



## UGL Services Helps Tulane University Manage Summer Conference Program Housing

*Leads to nearly \$1.5 million in total net proceeds for Tulane facilities operations...*

### **Background**

Tulane University in historic New Orleans is in a unique position to take advantage of its location to maximize the return on investment in its residential assets. Its uptown campus on St. Charles Avenue is in a historic residential district across the street from the 400-acre Audubon Park. The campus is served by buses and streetcars and is convenient to the Mississippi, the French Quarter and other historic and tourist attractions in the region. This combination of factors makes Tulane an ideal venue for a robust summer conference program that includes the rental of residence facilities to groups that are visiting New Orleans and/or running programs on campus.

Although Tulane had made some rooms available, especially for on-campus summer programs, it did not have a formal program targeting a wider universe of organizations and consequently was missing out on a significant revenue opportunity.

### **Statement of Program**

In 2009 the University, at the recommendation of Todd Schill, Associate Vice President of Housing at the time, established a summer conference program that opened the residence halls to groups ranging in size from 5 to 500. The program is currently administered by Ross Bryan, Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs for Housing and Residence Life and Nancy Goff, Director of Finance and Operations for Housing and Residence Life.

The groups' stays range from a few nights to weeks, with an average stay of about five days. The program is designed for groups that are using campus facilities to run their programs, as well as for groups that use only the sleeping facilities and leave campus during the day to pursue other activities. It is also open to individuals who are participating in internships at local companies, such as Chevron or Coca-Cola.

The program is in addition to Tulane's summer academic and sports programs, such as housing for students participating in sports camps and training, summer classes and research.

### **PROJECT SUMMARY**

**Project:** *Redesign housekeeping for Tulane summer housing program*

**Customer:** *Tulane University*

**Situation:** *Tulane's summer housing program was unable to reach its potential because of housekeeping limitations.*

**UGL Services response:** *UGL Services worked with Housing and Residence Life staff to develop a responsive cleaning and room preparation system.*

**Results:** *Tulane was able to significantly expand the program increasing net proceeds by more than 250% to \$710,000 in summer 2011.*

Commented Goff, "This type of program makes sense for universities that are located in cities or areas that seem attractive to guests. Parents, organizations and students feel a lot more comfortable on a college campus where there is security, and utilities and other necessities are taken care of."

### **Objectives**

The program was designed to provide income to the university by renting underutilized assets over the summer months. The financial model that was developed returned the proceeds to supplement the Housing and Residence Life budget in order to support facilities services projects for additional improvements to enhance the Tulane campus.

### **Project Details**

The challenge was to implement this program while supporting Tulane's traditional summer residential requirements and continuing to carry out the necessary normal summer cleaning and refurbishing programs. The initiative required close coordination with the facilities services department and Tulane's cleaning contractor, UGL Services. The planning starts over the winter months and includes a projection of available rooms and a dynamic inventory of available buildings and rooms throughout the 10-week summer conference program.

Along with facilities, the HRL staff determines what buildings will be totally offline so the bed spaces can be removed from the count. "We work closely with facilities," said Goff. "Usually we know before the summer starts what buildings will be totally offline so we don't even count those bed spaces. For smaller projects where facilities can work around the conference schedule, they'll take a week or two with no one in the building while they do their work and then they release it back to us."

In the first summer, 2009, the new program accommodated 1,693 guest/nights representing 37 groups. It was quite successful but it was also a learning experience. Tulane discovered that on-staff capacity to clean and prepare rooms for arriving guests was a limiting factor. If the program was going to grow, additional resources would be needed to handle housekeeping services over and above the normal summer cleaning and refurbishing programs.

Tulane HRL staff was invited by UGL Services to visit the University of Miami where the company has a similar program. Following the research, Tulane and UGL Services introduced several improvements to better manage the program in order to facilitate growth, including:

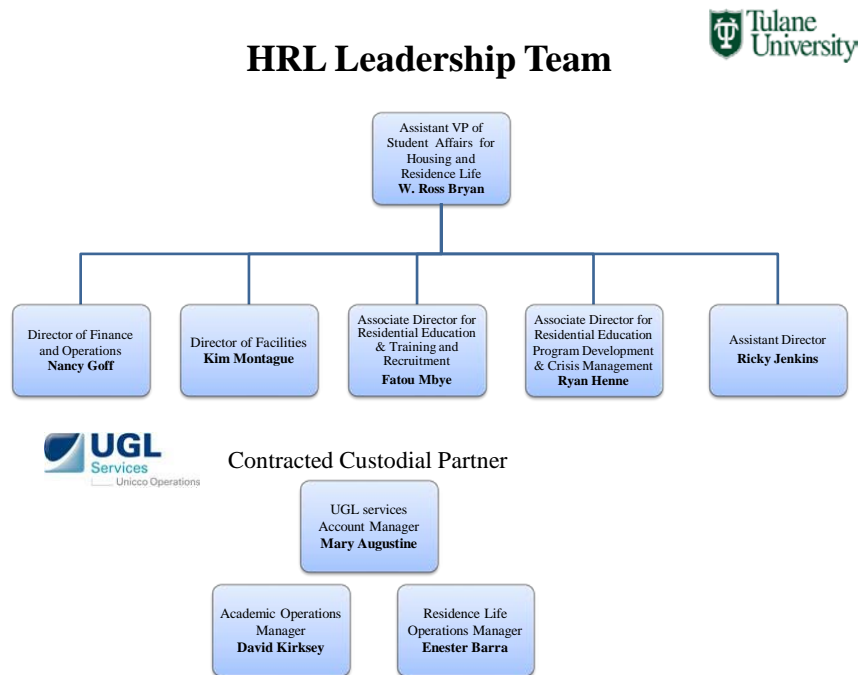
- Pre-planning during the academic year to anticipate the summer conference season and project the number of rooms that will be available and factor in the times when specific blocks of rooms or buildings will not be available due to facilities projects;
- Close coordination among all of the affected service departments;
- Authorization for UGL Services to add seasonal workers for 90 days to augment the year-round staff to cover the added workload of quick turnarounds;
- Assigning four UGL Services supervisors to the program to lead teams;
- Expanding the cleaning schedule from only one shift (8:00 to 4:30) to 24-hour services;
- Cross training workers to handle all cleaning tasks, such as shower cleaning and floor maintenance;
- Initiating administrative procedures, such as daily updates of room status and a work order response system, to quickly respond to the dynamic nature of the housing program.

Over the years the program has hosted a number of organizations, including:

- ACUHO-I International Program
- ACUHO-I Stars Program
- Capital Camps & Retreats
- Center for Conservation Leadership
- First Baptist Church - Chattanooga
- Furman University
- Georgetown Visitation Prep School
- Gilder Lehrman Institute
- Girls First
- Impact New Orleans
- ISCSC
- KIPP Lead Charter - Indiana
- Literature & Film Camp
- Mathematical Sciences Institute
- mFUGE
- National Student Leadership Conference
- Overland Programs
- Positive Vibrations
- Space City Stars
- Teach for America
- Upward Bound

**Management Involvement**

This successful program came about as a result of close coordination among Tulane HRL and Facilities, and UGL Services managers. In addition to the research trip to the University of Miami by Tulane staff, Mary Augustine, UGL Services Account Manager, and her staff frequently met directly with Heather Hargrave, Vice President of Facility Services, Nancy Goff and managers from other University departments.



Spreadsheets and reports were developed and shared, and management from all parties made a commitment to be responsive to the program. Budgets were established and adjusted to accommodate program growth. Perhaps most importantly, the planning took an entrepreneurial approach and remained focused on the ultimate objective – to maximize the return to the institution in order to supplement the HRL budget.

**Innovation/Creativity**

This program required that all of the parties step back from the challenges of the traditional summer refurbishment and deep cleaning practices and creatively determine how to accomplish the traditional tasks while supporting a new revenue-generating initiative. HRL researched the potential return and the methodologies required to deliver the desired results and then worked with UGL Services and other University departments to design a sustainable program that is growing through repeat business.

HRL staff was entrepreneurial and made the case for investing in the program on the promise of additional income. It required that UGL Services add staff, extend its service offering to 24 hours, and implement new work practices. It further required Tulane to invest in the program by committing staff and resources in an entrepreneurial manner. The program was uncharted waters that took vision, commitment and new management oversight.

**Institutional Benefits**

The summer conference program is significantly contributing to the Housing and Residence Life refurbishment budget. Due in large part to the increased responsiveness and efficiency of the cleaning regimen, the program has been able to expand in each of the last three years and there is potential for continued growth by expanding the program to more of Tulane's 3,817 beds on campus. To date, the initiative has delivered almost \$1.5 million to the University.

Year	# Guests	# Groups	Net Proceeds
2009	1,693	37	\$269,000
2010	1,835	43	\$445,000
2011	4,143	42	\$710,000

The money has been used to directly benefit HRL programs by purchasing equipment and upgrades. In past years HRL has been able to complete some bonus projects, such as adding laundry facilities in two residence halls that lacked such facilities, replacing carpet and furniture and doing some additional painting. They have also added amenities, such as a sand volleyball court. As a result of the tremendous returns from the 2011 summer season they were able to replace all of the 3,817 mattresses on campus.