CAMPAIGN PLAN · FOR REVIEW

The Case for Tulane Athletics

A positive, evidence-based campaign to make athletics a priority on par with academics, and to position Tulane for a Power 4 future.

Prepared for the campaign review committee
November 2026
#CureMediocra

SECTION 1

Summary

Tulane is one of America's great private research universities, and in the last four years its football program has shown what athletics can do for it: a Cotton Bowl victory, a College Football Playoff appearance worth $8.1 million to the university, and national attention that money cannot easily buy. Yet athletics remains, by Tulane's own choices, a secondary priority. In the new landscape of college sports, standing still means falling behind.

This campaign asks Tulane's leadership to treat athletics as a partner to academics: to fund every scholarship the NCAA now allows, to invest competitively, to set public goals, to grow the athletics endowment so that support is permanent, and to pursue membership in a Power 4 conference. It does so through a planned sequence of ten newspaper ads, with seasonal and reserve pieces in an appendix.

The core principle: the campaign argues for an institution, never against individuals. It does not call for anyone to be fired. Every claim is sourced and checkable. Every ad ends with a constructive ask. That is what makes it difficult to dismiss as a personal grudge or the frustration of disgruntled fans, and what obliges leadership to engage with the substance.

Why now

- **The rules have changed.** The House v. NCAA settlement replaced scholarship caps with roster limits. Baseball, for example, went from 11.7 scholarships to 34 roster spots that may all be funded. Schools that fund them will out-recruit schools that do not.
- **The gap is widening.** Tulane athletics brings in roughly $66 million a year, against roughly $160 million for the average ACC department. Conference realignment rewards programs that are ready when the call comes.
- **Peers are moving.** SMU invested and joined the ACC. Vanderbilt acknowledged under-investment, raised more than $370 million, and had the best football season in its history. Northwestern's donors built an $862 million stadium.
- **Tulane has already proven the value.** After the Cotton Bowl, Tulane's president called the win emblematic of the university's success in student achievement, research, admissions and fundraising.

Our approach

1. **Institutions, not individuals.** The campaign discusses decisions, priorities and results, never personalities.
2. **Evidence first.** Every figure comes from Tulane's own publications, peer-reviewed research or reputable reporting, cited on the ad itself.
3. **A partner, not an adversary.** The campaign asks for a plan and offers support, including pledges released when the plan is published.
4. **Humor to earn attention, evidence to earn respect.** Satirical pieces draw readers in; data-driven pieces give them reasons to act.
5. **One message, one ask.** Every ad points to the same website and the same hashtag, #CureMediocra, so each one builds on the last.
6. **Gradual escalation.** Each stage gives leadership room to respond, and any response is acknowledged publicly.

SECTION 2

The sequence

The ads move from attention, to argument, to an organized constituency, to ongoing accountability. If leadership responds at any stage, the campaign adjusts: a published plan would make Ads 6 through 9 unnecessary and turn Ad 10 into a record of progress.

#	Ad	Stage	Role in the campaign
1	Mediocra™	Attention	Humorous opener; names the problem as institutional complacency
2	Athletics Makes the Grade	Argument	Shows that athletics supports the academic mission
3	The Real Cost of One More Scholarship	Argument	Answers the cost objection
4	Where's the Wins?	Reactive	Contrasts official spin with results; run when the moment arises
5	Elite Academics. Elite Athletics.	Argument	Peer universities that refused to choose
6	Six Questions for Tulane's Board	Transparency	Invites a public response
7	An Open Letter to Tulane	Constituency	Shows breadth of support by name
8	We're Ready to Give. Show Us the Plan.	Leverage	Pledges released when Tulane publishes a plan
9	Give Once. Give Forever.	Permanence	Endowed scholarships answer donor fatigue with a lasting gift
10	The Tulane Athletics Scorecard	Accountability	Recurring measure of results and commitment
A	Take Me Out to the Status Quo; NCAA Tournament Waiting Room	Seasonal	Baseball opener and Selection Sunday
B	Fire Harris and Hall; You Hired HUHH?	Reserve	Name individuals; held unless circumstances change

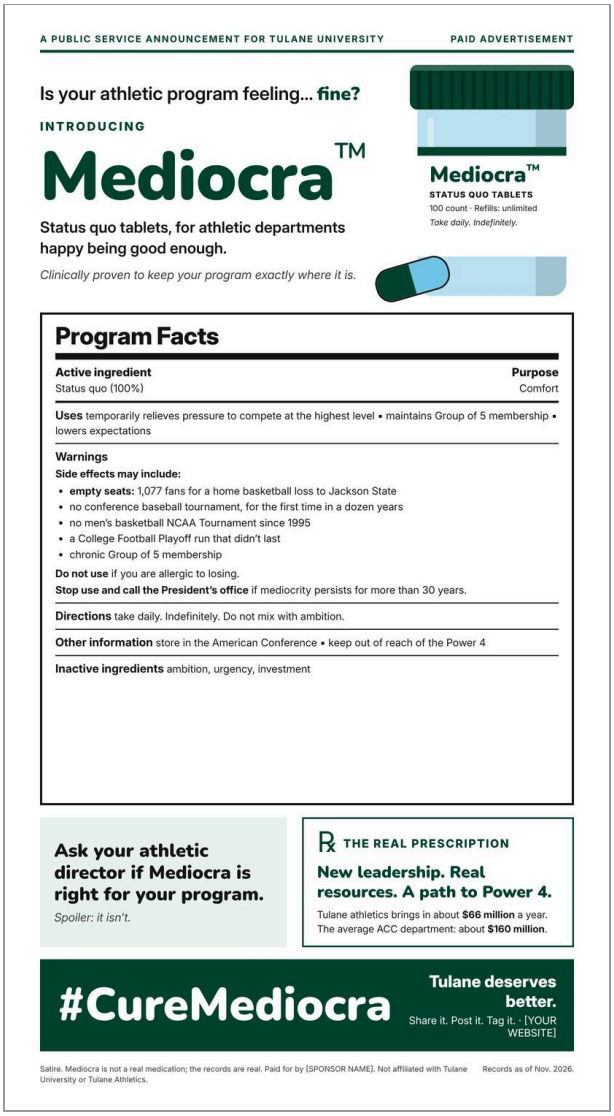
Production notes

- All ads are sized for an 11.5 × 21 inch broadsheet page. Confirm each newspaper's exact specifications before submission.
- Fill in every bracketed placeholder, including [YOUR WEBSITE] and [SPONSOR NAME]. Most newspapers require a "paid for by" line on advocacy advertising.
- Records and figures change during the season; each ad page lists what to update before printing. No ad or merchandise uses Tulane's names, logos or marks as branding.

SECTION 3

The ads

Each page shows one ad with its purpose, key message, timing and ask, along with anything to update or prepare before it runs.



AD 1 · OPENING

Mediocra™

PURPOSE

Open the campaign with humor that is impossible to dismiss as a personal attack. A parody drug ad diagnoses the problem as institutional complacency, not any individual.

KEY MESSAGE

The status quo has side effects: empty seats, missed tournaments, decades without an NCAA Tournament bid, and permanent Group of 5 membership. The real prescription is new leadership commitment, real resources and a Power 4 future.

WHEN TO RUN

Launch, once students return from Thanksgiving break.

THE ASK

Share it. Introduce #CureMediocra, the hashtag that ties every later ad together.

COMPANION PIECES

An 8.5 × 11 flyer, a 30-second animated video and #CureMediocra merchandise.

BEFORE PRINTING

Refresh the side-effect details if new results become available.



AN OPEN LETTER TO TULANE UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP — PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Athletics makes the grade.

Tulane's best teams don't compete with its classrooms. They recruit for them.

Report Card: The Case for Athletics — TERM: 2026–27

SUBJECT	THE EVIDENCE	GRADE
Admissions	A stellar football or basketball season brings up to 10% more SAT score sends, a stand-in for applications, according to economists at BYU and the University of Chicago.	A
Revenue	One College Football Playoff trip brought Tulane $8.1 million. Every NCAA Tournament game is worth about $2.1 million to a school's conference, paid over six years.	A
National exposure	After George Mason's 2006 Final Four run, a study valued its free publicity at $677 million, and admissions inquiries jumped 350%.	A
Peer results	SMU says its freshman applications rose 50% after a 2009 bowl win. It kept investing, and today it plays in the ACC.	A
Tulane's own words	Tulane's president called the Cotton Bowl win "emblematic of the success we have had throughout Tulane," naming admissions, research and fundraising.	A
Institutional commitment	Tulane athletics brings in about $66 million a year. The average ACC department: about $160 million.	Inc.

COMMENTS *Shows real talent. Needs to apply itself.*

WHO WINS WHEN TULANE WINS

Students: packed game days, a livelier campus, and a degree with a name the whole country knows.

Alumni: a reason to come home, show up, and give.

Faculty and research: a bigger, stronger applicant pool and a better-known name behind every paper and grant.

New Orleans: game-day visitors filling hotels, restaurants and bars.

Louisiana: a national television stage, again and again.

The administration: more applicants, more donors, more leverage, at a fraction of what it costs to buy that attention.

Academic excellence and athletic excellence aren't rivals. They're teammates.

Make athletics a priority on par with academics. Tulane can be both.

#CureMediocra

[YOUR WEBSITE]

Sources: Pope & Pope, *Journal of Sports Economics* (2014); Forbes and Front Office Sports (CFP payouts, Dec. 2025–Jan. 2026); Associated Press (NCAA unit values, Apr. 2026); ESPN (George Mason study); SMU News (2011); *Tulanian* (Winter 2023).

Paid for by [SPONSOR NAME]. Not affiliated with Tulane University or Tulane Athletics.

AD 2 · THE CASE

Athletics Makes the Grade

PURPOSE

Speak to an academic institution in its own language. A report card grades the benefits of athletics with evidence a faculty member would respect.

KEY EVIDENCE

Peer-reviewed research showing up to 10% more prospective students after a stellar season; Tulane's $8.1 million College Football Playoff payout; NCAA Tournament units worth about $2.1 million per game; George Mason's Final Four publicity; SMU's application surge; and the president's own description of the Cotton Bowl win as emblematic of success across Tulane.

WHEN TO RUN

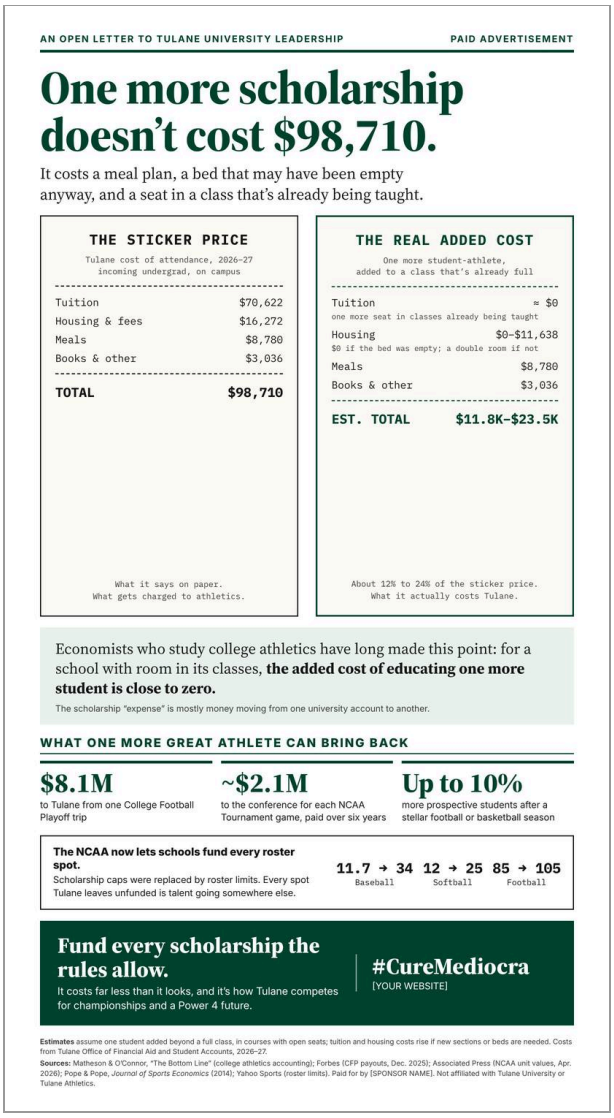
One to two weeks after Mediocra.

THE ASK

Make athletics a priority on par with academics.

BEFORE PRINTING

Confirm the original source of the $66 million and $160 million revenue figures.



AD 3 · THE OBJECTION

The Real Cost of One More Scholarship

PURPOSE

Remove the most likely objection, cost. Two receipts compare Tulane's $98,710 sticker price with the real added cost of one more student-athlete.

KEY EVIDENCE

Tulane's published 2026–27 cost of attendance, and economists' long-standing finding that the added cost of educating one more student is close to zero when classes have room. Estimated real cost: about 12% to 24% of the sticker price.

WHEN TO RUN

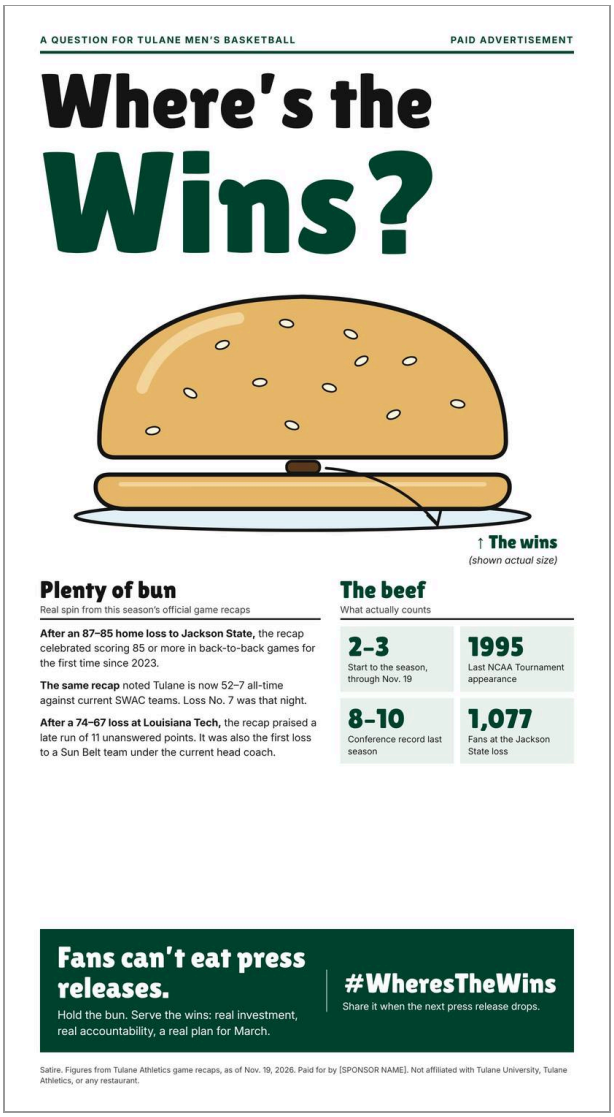
After Ad 2, ideally before spring recruiting and signing periods.

THE ASK

Fund every scholarship the NCAA now allows, in every sport.

EXPECT PUSHBACK ON

Capacity. Tulane is selective and requires on-campus housing for underclassmen. The ad states its assumption openly, and even the high-end estimate is under a quarter of the sticker price.



AD 4 · REACTIVE

Where's the Wins?

PURPOSE

Keep the campaign responsive. Held ready to run after the next upbeat press release, it contrasts official spin with results.

KEY MESSAGE

A giant bun with a tiny patty: real lines of spin from Tulane's own game recaps, set against the record.

WHEN TO RUN

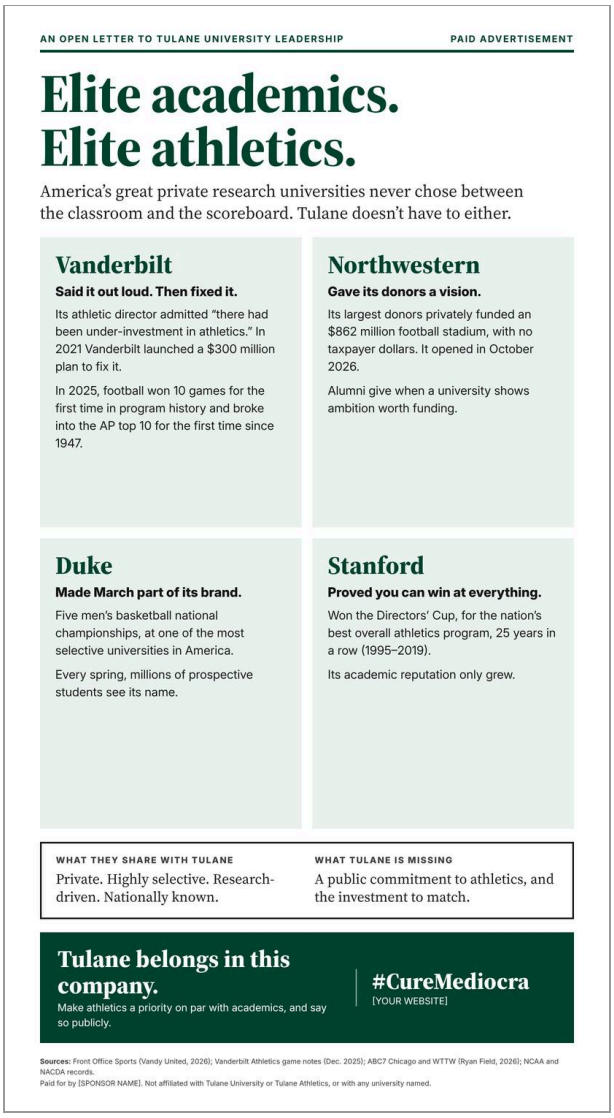
Within days of an upbeat statement or a disappointing loss, during basketball season.

THE ASK

#WheresTheWins: share it when the next press release drops.

BEFORE PRINTING

Update the season record and, if possible, the recap examples. Current figures run through Nov. 19, 2026.



AD 5 · THE PRECEDENT

Elite Academics. Elite Athletics.

PURPOSE

Remove the "we are an academic institution" argument by pointing to peers that refused to choose.

KEY EVIDENCE

Vanderbilt admitted under-investment, launched a $300 million athletics plan, and in 2025 won 10 football games for the first time in program history. Northwestern's donors privately funded an $862 million stadium. Duke and Stanford pair national academic reputations with sustained athletic success.

WHEN TO RUN

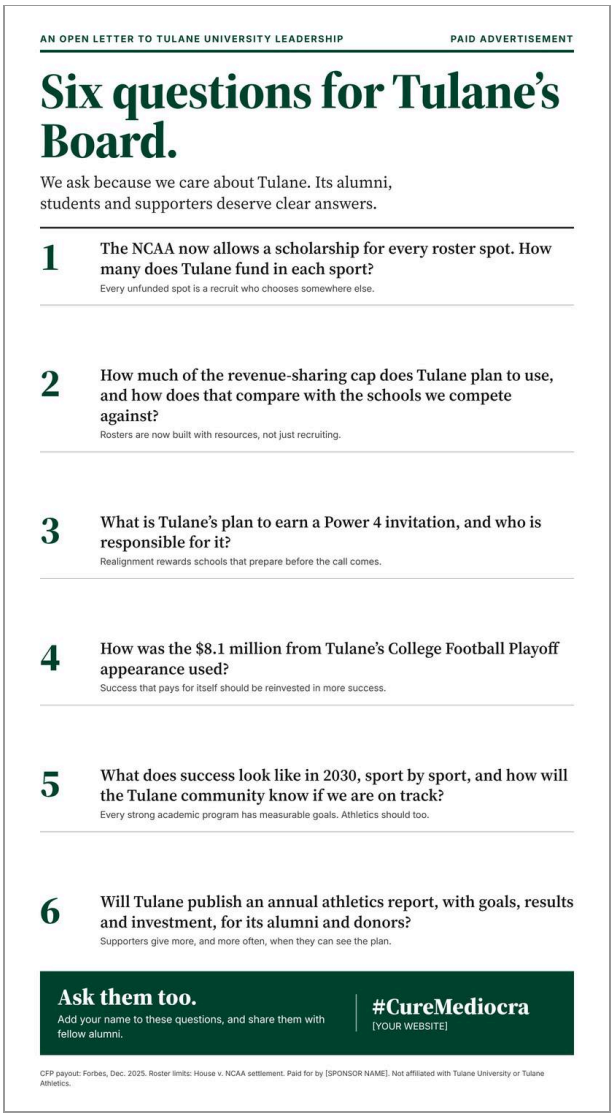
After the first four ads establish the case.

THE ASK

Tulane belongs in this company. Commit publicly to athletics.

WHY IT WORKS

It is the most persuasive argument for an academically minded board, because the examples are aspirational peers rather than athletics factories.



AD 6 · TRANSPARENCY

Six Questions for Tulane's Board

PURPOSE

Shift from making the case to inviting a response. Reasonable, specific questions are hard to ignore and impossible to call a grudge.

THE QUESTIONS

Scholarships funded versus allowed; use of the revenue-sharing cap; the Power 4 strategy and its owner; use of the $8.1 million CFP payout; measurable goals for 2030; and an annual athletics report.

WHEN TO RUN

Ideally ahead of a scheduled Board meeting.

THE ASK

Add your name to the questions and share them.

NOTE

A public answer to any one of these would be progress worth acknowledging in the next ad.



AN OPEN LETTER — PAID ADVERTISEMENT

To Tulane, from the people who love it.

To President Fitts and the Board of Tulane University:

We are alumni, students, parents, donors and season ticket holders. We are proud of Tulane: its research, its teaching, its renewal after Katrina, and its place among America's great universities.

We write because we believe Tulane is leaving something valuable on the table. Athletic success draws applicants, unites alumni, inspires donors and puts Tulane's name in front of millions. Our College Football Playoff appearance showed what is possible. Without sustained commitment, that success fades quickly.

We are not asking Tulane to choose athletics over academics. We are asking it to treat athletics as a partner to academics: to fund every scholarship the rules allow, to invest competitively, to set public goals, and to pursue a place in a Power 4 conference.

We are ready to help. We ask only for a plan worth supporting.

Respectfully,

[Name], Class of [Year]	[Name], Class of [Year]	[Name], Class of [Year]
[Name], Class of [Year]	[Name], Class of [Year]	[Name], Class of [Year]
[Name], Class of [Year]	[Name], Class of [Year]	[Name], Class of [Year]
[Name], Class of [Year]	[Name], Class of [Year]	[Name], Class of [Year]
[Name], parent, Class of [Year]	[Name], season ticket holder	[Name], former student-athlete
[Name], parent, Class of [Year]	[Name], season ticket holder	[Name], former student-athlete

...and **[NUMBER]** more alumni, students, parents, donors and fans.

Add your name.
The next printing will carry every signature we receive.

#CureMediocra
[YOUR WEBSITE]

Signatures published with permission. Paid for by [SPONSOR NAME]. Not affiliated with Tulane University or Tulane Athletics.

AD 7 · THE CONSTITUENCY

An Open Letter to Tulane

PURPOSE

Show that the campaign is a broad constituency, not anonymous fans: alumni, students, parents, donors, season ticket holders and former student-athletes, by name.

KEY MESSAGE

We are proud of Tulane. We ask it to treat athletics as a partner to academics, and we are ready to help.

WHEN TO RUN

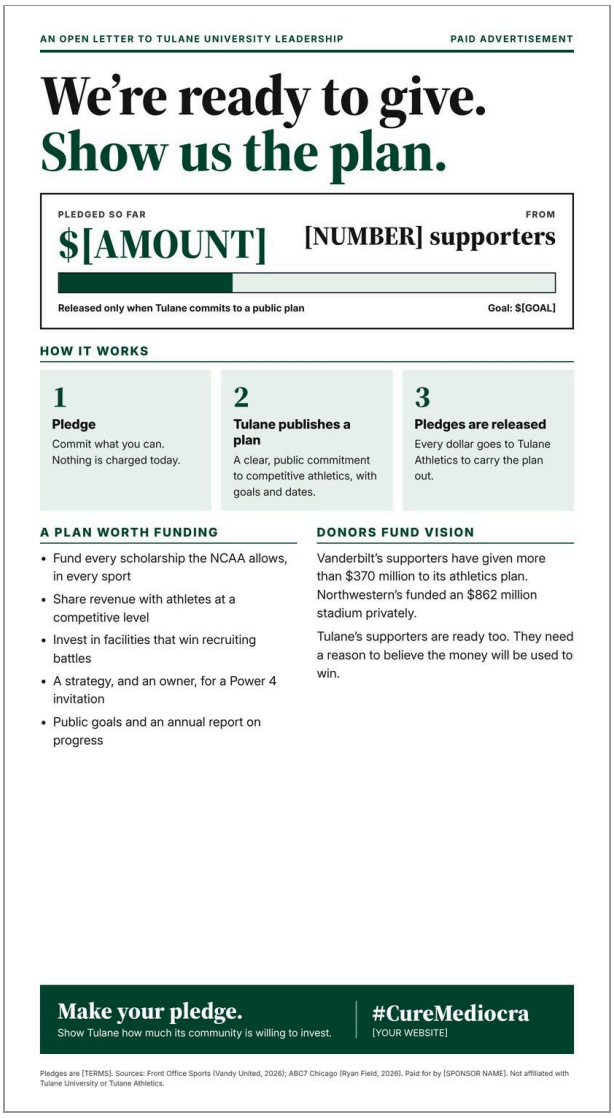
Once enough signatures are collected to fill the page.

THE ASK

Add your name; each printing carries every signature received.

BEFORE PRINTING

Collect signatures through the campaign website with explicit permission to publish names and class years.



AD 8 · THE LEVERAGE

We're Ready to Give. Show Us the Plan.

PURPOSE

Offer resources, not demands. Pledges are released to Tulane Athletics once the university publishes a plan.

KEY MESSAGE

Donors fund vision. Vanderbilt's supporters have given more than $370 million to its athletics plan; Northwestern's funded a stadium privately.

WHEN TO RUN

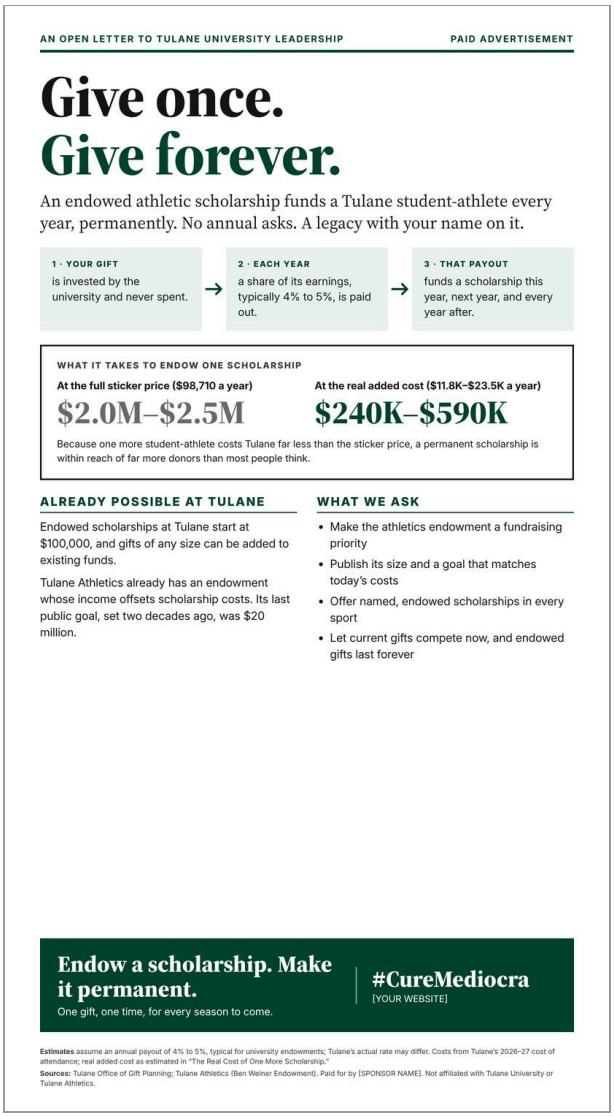
After the open letter demonstrates breadth of support.

THE ASK

Make a pledge.

BEFORE LAUNCH

Set up the pledge structure with legal and tax advice, including whether pledges are binding, where funds are held, and the conditions for release. Fill in the pledge totals and terms, and decide whether pledges can be designated to the athletics endowment (Ad 9).



AD 9 · PERMANENCE

Give Once. Give Forever.

PURPOSE

Answer donor fatigue with a better kind of gift. An endowed athletic scholarship funds a student-athlete every year, permanently, with no annual ask.

KEY EVIDENCE

Endowed scholarships at Tulane start at $100,000, and Tulane Athletics already has an endowment whose income offsets scholarship costs; its last public goal, set two decades ago, was $20 million. At a typical 4% to 5% payout, endowing the full $98,710 sticker price takes about $2.0 to $2.5 million, while endowing the real added cost takes about $240,000 to $590,000.

WHEN TO RUN

After Ad 8, so pledges can be designated to current use or to the endowment.

THE ASK

Make the athletics endowment a fundraising priority, publish its size and a goal that matches today's costs, and offer named endowed scholarships in every sport.

NOTE

Endowments are slow to build, so the campaign asks for both: current gifts to compete now, endowed gifts so the program never has to start over. Confirm Tulane's actual payout rate if possible.



PUBLISHED EVERY SEMESTER — PAID ADVERTISEMENT

The Tulane Athletics Scorecard

Fall 2026 edition. Results, investment and commitment, measured in public.

MEASURE	LAST YEAR	THIS YEAR	THE GOAL
Football	11–3, College Football Playoff	[FINAL RECORD]	Conference title, Playoff
Men's basketball	18–15, no NCAA bid (last: 1995)	In progress	NCAA Tournament
Baseball	25–31, missed conference tournament	Opens in February	NCAA regional
[OTHER SPORT]	[LAST YEAR]	[THIS YEAR]	[GOAL]
Scholarships funded vs. allowed	*Not disclosed*	*Not disclosed*	Every roster spot, every sport
Athletics revenue	About $66 million	[THIS YEAR]	Closing the gap to the ACC average (~$160M)
Published athletics plan	[STATUS]	[STATUS]	Public goals, reported yearly
Conference	American	American	A Power 4 invitation

We will publish this scorecard every semester. Nothing would make us happier than filling it with wins.

Progress you can measure.
Follow the scorecard and help fill in the blanks.

#CureMediocra
[YOUR WEBSITE]

Records from Tulane Athletics. Revenue figures approximate. Paid for by [SPONSOR NAME]. Not affiliated with Tulane University or Tulane Athletics.

AD 10 · ACCOUNTABILITY

The Tulane Athletics Scorecard

PURPOSE

Make accountability about results rather than people. Published each semester, the scorecard tracks records, scholarships, revenue, a published plan and conference status.

KEY MESSAGE

Progress you can measure. Nothing would make us happier than filling it with wins.

WHEN TO RUN

Each semester, starting once earlier ads have run.

THE ASK

Follow the scorecard and help fill in the blanks.

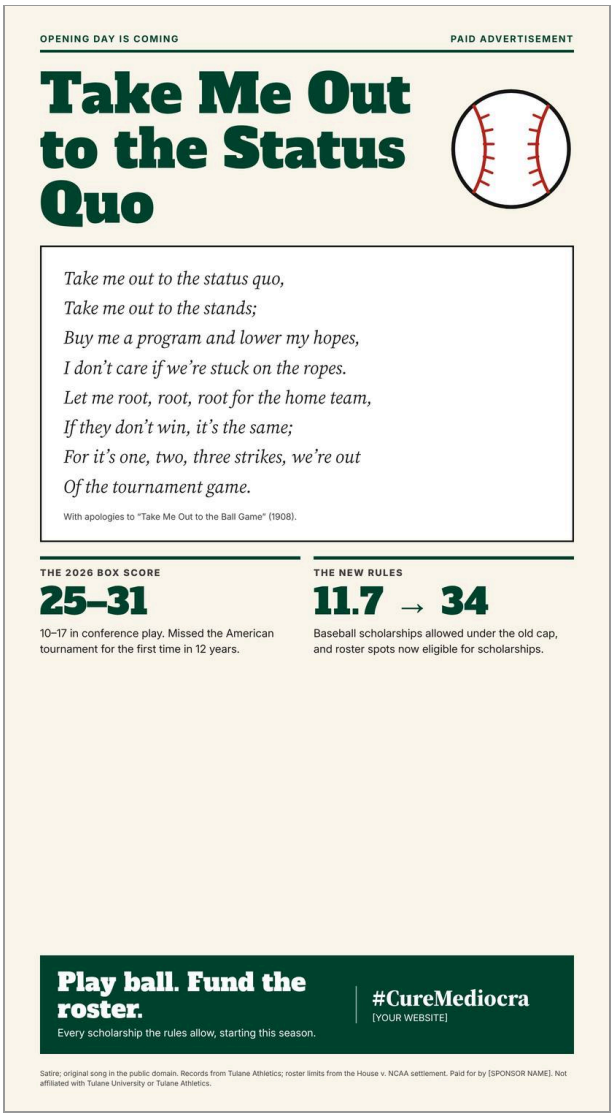
BEFORE PRINTING

Fill in current results and any sport the committee wants to add. Where Tulane does not disclose data, the scorecard says so plainly.

APPENDIX

Seasonal and reserve ads

Appendix A holds two seasonal pieces timed to the baseball opener and Selection Sunday; both are humorous and name no individuals. **Appendix B** holds the two earlier ads that name individuals, kept in reserve because using them early would undercut the institutional approach that gives the campaign its credibility.



APPENDIX A · SEASONAL

Take Me Out to the Status Quo

PURPOSE

A light-hearted baseball piece built on a parody of the public-domain 1908 song.

WHEN TO RUN

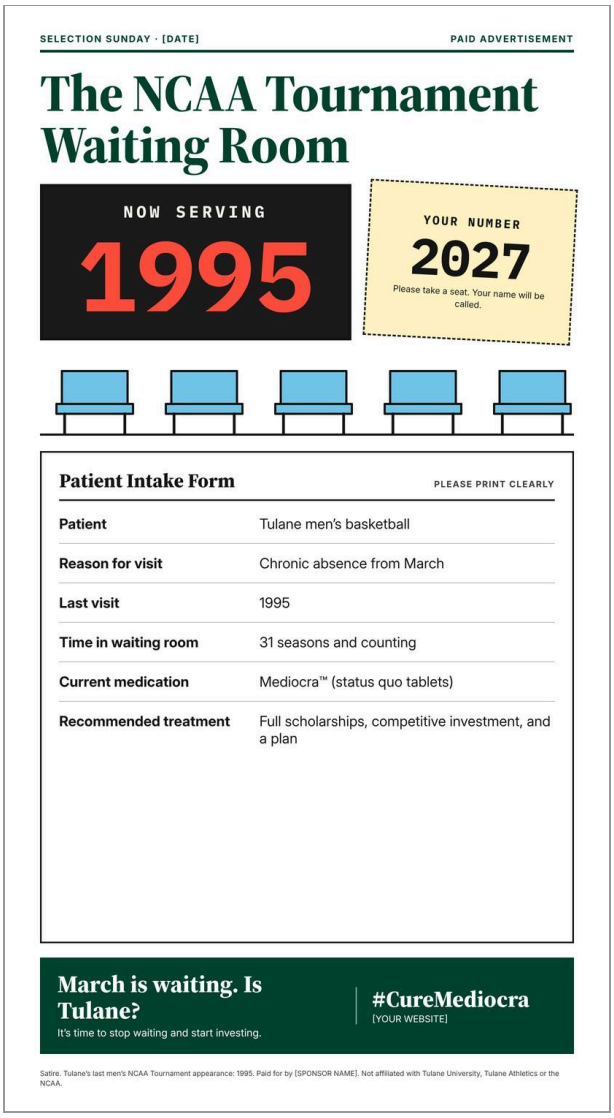
Opening weekend of the baseball season, mid-February.

KEY FACTS

2026: 25–31 overall, 10–17 in conference, and the first missed American tournament in 12 years. Baseball roster spots eligible for scholarships rose from 11.7 under the old cap to 34.

THE ASK

Play ball. Fund the roster.



APPENDIX A · SEASONAL

The NCAA Tournament Waiting Room

PURPOSE

A Selection Sunday piece: a doctor's-office waiting room where the counter still reads "Now serving: 1995."

WHEN TO RUN

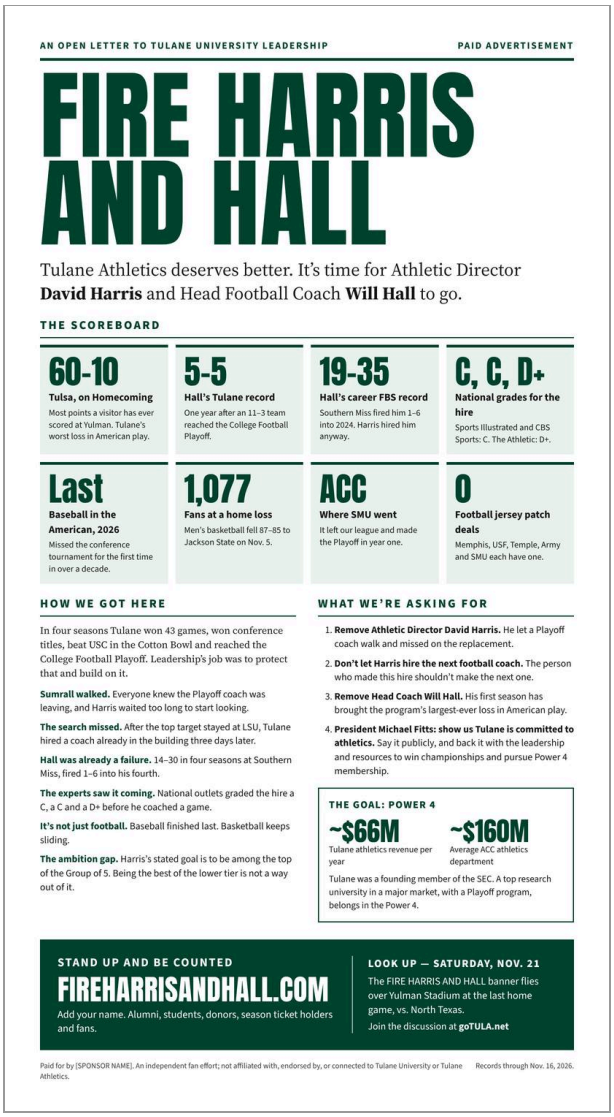
Selection Sunday week in March. Insert the date.

KEY FACTS

Tulane's last men's NCAA Tournament appearance was 1995, 31 seasons ago through 2025–26. Update the count each year.

CONNECTION

The intake form lists Mediocra™ as the current medication, tying back to the opening ad.



AN OPEN LETTER TO TULANE UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP — PAID ADVERTISEMENT

FIRE HARRIS AND HALL

Tulane Athletics deserves better. It's time for Athletic Director **David Harris** and Head Football Coach **Will Hall** to go.

THE SCOREBOARD

60-10 — Tulsa, on Homecoming. Most points a visitor has ever scored at Yulman. Tulane's worst loss in American play.

5-5 — Hall's Tulane record. One year after an 11–3 team reached the College Football Playoff.

19-35 — Hall's career FBS record. Southern Miss fired him 1–6 into 2024. Harris hired him anyway.

C, C, D+ — National grades for the hire. Sports Illustrated and CBS Sports: C. The Athletic: D+.

Last — Baseball in the American, 2026. Missed the conference tournament for the first time in over a decade.

1,077 — Fans at a home loss. Men's basketball fell 87–85 to Jackson State on Nov. 5.

ACC — Where SMU went. It left our league and made the Playoff in year one.

0 — Football jersey patch deals. Memphis, USF, Temple, Army and SMU each have one.

HOW WE GOT HERE

In four seasons Tulane won 43 games, won conference titles, beat USC in the Cotton Bowl and reached the College Football Playoff. Leadership's job was to protect that and build on it.

Sumrall walked. Everyone knew the Playoff coach was leaving, and Harris waited too long to start looking.

The search missed. After the top target stayed at LSU, Tulane hired a coach already in the building three days later.

Hall was already a failure. 14–30 in four seasons at Southern Miss, fired 1–6 into his fourth.

The experts saw it coming. National outlets graded the hire a C, a C and a D+ before he coached a game.

It's not just football. Baseball finished last. Basketball keeps sliding.

The ambition gap. Harris's stated goal is to be among the top of the Group of 5. Being the best of the lower tier is not a way out of it.

WHAT WE'RE ASKING FOR

1. **Remove Athletic Director David Harris.** He let a Playoff coach walk and missed on the replacement.
2. **Don't let Harris hire the next football coach.** The person who made this hire shouldn't make the next one.
3. **Remove Head Coach Will Hall.** His first season has brought the program's largest-ever loss in American play.
4. **President Michael Fitts: show us Tulane is committed to athletics.** Say it publicly, and back it with the leadership and resources to win championships and pursue Power 4 membership.

THE GOAL: POWER 4

~$66M — Tulane athletics revenue per year

~$160M — Average ACC athletics department

Tulane was a founding member of the SEC. A top research university in a major market, with a Playoff program, belongs in the Power 4.

STAND UP AND BE COUNTED

FIREHARRISANDHALL.COM

Add your name. Alumni, students, donors, season ticket holders and fans.

LOOK UP — SATURDAY, NOV. 21

The FIRE HARRIS AND HALL banner flies over Yulman Stadium at the last home game, vs. North Texas.

Join the discussion at **goTULA.net**

Paid for by [SPONSOR NAME]. An independent fan effort; not affiliated with, endorsed by, or connected to Tulane University or Tulane Athletics. Records through Nov. 16, 2026.

APPENDIX B · IN RESERVE

Fire Harris and Hall

STATUS

Held in reserve. It names individuals and calls for dismissals, which conflicts with the campaign's institutional approach.

WHEN IT MIGHT BE USED

Only if circumstances change materially, for example a failed search, a public misstep or a broad shift in sentiment.

BEFORE ANY USE

Update all records and figures, which are current only through mid-November 2026.



A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT FROM CONCERNED TULANE FANS — PAID ADVERTISEMENT

You hired HUHH?

HU HH

NOT FDA APPROVED

Introducing **HUHH™**, the four-ingredient leadership formula clinically proven to keep Tulane Athletics exactly where it is.

Leadership Facts

Serving size: 4 hires

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS		PURPOSE
H	**David Harris** — Let a College Football Playoff coach walk out the door. Replaced him with the coach Southern Miss had just fired.	ATHLETIC DIRECTOR
U	**Jay Uhlman** — Promoted from the staff of a coach Tulane fired after six seasons without a regional. Missed the American tournament for the first time in 12 years.	HEAD BASEBALL COACH
H	**Ron Hunter** — Seven seasons, zero NCAA Tournaments. Tulane's last trip was in 1995, the year *Toy Story* came out.	HEAD BASKETBALL COACH
H	**Will Hall** — Inherited a College Football Playoff team. Gave up 60 points to Tulsa on Homecoming.	HEAD FOOTBALL COACH

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Side effects of HUHH may include: giving up 60 points on Homecoming; acute empty-seat syndrome (1,077 fans for a home loss to Jackson State); missing the conference tournament; national grades of C, C and D+; watching SMU reach the Playoff from the ACC; chronic Group of 5 membership; recurring "next year" episodes; and donor fatigue.

Do not take HUHH if you are allergic to losing.

Stop taking HUHH and call President Fitts if your basketball program experiences March without the NCAA Tournament for more than 30 years.

Ask your Athletic Director if HUHH is right for you.

Spoiler: he thinks it is.

℞ THE REAL PRESCRIPTION

New leadership. Real resources. A Power 4 future. Tulane is a top research university in a major city with a Playoff football program. Its athletics should act like it.

#uhiredHUHH

POST IT. SHARE IT. TAG IT.

Add your name at **fireharrisandhall.com**

This is satire. HUHH is not a real medication; the records are real. Paid for by [SPONSOR NAME]. Not affiliated with Tulane University or Tulane Athletics.

Records as of Nov. 2026.

APPENDIX B · IN RESERVE

You Hired HUHH?

STATUS

Held in reserve for the same reason: it is a parody built around four named individuals.

BEFORE ANY USE

Confirm who made each hire, since some predate the current athletic director, and update every record line.

SOURCES

Sources

- Pope, D. G., & Pope, J. C. (2014). Understanding College Application Decisions: Why College Sports Success Matters. *Journal of Sports Economics*, 15(2).
- Forbes (K. Dosh), Front Office Sports and EssentiallySports: College Football Playoff payouts to the American and Tulane, Dec. 2025–Jan. 2026.
- Associated Press: NCAA men's basketball tournament unit values, April 2026.
- ESPN: George Mason Final Four publicity study; SMU News (2011): applications after the 2009 bowl win.
- *Tulanian*, Winter 2023: the president's remarks after the Cotton Bowl.
- Tulane Office of Financial Aid and Student Accounts Receivable: 2026–27 cost of attendance and housing rates.
- Matheson, V., & O'Connor, D., "The Bottom Line: Accounting for Revenues and Expenditures in Intercollegiate Athletics"; and related analyses of the marginal cost of athletic scholarships.
- Yahoo Sports and Sports Illustrated: House v. NCAA settlement roster limits.
- Front Office Sports: Vanderbilt's Vandy United investment; Vanderbilt Athletics game notes, Dec. 2025.
- ABC7 Chicago, CBS Chicago and WTTW: Northwestern's Ryan Field, 2026.
- Tulane Office of Gift Planning: endowed scholarships; Tulane Athletics: Ben Weiner Endowment and Perpetual Wave campaign.
- Tulane Athletics: game recaps and season records, 2025–26 and 2026–27.
- Fire Harris and Hall website: Tulane athletics revenue (~$66M) and ACC average (~$160M); to be confirmed against original sources before print.