Students get down to business in City Park

September 24, 2014

More than 400 business students converged on City Park Saturday (Sept. 20) for the first-ever day of service for Business TIDES, the Tulane InterDisciplinary Experience Seminars aimed at first-year students interested in majoring in business.



Freeman School student Ben McManus helps plant irises on Nursery Island in City Park. (Photo by Ryan Rivet)

Organized by the Center for Public Service in collaboration with the business school, the service day brought together students and instructors from all 27 sections of the Freeman School's two TIDES courses. The students spent the morning working at 11 different sites in the park, doing everything from planting flower beds and clearing hiking trails to tearing down invasive vines and weeds that threaten the park's native trees.

While the connection between business and cutting down ragweed might not be immediately apparent, Michael Hogg, associate dean for undergraduate education at the business school and one of the event's organizers, says there's an underlying message.

"As future leaders, our students need to realize that they're an integral part of the communities in which their organizations exist," he says. "Part of being a good leader is recognizing that you need to help the community, and business people are uniquely suited to do that because they're good problem solvers."

Business student Kody Low, who spent the morning pulling down vines in the area around Couturie Forest, says the project was especially satisfying.

"With a lot of community service work, you don't really see the fruits of your labor until much later," Low says. "What was nice about this is it was something we could do really quickly. You'd have entire trees you couldn't even see and then after pulling down vines for 10 minutes, you'd have a great looking oak."

"We saw a few people walking their dogs or with their kids in the park," adds student Elena Garidis. "It was nice talking with them and hearing them say, 'Thank you so much for doing this. We love the park, and we like seeing young people invested in the community and making a difference.'"