

Exploring New Orleans with resilience experts

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Students at the DRLA Summer Resilience Institute listen to Richard Campanella speak at the Mississippi riverfront in Crescent Park. (Photo by Cheryl Gerber)

In the heart of the vibrant city of New Orleans lies a rich tapestry of architectural wonders, each steeped in history and imbued with the unique spirit of this iconic city. As part of the Disaster Resilience Leadership Academy's Summer Institute on June 1, Tulanians had the exclusive opportunity to delve into this heritage under the expert guidance of renowned urban historian Richard Campanella.

Led by Campanella, whose knowledge of New Orleans' urban landscape is unparalleled, the tour promised a journey through time, exploring the city's

architectural evolution and the stories embedded within its streets. From the colonial French Quarter to the grand antebellum mansions of the Garden District, each site offered a glimpse into the city's complex past and its strength in the face of adversity.

From Lakeview to the Lower Ninth Ward, Campanella led the group around the city, denoting eras of geographic and historic significance. His vivid narratives transported participants through the city's many lives, highlighting the enduring influence of indigenous groups, French and Spanish colonialism, Jim Crow era architecture, Art Deco affluence, and more.

Standing before the levees that failed in the Ninth Ward during Hurricane Katrina, students gained a deeper understanding of the challenges the communities in New Orleans face and the efforts being made by various organizations to restore the neighborhood.

As part of a larger course on Adaptation in New Orleans led by DRLA Professors and Tulane alumni Corey Eide, MS, and Betsy Lopez, CBCP, PMP, MS, the tour illuminated the socioeconomic and geological forces that shaped the city's design. Students walked away from the course with a deepened well of knowledge on Louisiana's resilience practices, which they can use to shape communities and organizations across the globe.

According to Reggie Ferreira, PhD, director of the Disaster Resilience Leadership Academy, the Summer Institute in New Orleans offers invaluable training in disaster resilience, focusing on equipping participants with the leadership skills necessary to effectively manage and mitigate the impacts of disasters. The institute integrates hands-on experiences, case studies, and expert lectures, fostering a comprehensive understanding of disaster risk reduction and resilience-building strategies in a city that has remained strong through significant disasters.