



## Quick Stats

- ✓ Monthly chat sessions average over 500 student attendees
- ✓ During an average 2 hour session, over 1000 questions are moderated
- ✓ During an average session, an average of 500 questions are answered
- ✓ Enrollment:  
7,803 undergrad;  
4,819 graduate & professional
- ✓ 4,000 faculty and staff
- ✓ According to the *U.S. And News and World Report*, Tulane University is ranked 51<sup>st</sup> among the best national universities
- ✓ Mission: "Tulane's purpose is to create, communicate and conserve knowledge in order to enrich the capacity of individuals, organizations and communities to think, to learn and to act and lead with integrity and wisdom."

## Challenge

Tulane University Admissions Department staff prides itself in its ability to answer prospective and newly admitted students' questions in a personalized and timely manner. Tulane has determined this highly attentive level of outreach motivates students to apply and increases the yield rate of admitted students. One of the admissions department's biggest challenges was efficiently utilizing staff members' time. Staff members found themselves repeatedly answering the same questions from prospective and newly admitted students/parents and needed to find a way to streamline their efforts. Tulane needed an easy-to-use, powerful online recruiting tool that would help to both alleviate the repetitious inquiries and make better use of staff time – while maintaining the goal of connecting with students and parents on a very personal level. The admissions department required an online tool they could configure and set up themselves, without assistance from their internal IT department or Webmasters, but that had built-in support staff behind it, ready to jump in and assist at any time.

## Solution

Tulane partnered with SparcPlug, Inc., selecting its moderated group chat solution. With it, Tulane is able to:

- Host large, well-attended moderated chat events – including multiple moderators and any number of guest speakers (admissions staff members, current students, etc.)
- Familiarize large groups of prospective students to their school and motivate them to apply and enroll
- Provide immediate answers to questions – that get shared among 100s/1000s of students and parents in real-time
- Work in an online medium (chat/real-time social networking) that students are already comfortable with and prefer
- Push out web links, web pages, slides, share files and show YouTube videos as part of a chat session
- Collect searchable chat session transcripts – made available to students unable to attend the chat and that can serve as FAQs
- Continually gather feedback from each chat session to use for existing outreach programs or use to create new strategies

**“Using SparcPlug's moderated chat service, Tulane is able to efficiently and *personally* reach out to very large groups of students and parents.”**

- Jeffrey G Schiffman  
Assoc. Director of Admission  
Tulane University

SparcPlug makes the entire chat event process 100% hassle-free for Tulane – handling the chat event hosting, branding, guest speaker photo page layouts, event web page hosting and support. Tulane simply schedules its chat events, e-mails prospective students to join and then logs in to chat at the appointed time. To boost and maximize attendance to Tulane’s chat events, SparcPlug offers linking to popular social networks like Facebook and Twitter so chat audience members can easily share with their friends. SparcPlug also sends event reminders via text messages, phone calls and emails, as well as offering the export-to-calendar functionality that lets audience members book Tulane’s chats into many popular online calendars.

## Results

Some of the positive results Tulane has achieved include:

- More efficient use of admissions staff members’ time
- Discovering new ways to make contact with students in ways that are more meaningful and preferred by them
- An increase in applicants
- Higher yield rate of admitted students
- Questions being asked individually are more specific, allowing for better tailoring of answers
- Positive feedback from prospective students and parents
- In addition to admissions staff chats, Tulane uses the moderated chat tool to allow prospective students and parents to chat with myriad guest speakers: Tulane’s president, current students, housing or financial aid staff, faculty members and sports department members
- Incorporation of chat events into year-round communications with enrolled students provides them continuity and a sense of their place in the community throughout a student’s life-cycle at Tulane.

**SparcPlug’s moderated group chat is powered by Xronos, a service of SparcPlug, Inc.**

SparcPlug, Inc. is headquartered in San Francisco, CA.

For more information, please visit: <http://Xronos.com>

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