

New alumni president finds joy and meaning in service to Tulane

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After 11 years of committed service, first as volunteer leader with the Tulane Club of D.C. and then on the Tulane Alumni Association Board, Jennifer Mills, MD (NC '01) took on a new role starting July 1 — as board president.

She traces her Tulane Alumni presidency back to attending a party. A Mardi Gras party, naturally. After completing medical school, she had moved to Washington, D.C. for her residency. The grueling hours left her disconnected from her new city before she attended the Tulane Club of D.C.'s annual Mardi Gras party in 2013.

“I had a great time,” says Mills. “And I wanted to make it better.

“I like making things better, and I like helping, so I got on the board.”

In short order, she was organizing signature events for the Tulane Club of D.C. including the annual crawfish boil, the Mardi Gras party and the group's Katrina Happy Hour. She then served as DC Club president during the SARS-CoV-2 virus pandemic.

It was a natural fit for Mills, who received her BFA in music and her BS in cell and molecular biology from Newcomb College in 2001.

"I think very creatively in medicine, and I think very structurally in music," says Mills, who has brought both sets of talents to her service, handling complex logistics while dreaming up new avenues for engagement.

After being invited to attend the Tulane Alumni Association Board of Director's meeting at George Washington University in the summer of 2016, Mills was ready to take her service to Tulane to the next level. She joined the development committee and began attending board meetings in New Orleans, officially taking her place on the board in 2019.

Among her goals for her presidency, Mills says, "I want everyone to feel like they have a place, and I want everyone to feel welcome."

She's eager to expand programming and increase access so that all alumni feel that they have a place in the Tulane alumni community.

"That creates a commonality from which you build a relationship. We had a unique experience of a liberal arts education in New Orleans, and I think that attracts a certain kind of person.

The Tulane community is a living, breathing, viable network that connects people from various spheres of the world to each other, facilitating meaningful collaborations, whether they're professional collaborations or academic, educational collaborations."

Mills shares a secret about her service to Tulane Alumni — in addition to being a meaningful way to support an institution that she found both life-changing and life-affirming — it's a joyful experience.

“I’m an internal medicine doctor and my every day is taking care of people at their most vulnerable. It’s a lot of mental work. It’s a lot of emotional work. Whatever it is that I’m doing, it needs to be meaningful to me. And [with the TAA] I have a great time. I love going to these events and talking to people. The things that are most important to me about being involved with Tulane alumni and the TAA is the opportunity and the privilege to develop meaningful relationships with people and then to be able to help people where I can.”

The Tulane Alumni Association Board also welcomes Phil Krause Schmidt (PHTM '13, PHTM *15). Prior to taking his role on the board, Krause Schmidt was an ex officio member of the board representing the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. He is a lead associate with Booz Allen Hamilton where he serves as a portfolio manager for federal health programs and projects and as a health business strategist.



Members of the 2024-25 TAA board gather together in Atlanta at the board retreat