

Media+Design students, alumni bring life to SoPA community space

September 17, 2021 1:15 PM Alicia Jasmin
ajasmin@tulane.edu



A new mural in the Tulane School of Professional Advancement is the centerpiece of the school's student and community space. (Photo by Stephen Young)

Students and alumni from the Media + Design program at the Tulane School of Professional Advancement (SoPA) have left their mark in the form of a new mural in the school's student and community space.

[View the time-lapse video below.]

In April of 2021, when SoPA relocated its offices from the basement of Gibson Hall to the second floor of Richardson Building #5, SoPA Dean Suri Duitch sought to create an aesthetically engaging space for students to gather, study and enjoy.

“We had such a great space, but we needed to make it feel warm and inviting, said Duitch, who conceived the idea for a mural and suggested the use of student artists for its commission. “Even before seeing the design concepts, I knew that our students would deliver something amazing because they are all incredibly talented.”

Student Kat Coneybear and alumna Keagan Krauss were tasked with leading the creation of the mural from idea to completion. Over a five-day period, Coneybear and Krauss garnered the assistance of a team of SoPA students who helped stencil and then paint the design on the largest wall in Richardson suite 203.

“This was such a big project in many senses—the mural itself is physically large and much bigger than most projects we've worked on in our design classes, but it's also "big" conceptually in that it's in this beautiful new space on campus and is really meant to represent SoPA and communicate something essential about the school to anyone who sees it,” said Coneybear.

Krauss and Coneybear hit the message out of the park using a statement explaining to any person who enters —student, faculty, staff, or guest — that SoPA is “Where you belong.”

“My design classmates have been everything from true undergraduates in their late teens to medical doctors in their 60s to service industry workers to nonprofit employees and everything in between,” says Coneybear. “It is a place where a truly diverse group of people can find belonging.”

The mural’s imagery supports its text in meaning through the use of brightly colored botanical elements including leaves, vines, and the white star jasmine, which the students call “a nod to New Orleans” because of its familiar bloom found around the city in early summer.

A supporting shade of blue and a pair of hands marries the pieces into a single visual spectacle that must be seen in person to fully appreciate.

“The hands are meant to convey a sense of support,” says Krauss. “It ties back into the idea that SoPA is a place where people from different backgrounds can come

together to learn and be supported in their academic endeavors.”

Guests are invited to visit SoPA’s new facility and view the mural at any time. An Open House will be held during Homecoming on Friday, Nov. 12, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

