Alumna to lead French Quarter Festival and other popular music events

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Freeman School alumna Emily Madero is the new president and CEO of French Quarter Festivals Inc. (Photo by Zack Smith)

While massive crowds enjoyed great food and live performances at the 2017 French Quarter Fest in April, it was Freeman School alumna Emily Mitchell Madero (NC ’02, G ’03, MBA ’07) keeping everything in rhythm behind the scenes. In April, Madero was named president and CEO of French Quarter Festivals Inc.

In addition to the popular four-day music fest held April 6-9, the nonprofit organization produces the events Satchmo SummerFest and Christmas New Orleans Style.

The Maine native moved to New Orleans in 1998. After graduating in 2002, she returned to Tulane to earn a master’s degree and an MBA from the A. B. Freeman

School of Business.

“I had a tremendous experience as an undergraduate, and I was really committed to New Orleans,” said Madero. “It’s an incredible place with a very unique culture, and I’ve always been drawn to the creative industries — the music, food and artwork that create a rich heritage here.”

Madero previously served as COO and acting CEO of The Idea Village, a nonprofit co-founded by fellow Freeman alumnus Tim Williamson (BSM '87) in 2000, which supports local entrepreneurs.

Madero says that she has been able to draw parallels between her work with The Idea Village and her new role leading French Quarter Festivals, Inc.

“When I learned about the opportunity, I was excited to apply my leadership experience building a nonprofit organization. This is sort of a continuation of my journey,” she said. “It is exciting to return my focus to some of my personal passions and to invest in the culture makers of New Orleans.”

Closing out her first year helming the festival, Madero was impressed at the level of collaboration between the festival staff, vendors, sponsors, residents and the city of New Orleans, which she attributes for the event’s success.

“We’re not a typical festival that is fenced in. We use the entire French Quarter as the canvas for the event, and we’re so grateful for the community members that contribute,” she said.

By Mary Cross

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