

'See the world from other angles'

August 22, 2015 7:00 AM Faith Dawson

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Members of the Class of 2019 listen to the alma mater sung by the a cappella group Green Envy, while wearing special gray "Only at Tulane ? Only in New Orleans" T-shirts for the President's Convocation in McAlister Auditorium on the Tulane University uptown campus. "Our theme for this year at Tulane is "Crossing Boundaries." We do it with joint majors, study abroad, reaching into the community for public service and much more," President Mike Fitts told the incoming students. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

If the students of the Tulane University Class of 2019 were exhausted from having moved into residence halls in the blazing summer heat, they didn't show it. As the class ? with more than 1,700 students, the largest first-year group ever ? poured into [McAlister Auditorium](#) on the uptown campus to hear the President's

Convocation on Saturday (Aug. 22), the atmosphere was excited and expectant.

The [Tulane University Marching Band](#) helped set the mood with lively renditions of “Smells Like Teen Spirit,” “Livin’ La Vida Loca,” “When the Saints Go Marching In” and “Dancing Machine” as the students filed in.

That there are more than [1,700 students](#) in the Class of 2019 isn’t the only impressive statistic. They come from 47 U.S. states – only Alaska, South Dakota and Wyoming weren’t represented, though [James M. MacLaren](#), dean of [Newcomb-Tulane College](#), promised they wouldn’t be left out next year. Members of the class represented 28 countries, including Australia, Brazil, India, Japan, Panama and Ukraine. A student traveled an average of 900 miles to attend Tulane.

Family members shuffled off to Avron B. Fogelman Arena in Devlin Fieldhouse to watch the President’s Convocation remotely, giving the Class of 2019 an exclusive audience with President Fitts.

After the processional of gonfalons, deans and Dr. Michael White’s Original Liberty Jazz Band, J. Davidson “Dusty” Porter, vice president for student affairs and dean of students, issued a warm welcome to the crowd.

When Fitts took the stage, his message was clear: A Tulane education, in a unique and engaging city, offers students a great opportunity: “College – especially at Tulane – is about exploring,” he said. He encouraged the students to pursue varied classes, public service, extracurricular activities and research.

“I can tell you, for new perspectives, you have come to the right place,” Fitts said. “One of the most powerful things I noticed when I arrived was the creativity of this storied city,” noting New Orleans’ progress since Hurricane Katrina and its current mix of tradition and innovation. Fitts also stoked students’ creativity by issuing a photo challenge; winners would dine with him at Commander’s Palace. Read the full text of the president’s address to students [here](#).

After the address, the Original Liberty Jazz Band led the assembled group out to a traditional second line. Students had been invited to take a commemorative doubloon and touch the [Victory Bell](#) for good luck, but Fitts’ advice still hung in the air.

“Tulane will deliver new experiences. Your job is to seize this chance to see the world from other angles.”



Tulane President Mike Fitts, center, along with senior university administrators and deans, welcomed more than 1,700 first-year students to the uptown campus at the annual President's Convocation ceremony.