

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Fall 2014



November 21, 2014

Dear alumni, parents, faculty, staff and friends:

It's a different world.

My father was a national leader in modern trauma surgery, yet the way he practiced medicine seems downright antiquated by today's standards. That's not due solely to advances in medical knowledge, either.

No, like every other area of human knowledge, the very nature of medicine has changed. Gone are the days of studying in discrete disciplines such as medicine, law, business, science, architecture or the arts.

To succeed in life, to make a difference in the world, today's students must be schooled not only in subjects but in interconnected systems of knowledge. The English major needs to know about marketing, the architecture student needs to learn about the sociological impact of building design, the engineer needs to know foreign languages.

Tulane is perfectly poised to provide such an innovative, interdisciplinary experience for its students. We are unique among universities in having all of our undergraduates matriculate through one single college, Newcomb-Tulane College.

Why is this important? It encourages students to view their education more broadly rather than compartmentalizing themselves into one particular major or field of study.

A CLASSY BEGINNING

When the fall semester opened, 1,649 first-year students enrolled at Tulane as members of the class of 2018, out of 30,000 who applied to the university. They have an average SAT score of 1338, and high school academic records place them in the top 10 percent of college-bound freshmen nationwide.

There are first-year students from 46 different states and countries such as Nicaragua, Panama, China, Canada, Vietnam, Spain, Costa Rica, Turkey, Colombia, Zimbabwe, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, India, Honduras, Germany, the United Kingdom and Ethiopia.

Earlier in August, the School of Medicine welcomed members of its 2018 class, who received their first doctor's white jackets in a special ceremony. The 186 students are from 31 states—California and Louisiana are the top two—and four other countries.

Top Left: President Mike Fitts speaks at the dedication of Yulman Stadium.

Top Right: After the fall convocation ceremony, first-year students by tradition touch the Tulane Victory Bell.



Senior anthropology major Kate Elder spent her summer at an archaeological dig in Peru, thanks to a Judith and Morris Henkin Memorial Travel Scholarship from Newcomb-Tulane College.

GREENBAUM HOUSE WELCOMES STUDENTS

The third residential college on the Tulane uptown campus opened its doors this fall to 256 students. Barbara Greenbaum House at Newcomb Lawn, located at Broadway and Freret Street near Newcomb Hall, also welcomed a professor-in-residence and her family.

Lisa Molix, associate professor of psychology, with her husband and 15-month-old daughter, live at Greenbaum House and will host activities to foster an intellectual community.

The red brick, 80,000-square-foot residence hall has four-story and six-story sections connected by a courtyard and bridges at the upper stories. It has a demonstration kitchen for cooking classes, a 35-seat classroom, study and social lounges and a name befitting a lifelong romance. Alumnus **Jerry Greenbaum** met his wife, **Barbara**, a Newcomb alumna, on the uptown campus. Their lead gift for the residence hall led to him naming it in her honor.

Through the Newcomb-Tulane College model students are free to explore endless possibilities and avenues of discovery, to learn who they are and the difference that knowledge can make in their own life and in the lives of others.

The dancer may not decide to become a scientist but sharing a common entry point into Tulane with *unlike-minded* classmates just might inspire him to take a human physiology course to learn how the musculoskeletal system powers artistic expression.

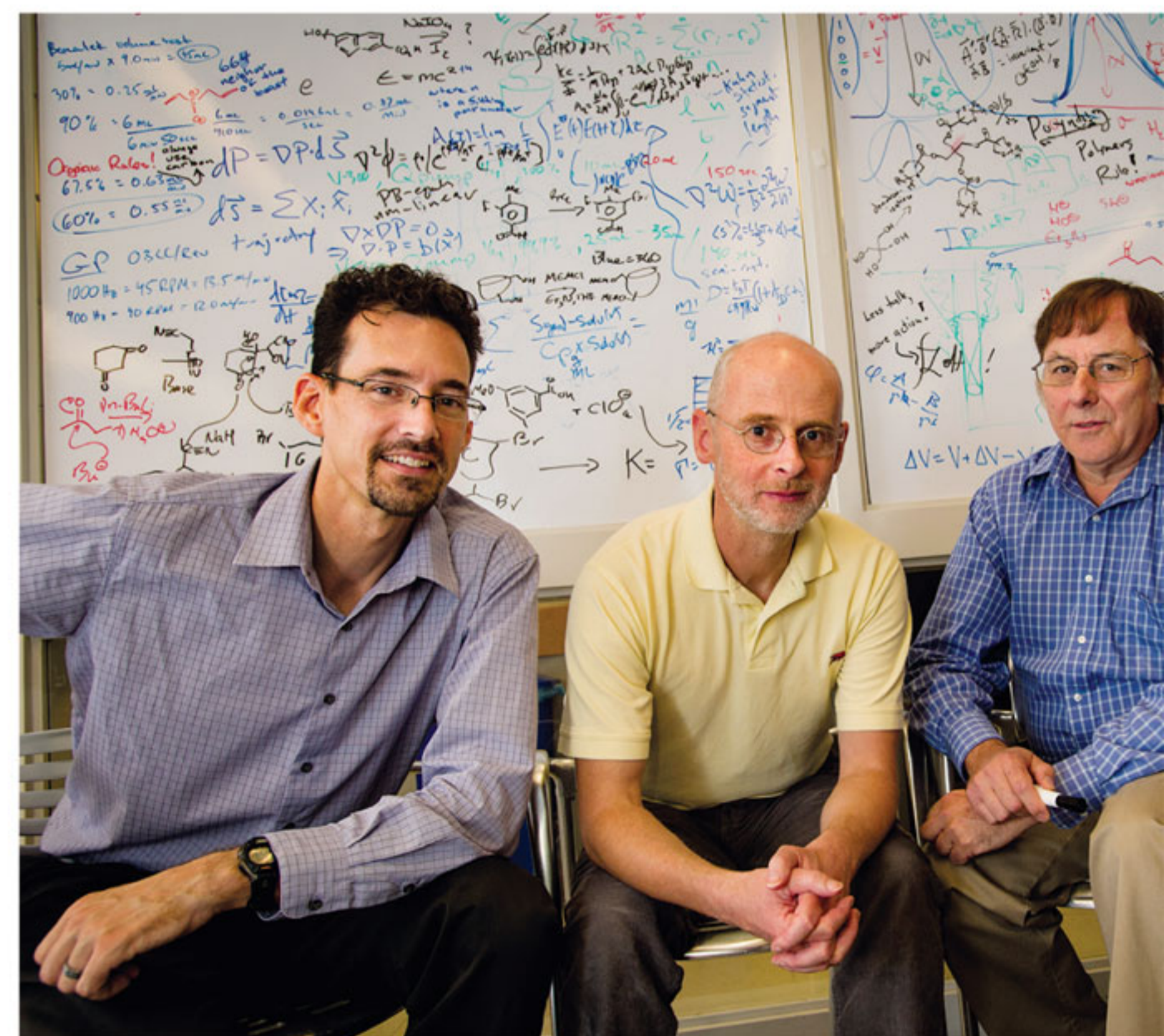
The student who has always dreamed of being a chemist might not decide to become a business major but after taking some entrepreneurial courses at the Freeman School, she may decide to open her own environmental consulting business. The sculptor may decide to become a psychologist or, better yet, become a sculptor and a psychologist.

And the medical student will learn how to cook. That's right—cook. This is the mission of the recently opened Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine, where a professional chef working in a state-of-the-art kitchen teaches Tulane medical students the culinary skills they need to help their patients cook and eat right.

Tulane is the first medical school in the nation to pursue such an innovative concept, which is the brainchild of philanthropist and Tulane alumnus **William Goldring**.

Melding culinary magic and medical practice is a prime example of the great things that happen when the walls between various fields of knowledge are brought down and experts in all disciplines work together to solve local and global problems.

Another even more powerful example of this is Tulane's leadership in fighting the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. From working to create a vaccine and a rapid response test for Ebola, to our partnership with Harvard University and others in the Viral Hemorrhagic Fever Consortium, the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and School of Medicine are on the front lines of this global battle.





Chef Leah Saris, left, program director at the Center for Culinary Medicine, leads a kitchen lesson with Tulane medical students.

The School of Medicine and the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine have also joined forces with the School of Science and Engineering in an effort to use bioinformatics and biostatistics to better diagnose and treat diseases ranging from osteoporosis to schizophrenia to bipolar disorder.

Fostering multi-discipline collaborations such as this is at the heart of the Phyllis M. Taylor Center for Social Innovation and Design Thinking. Established with a \$15 million gift from Tulane alumnus and board member **Phyllis Taylor**, the center will bring Tulane faculty, students and researchers from a wide array of disciplines together to find practical solutions to real-life problems in the environment, education, health care and more.

The Taylor Center will hire faculty who specialize in design thinking—the process of finding pragmatic, efficient and sustainable solutions to societal problems. It will also bring Taylor Social Innovation Fellows—world-renowned social entrepreneurs and practitioners—to Tulane as visiting professors. Adding these new resources to the leadership we have already established in social innovation will produce some amazing results.

Academic collaborations can take many forms. For instance, **Mark Davis**, a law school faculty member, and **Mike Blum**, a scientist, hail from widely different disciplines, but through their shared expertise on environmental issues they, along with colleagues throughout the university, worked together to bring The French-Ameri-Can Climate Talks to Tulane. This major conference of scientific and policy experts was one of only seven such gatherings in the United States and Canada leading up to the 2015 United Nations annual climate change summit in Paris.



BOB GARRY

RAPID TEST FOR EBOLA

Tulane researchers are developing a rapid test for Ebola that could help stop the epidemic in its tracks. Instead of taking days for lab results, the new test uses a drop of blood from a finger prick to deliver a diagnosis within 20 minutes, allowing public health workers to isolate and treat patients immediately.

“It could have a huge impact in shutting down transmission during an outbreak,” says lead researcher **Bob Garry**, professor of microbiology and immunology. In June, the National Institutes of Health awarded Tulane’s research partner Corgenix Medical Corp. \$2.9 million to fast track the diagnostic, which needs FDA approval before hitting the market.



BRIGHT START FOR ‘SMART POLYMERS’

Four Tulane researchers are among a group of 14 Louisiana and Mississippi scientists receiving National Science Foundation grants to develop tools that will help strengthen the regional workforce and broaden opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

The chemistry and physics professors—from left, **Scott Grayson**, **Bruce Gibb**, **Wayne Reed** and **Hank Ashbaugh**—will receive \$2 million in funding. They are part of the Louisiana-Mississippi Consortium, which will develop new experimental and computational tools for accelerating development of “smart polymers” used to create materials for targeted drug delivery, self-healing materials that recover from damage and nano-composites that resist bacterial growth.



EBOLA VIRUS



Founded in 1964, the Tulane National Primate Research Center, located in Covington, Louisiana, is a center of excellence for biomedical research on human health problems.



DEGREES GO GLOBAL

Two new advanced degrees are expanding graduate education at Tulane. The A. B. Freeman School of Business has launched a new Master of Finance program with the prestigious Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing.

The 18-month post-experience master's program is targeted at individuals in government, banking, finance, insurance and other industries.

And the School of Social Work has a new dual-degree master's program that combines graduate studies in social work with training in disaster resilience and global humanitarian leadership through the Tulane Disaster Resilience Leadership Academy.

The Tulane National Primate Research Center, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, is another Tulane hub for innovative collaborations that address the pressing problems and needs of our world. The center supports the research of more than 400 institutions each year and is home to several unique programs funded by the National Institutes of Health, including a simian vaccine evaluation unit, a tuberculosis research unit and a Tuberculosis Systems Biology program that features teams of microbiologists, molecular biologists, veterinarians, pathologists, infectious disease/pulmonary physicians, mathematicians and statisticians all working together.

The Primate Research Center's unit of Collaborative Research was specifically designed to offer scientists throughout the university and country the coveted opportunity to conduct research at the Primate Center, one of only eight such centers in the country. Among other discoveries, this has resulted in a promising new drug that could prevent HIV infections.

While Tulane is already a leader in interdisciplinary efforts such as the ones mentioned above, we can do even more, especially at the undergraduate level. To that end, I have formed a task force on undergraduate education to find ways to make the collaborative thought and action of interdisciplinary studies truly a central, defining characteristic of a Tulane education.

This "new" effort actually harkens back to the original vision that gave birth to Tulane. An 1834 collaboration among doctors to solve the pressing problems of the day (yellow fever, malaria and other infectious diseases that menaced subtropical New Orleans) led to the foundation of what would become Tulane University.

Today, 180 years later, Tulane is still gathering the best minds, exploring the broadest knowledge and summoning the deepest compassion to confront problems that affect and threaten us all. This is what a Tulane education is all about—our values, our history, our very DNA foster profound thinking and purposeful action in partnership with one another and the world.

Mike Fitts

