at the ticketed ceremony in the Mercedes-Benz Superdome.



A New Orleans second-line celebration by Dr. Michael White's Original Liberty Brass Band traditionally closes out the Tulane Unified Commencement Ceremony. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Past commencement ceremonies have featured notables such as Presidents Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush, TV star Ellen DeGeneres and journalists Anderson Cooper and Brian Williams. For the Dalai Lama, Tulane event planners are preparing for a significantly larger attendance than in past years.

Because of the size of the audience, additional large video screens will be placed in

the Superdome.

The [Dalai Lama](#) will receive an honorary degree at the ceremony, as will poet laureate Natasha Trethewey and renowned New Orleans musicians Allen Toussaint and Mac “Dr. John” Rebennack.

Music is a special focus of the program, from bagpipers who lead the platform party to the stage, to herald trumpets that announce the procession, to Dr. Michael White's Original Liberty Jazz Band, which performs throughout the celebration.

The Superdome ceremony is limited to graduates and their invitees as well as distinguished guests and members of the Tulane community directly involved in the event. Each graduate is allotted [16 tickets](#) to the 9 a.m. ceremony.

With interest heightened by the Dalai Lama's first visit to New Orleans, Tulane is expanding its online and social media connections to the event. The ceremony will be [streamed live](#) on both the Tulane website and the Tulane Facebook page.

Members of the Tulane community who are on [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#) can use the hashtag #tulane13 to be part of all the excitement surrounding Commencement. The best tweets, photos, videos and Facebook comments will be compiled for New Wave's post-Commencement coverage.