

Stronger by a decade: Tulane and New Orleans

August 06, 2015 8:45 AM Carol J. Schlueter

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Ten years after Hurricane Katrina, the ties between Tulane University and its home city of New Orleans are stronger than ever. (Photo by Jackson Hill)

“Only at Tulane, only in New Orleans” became a clarion call for prospective Tulane University students after Hurricane Katrina. Ten years later, the ties between university and city have strengthened and spread, from neighborhood initiatives to economic development to public education support.

“New Orleans wouldn’t be the same city without Tulane and Tulane wouldn’t be the same university without New Orleans,” says Sharon Courtney, vice president of the [Office of Government and Community Relations](#).

Courtney’s office recently completed a report about the impact that Tulane has on the city. A brochure entitled “New Orleans: Our Home, Our Priority” lists:

• \$27.4 million in scholarships awarded annually to greater New Orleans students.

• 530,514 total service hours performed by the Tulane community, valued at an estimated \$11,750,000.

• More than 80 community design projects estimated at nearly \$1 million by the [Tulane City Center](#) of the School of Architecture.

Programs initiated through the Tulane [Center for Public Service](#) “have carved out a unique place for Tulane in higher education,” Courtney says. Post-storm, public service is a graduation requirement for undergraduates.

One outcome of those programs is adding to a “brain gain” of young people in the city, she says. “Our role in that is engaging our students in the community and making them feel at home here, which encourages them to stay in New Orleans.”

Courtney thinks Tulane has become more focused on “making connections in the community” in economic development and “taking seriously our role as an anchor institution in the city.” The [Earn and Learn Career Pathways Program](#) through the university’s [Cowen Institute](#) is helping disconnected youth get career and academic training at partner Delgado Community College, along with paid Tulane apprenticeships.

Involvement in K-12 education also is a major Tulane initiative through the Cowen Institute, the university’s [Education Research Alliance](#) and public service work.

The futures of Tulane and New Orleans are linked, says Tulane President Mike Fitts. “We need to nurture that and further that relationship because it benefits us both.”

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