



STRATEGIC ADMISSIONS ADVICE

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If you like the University of Miami, we suggest you research Tulane University

The map may say that Tulane is in the South, but Tulane has the temperament of an East Coast institution. The university is trying to shoehorn its way into the front rank of Southeastern universities, though it still trails Emory and Vanderbilt. Post-Katrina, Tulane has developed a strong emphasis on community service. High achievers should shoot for the Tulane Scholars program.

Once a staid, genteel choice for students seeking a traditional education, Tulane University has rebranded itself with an emphasis on community service and now attracts service-minded students from around the nation who choose from more than 130 service-learning opportunities, many of them existing courses that were revamped to include a service-learning component after Hurricane Katrina. Indeed, Tulane promises a solid education to those who are willing to take up residence in the Big Easy.

The school's 110-acre campus is located in an attractive residential area of uptown New Orleans, about 15 minutes from the French Quarter and the business district. Tulane's administration building, Gibson Hall, faces St. Charles Avenue, where one of the nation's last streetcar lines still clatters past mansions. Across the street is Audubon Park, a 385-acre spread where students jog, walk, study, or feed the ducks in the lagoon. The buildings of gray limestone and pillared brick, separated by live southern oak trees, are modeled after the

neocollegiate/Creole mixture indigenous to Louisiana institutional-type structures. One particular point of pride is the university's 13 Tiffany windows, one of the largest collections in existence.

Tulane remains committed to its mission as a major research university that emphasizes undergraduate opportunities. Tulane's strength lies in the natural sciences, environmental sciences, and the humanities; international studies in general and Latin American studies in particular are especially strong. The Stone Center for Latin American studies includes the 200,000-volume Latin American Library and offers more than 150 courses taught by 80 faculty members. An interdisciplinary program in political economy (economics, political science, and philosophy) stands out among the social sciences and is very popular with prelaw students. The School of Science and Engineering is composed of five distinct divisions: biological sciences and engineering; chemical sciences and engineering; physical and material sciences; earth and environmental sciences; and mathematics and computational science. Environmental studies majors benefit from the Tulane/Xavier Center for Bioenvironmental Research, where faculty members and students work together on research projects that include hazardous-waste remediation and the ecological effects of environmental contaminants.

Tulane offers more than 80 study abroad programs in 30 nations, including one-semester programs to locations such as Japan to study sociology and culture, Mexico City to delve into the language, and London to study liberal arts. In addition, the Tulane/Newcomb Junior Year Abroad program is one of the country's oldest and most prestigious programs, in which the student is fully immersed in the language and culture of the particular country. Several programs help freshmen make the transition from high school to college. One is TIDES, where students can join groups on such topics as Understanding Your Classmates, World Religions, and Cultures. Another offering for freshmen is the First Year Experience, one-credit courses on such subjects as Metacognition (Thinking about Thinking), Campus Life, and Women and Leadership.

Most classes have 30 or fewer students, making it sometimes difficult for students to get into the classes of their choice. Although the majority of those classes are taught by full professors, graduate instructors are most likely to teach the beginning-level classes in English, foreign languages, and math. Overall, students praise Tulane's faculty, and the academic atmosphere can be very intense, depending on the class. All Tulane liberal arts majors must complete a rigorous set of general education and distribution requirements that include a service-learning course as well as a service-learning project, such as doing urban archaeology or teaching in a local school. In the process of satisfying the requirements, students must take at least one course in Western and non-Western civilization and complete a public service component, as well as a writing-intensive class, although freshmen with high SATs can place out of some classes. Each year the university's highly acclaimed honors program invites about 700 outstanding students, known as Tulane Scholars, to partake in accelerated courses taught by top professors. These select scholars also have the opportunity to design their own major and spend their junior year abroad.

Tulane has a somewhat Southern feel and is a sophisticated and cosmopolitan institution. Says one student, "There is a large Northeastern constituency here who have brought their Type-A personalities and racial tolerance down to a Southern city. If you're a Northerner, it's impossible to escape the Southern influence of the city, and if you're a Southerner, it's impossible to escape the Northern influence that exists on campus." The student body is 9 percent African American, 6 percent Hispanic, and 4 percent Asian American. Students are drawn to service opportunities, and volunteering is encouraged and common. Tulane awards hundreds of merit scholarships, averaging \$22,360, and 199 athletic scholarships in six sports.

Over 50 percent of students live on campus; nonlocal freshmen must do so. Many upperclass students opt to move off campus, claiming that it's much cheaper than university housing, but others are concerned about the safety factor of living in New Orleans. Some men live in their fraternity houses, but sororities only have social halls due to an old New Orleans law that makes it illegal to have more than four unrelated women living in one house. Freshmen have to stomach the cost of Tulane's meal plan, but alternatives exist at the University Center food court.

Social life at Tulane goes almost without saying. "New Orleans itself never stops partying!" boasts a junior. Fraternities and sororities are a presence-26 percent of the men and 43 percent of the women join-but do not dominate the social life. Though you're supposed to be 21 to buy alcohol or enjoy the bar scene in the cafés and clubs that dot the French Quarter, a sophomore explains that "alcohol is accessible." Mardi Gras is such a celebration that classes are suspended for two days and students from all over the country pour in to celebrate. An annual Jazzfest in the spring also draws wide participation. Road-trip destinations include the Gulf Coast, Austin, Houston, Atlanta, and the Florida panhandle.

While schoolwork is taken seriously at Tulane, so are sports. Men's and women's basketball are solid, and the baseball team has a big following. The university fields 16 Green Waves teams that compete in The American Athletic Conference. Club sports are big, and students can also opt for weight work, squash, or swimming among other options at the Reily Recreational Center.

While Tulane is rich in Southern tradition, it is a forward-looking school where the possibilities seem endless. And like its hometown, it is a diverse, energetic melting pot of interests and activity. Those seeking a dynamic, service-oriented education in a vibrant city need look no further. *C'est si bon!*