

New campus crosswalks accommodate the visually impaired

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Anyone on the Tulane University uptown campus recently has probably noticed the beeping coming from the crosswalks at Freret and Willow streets. The constant noise comes from Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) installed in February to help members of the Tulane community who are visually impaired.

APS devices communicate “walk” and “don’t walk” information in non-visual formats. The signals beep constantly, directing someone with limited sight to the crosswalk, and once the button is pushed, the tone changes when it is safe to cross.

The signals are the first in New Orleans, and the city is using the campus as a “beta site” for future installations around town.

Working hand-in-hand with the city, Tulane Facilities Services installed the devices at a savings of more than 50 percent from the original quote.

The installation project was spearheaded by Erica Woodley, assistant vice president for student resources and support services, and Patrick Randolph, director of the Goldman Office of Disability Services, in an effort to accommodate the visually impaired population on campus.

“We have an obligation and a desire to provide a barrier-free environment for everyone who works and studies at Tulane,” Randolph says. “It’s really about providing equal access for everybody. It’s not just about student safety. It’s about accessibility and inclusion. I hope that our students view this project as an improvement, and that it brings some heightened awareness to other accessibility issues on campus.”