

A healthy, green and fun NOLA bike culture

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Rising Tulane senior Evan Walter spearheads the Tulane Bike Enthusiast Initiative. Starting at the end of finals week, the group began collecting bikes usually abandoned around campus by students, to be donated to the Youth Empowerment Project. (Photo by Ryan Rivet)

Every year over 300 bicycles are abandoned on the Tulane University uptown campus, waiting forlornly for the [Tulane University Police Department \(TUPD\)](#) to cut locks at the end of the academic year to remove them. Last year, the Tulane University Bike Enthusiast Initiative created a plan to optimize use of this wasted resource.

The club collects unwanted bikes at the end of the academic year to be donated to the [Youth Empowerment Project](#) (YEP) Trafigura Work Center in Central City.

At the center, youth repair bikes, gaining knowledge about mechanics that they need to pursue their passions in the future. Once the bikes are repaired, they will be sold to students as they move back onto campus next semester.

The idea for the club came from [Evan Walter](#), now a rising Tulane senior, in August 2014. Walter is minoring in social innovation and social entrepreneurship, which is now coordinated through the new [Phyllis M. Taylor Center for Social Innovation and Design Thinking](#). After taking an [SISE](#) class in design thinking, he was inspired to create the club as a way to deal with the number of bikes that students abandon yearly.

“Environmentally, it is damaging to purchase new bikes when we have so many that have already been produced and just need a little love,” said Walter, describing why sustainability is important to him. “Donating, repairing and reusing a bike gives us the opportunity to empower youth in New Orleans. This initiative allows us to recycle what we have, while helping the community ? what's better than that?”

In the past, TUPD has given donations to the Youth Empowerment Project. The Tulane Bike Enthusiasts provide a direct donation and will conduct an on-campus sale with YEP during the fall move-in week, where students can purchase repaired bikes.

“Evan's idea to have a direct donation to YEP from Tulane students at the end of each school year is a welcome innovation that would provide a direct line from donor to organization,” said program director Brice White.

Walter said the [Tulane Bike Enthusiast Initiative](#) wants to reach out to others on campus who are passionate about biking and sustainability and would like to get involved.

Claire Davenport is a rising sophomore student at Tulane University, majoring in English and political science.

“The mission is to decrease waste and promote the growth of a healthy, green and fun bike culture in New Orleans.”—Evan Walter, Tulane Bike Enthusiast Initiative