



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **500-Plus Howard University Students Head for Hurricane-Ravaged New Orleans**

*Week-long Alternative Spring Break Service Mission to Assist with Rebuilding Efforts*

**Washington, D.C., March 14, 2007** – More than 500 Howard University students have opted to trade their swim-wear for construction hats and boots to participate in the University’s Alternative Spring Break program (ASB) to rebuild houses and lives in New Orleans, where life in the “Big Easy” has become increasingly difficult in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

This year’s ASB, entitled *Journey Back to New Orleans — Uplifting Our People Through Service* will pick up where the 250 Howard students left off in their [2006 recovery effort](#).

“Howard University has been a part of the recovery immediately following the hurricane by accepting students from Gulf Coast universities,” said Howard University President H. Patrick Swygert. “Last spring break our students went down and did a tremendous job of showing the residents that our support was unwavering. This year, hundreds more are going and this demonstrates our continued profound support and commitment.”

The University’s Andrew Rankin Memorial Chapel has been taking students on public service missions since 1996. The 2007 mission occurs in two phases. [Phase I](#) began on March 11, when 66 School of Law students traveled to New Orleans to provide much needed legal assistance. In phase II, 500-plus students will help build and restore hundreds of homes in the Ninth Ward, in conjunction with Habitat for Humanity and local organizations. Howard University students from a variety of fields will also tutor local students.

Thousands across the Washington metropolitan region donated more than \$125,000 during a recent [Radiothon](#) hosted by Howard University’s WHUR 96.3 FM to help send the student volunteers to New Orleans.

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“Howard University has a legacy of leadership and service to our community, nation and world,” said Debbie Origo, ASB student co-coordinator. “Alternative Spring Break is one of the many ways we stay true to these values. Because of the recent outpour from the community we have an even greater mandate to leave New Orleans in better shape than we found it.”

Howard University has assisted nearly 400 students impacted by Hurricane Katrina, which included continuing students as well as admitting students from universities in the affected region. In addition to educational assistance, the University’s relief efforts included a broad range of services and assistance such as medical, legal, allied health, public health, social and psychological services, and religious support.

**Note to the Media:**

On Saturday, March 17, 500+ undergraduate students will convene at Howard University’s Cramton Auditorium (Main Campus), 2455 Sixth Street, NW, Washington, D.C., beginning at 7 a.m. The buses are scheduled to depart for New Orleans at noon.

Students will return to Washington, D.C. (same location as above) on Sunday, March 25, at approximately 8 a.m. (the actual time of arrival is dependent upon variables such as traffic flow).

Please contact Stacie Royster or Kerry-Ann Hamilton (information above) to coordinate coverage and interview opportunities.

***Saturday, March 17***

- **7 a.m. – 8 a.m.** Check-in for Buses 1 through 4
- **8 a.m. – 9 a.m.** Check-in for Buses 5 through 8
- **9 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.** Check-in for Buses 9 and 10
- **10 a.m.** BUSES ARRIVE – Commence Loading
- **10:30 a.m.** President Swygert’s address and send off
- **11 a.m.** Group photos
- **12 p.m.** Buses will depart (front of Cramton Auditorium)

For news outlets with bureaus or correspondents in the New Orleans area, work site locations are available for the week of service. Please coordinate visits and interviews with Kerry-Ann Hamilton at 202.437.7889 or [k\\_hamilton@howard.edu](mailto:k_hamilton@howard.edu) as she will be on site in New Orleans.

*Howard University is one of 48 U.S. private, Doctoral/Research-Extensive universities and comprises 12 schools and colleges. Founded in 1867, students pursue studies in more than 120 areas leading to undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees. Since 1998, the University has produced two Rhodes Scholars, a Truman Scholar, 13 Fulbright Scholars and nine Pickering Fellows. Howard also produces more on-campus African-American Ph.D.s than any other university in the world. For more information on Howard University, call 202-238-2330, or visit the University’s Web site at [www.Howard.edu](http://www.Howard.edu).*