



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Spring 2016



April 8, 2016

We often say that Tulane is different—and special. I want to explain to you why. Our difference has deep roots.

This text is adapted from the inauguration speech delivered by Tulane President Mike Fitts on March 17, 2016.

Most universities, historically, have been inward-looking. Tulane, on the other hand, has always looked outward, focusing on solving problems.

In a world with increasingly little use for boundaries, Tulane, from the beginning, has leapt over them. At a moment when society is demanding that higher education demonstrate its relevance and its value, Tulane provides the answers.

This does not represent the latest academic trend for us, but the code of our DNA. We cross boundaries, and we transform lives.

Tulane crosses the intellectual boundaries within our own campuses. It crosses the boundary between our campus and the city. And Tulane crosses boundaries all across the globe.

Crossing boundaries between fields

Tulane began by connecting medicine and public health. It understood from its inception that the hardest problems require solutions that cross fields.

Many of the world's greatest discoveries have been found only by making connections between different areas of knowledge. As Walter Isaacson, a great friend of Tulane, has said, "Innovation will come from people who are able to link beauty to engineering, humanity to technology, and poetry to processors." This is the future of higher education and research.

FREEMAN SCHOOL TO EXPAND

Tulane University will launch a \$35 million expansion of the A. B. Freeman School of Business this spring to meet surging enrollment, enhance industry-leading programming and provide new, state-of-the-art learning spaces for the next generation of business students.

Plans call for renovating about 40,000 square feet of existing space and constructing an approximately 45,000-square-foot, four-story addition that will convert Freeman's two-building footprint on the uptown campus into the Goldring/Woldenberg Business Complex. It will provide advanced, flexible classrooms; expanded breakout rooms for collaborative learning; a new financial analysis lab; a larger, modernized Career Management Center; and incubator space for student startups within a new home for the Lepage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

Business students now account for nearly a third of all Tulane undergraduates.

Top Left: At his March 17 inauguration ceremony, President Mike Fitts, left, is applauded by Board of Tulane chair Darryl Berger, center, and Amy Gutmann, right, president of the University of Pennsylvania.



MUSSAFER HALL

HOME FOR SUCCESS

Tulane has received a \$5 million gift from alumnus David Mussafer and his wife, Marion, to turn the former home of the Tulane School of Social Work into Mussafer Hall, a transformative space that will unite career programming, academic advising and success services.

“Young people are looking to take their studies and careers to the next level, and how great it will be to have a central place in the heart of campus to showcase these very important services.”

—David Mussafer

The 16,000-square-foot building is currently being renovated, and plans are in the works to add a 7,400-square-foot extension in 2017. Together, the two buildings will feature 72 private offices, a multi-purpose room, a research room, conference and breakout rooms, flexible use spaces, and an outdoor study space.

NEUROSCIENCE RANKS HIGH

In 2000, the first Tulane University undergraduate received a degree in neuroscience. The program has grown to be one of the largest on campus, with 337 majors enrolled this semester and 85 graduates receiving degrees in 2015.

Recently the educational website *study.com* recognized the Tulane program as one of the best in the nation, including it among the top 10 programs nationally.

“Tulane’s strong showing in neuroscience is a wonderful example of the ways we connect the undergraduate experience to our professional schools,” says Tulane President Mike Fitts.

We have exciting interdisciplinary centers in the humanities, such as the Stone Center for Latin American Studies, the New Orleans Center for the Gulf South and the Murphy Institute for Political Economy. Our computer science department works entirely in conjunction with other fields. And we see this spirit embodied in so many of our faculty.

Tulane is perfectly poised to lead the way to a future of higher education in which we cross-pollinate our research and teaching. Already, 70 percent of our students pursue a major and a minor, and 35 percent of our students are double majors, pursuing wonderful combinations like neuroscience and dance. Our undergraduates enter Newcomb-Tulane College with a license to explore before they choose a school.

We are creating wonderful residential colleges in which students engage with each other on issues that cut across disciplines. We will use our new Bernick faculty grants to make interdisciplinary training and research a part of everyday life. We will appoint presidential professors who bridge diverse fields. And we will invest in academic collaborations that reflect our strengths and are the defining issues of our time, from energy and the environment to health and bio-innovation.

We will dig deep into interdisciplinary studies of regions from the Gulf South to Latin America. This is our past—and it is our future.

Crossing boundaries between campus and community

Tulane has always embraced New Orleans. And 10 years ago, the flood washed away any walls that had crept up between the city and our campus. The binding of our fates became absolute.

Let me describe just one example, an exciting example: the Small Family City Center. It is a community design center located near its clients. Students work in teams. They translate their clients’ desires into physical reality. They make the world a better place.

CELEBRATION OF TULANE

After the March 17 inauguration of President Michael A. Fitts, Wavemaker Weekend kicked off with innovative events that highlighted the university’s impact and reach.

More than 350 alumni, parents, board members and other friends met on the uptown campus for the weekend, which included a speech by journalist and Board of Tulane member Walter Isaacson.

An interactive Wavemaker showcase in the Lavin-Bernick Center combined photography, video and text displays, emphasizing the extensive work that Tulane is doing to educate students, make a difference in the local and global communities, and find technological solutions to a range of issues. It also included a 3-D map showing planned or new renovation or building projects. The Wavemaker showcase will go on display in different cities later this year.



Dr. Gregory Stewart, left, greets registrants at a recent health screening for retired NFL players held at Tulane Institute for Sports Medicine. Stewart, co-director of the Tulane Sports Medicine Program, is medical director of the NFL Player Care Foundation screenings program at Tulane, a program that offers free medical evaluations and mental health resources to former players.

INVESTMENT FUND FOR FACULTY

The Carol Lavin Bernick Family Foundation, whose generous support of Tulane University built the iconic and award-winning Lavin-Bernick Center for University Life, has pledged \$5 million over the next five years to support Tulane's faculty.

The gift will provide \$1 million annually for department and faculty needs in research, recruitment, development, continuing education and student engagement with grants to individual full-time faculty members up to \$15,000.

The Carol Lavin Bernick Faculty Investment Fund will support a "treasured university asset—our world-class faculty," Tulane President Mike Fitts said.

"Given President Fitts' emphasis on academic collaboration across disciplines, I expect some of these funds will be used to create academic synergies between faculty from different fields," said Carol Bernick, founder of the Carol Lavin Bernick Family Foundation and vice chair of the Board of Tulane.

When we work in the community, theory and practice converge. They mold each other. They reflect each other.

Our philosophy students use Socrates to coach middle school debate. Our undergraduate neuroscience majors work in labs alongside graduate and medical students, studying the effects of medications on the brain and how infants learn. That's the reason the program was recently recognized in the top ten in the country.

We can accomplish far more. We will be a national model for connecting service learning and doctrinal knowledge. We will continue to bring the extraordinary concentration of brainpower on this campus to bear on issues facing not only New Orleans, but the whole world.

Crossing boundaries around the world

Tulane has, from the beginning, been an utterly global institution.

Tulane scholars created the first archeological maps of ancient Maya. They founded public health schools across sub-Saharan Africa. They looked for the origins of humankind in a cave near Johannesburg and shaped disaster response in Haiti.

And Tulane brings the world to our campus. Tulane's law school focuses on the civil law systems used by 80 percent of the countries in the world. We have the nation's most important Latin American academic centers. We have a thoroughly international public health school. And our business school partners with colleagues around the globe.





School of Architecture students in the master of preservation studies program developed proposed uses for the old Carrollton Courthouse in New Orleans. The 1855 building was named one of America's most endangered historic places. Students researched the building and suggested alternative uses in a public presentation.

COMMENCEMENT AHEAD MAY 14

Hoda Kotb, the beloved former New Orleans anchor whose Emmy Award-winning career has spanned the globe from covering wars and natural disasters to co-hosting NBC's "Today" show, will deliver the keynote address at the 2016 Tulane University Commencement ceremony on May 14 in the Mercedes-Benz Superdome.



Kotb, who also is a correspondent for "Dateline," was one of New Orleans' most popular public figures when she served as an anchor and reporter for WWL-TV from 1992 to 1998. In addition to Kotb's address, the

ceremony will feature traditional graduation pageantry with the distinct New Orleans flavor of live jazz, Mardi Gras beads, second-lining, confetti cannons and more.

ASHOKA INNOVATORS ON CAMPUS

Professors and administrators from across the country gathered at Tulane University on Feb. 27 for the annual Ashoka U Exchange conference—no better place for an event that focuses on social innovation.

Tulane, which hosted the event, houses the Phyllis M. Taylor Center for Social Innovation and Design Thinking and offers social innovation as a minor to help students tackle the problems they see through creative approaches. The goal of Ashoka is to stimulate conversation about ways in which higher education can promote change-making among students.

Michael Sorrell, president of Paul Quinn College in Dallas, discusses his goal to create urban change through education reform, during a keynote address at the Ashoka U Exchange conference in McAlister Auditorium.



We must have this focus to support our students as they compete in a truly global economy. Already, a third of our undergraduates study abroad and no other university sends more graduate students to the Peace Corps than Tulane.

We can do even more to encourage our students to venture overseas and to embrace the unfamiliar. We will broaden their horizons by bringing the world to Tulane with more undergraduate international students. And we will partner with more of the finest universities around the globe.

Building a brilliant future

Finally, while I have described to you all of the ways that Tulane uniquely crosses boundaries and solves problems, we have one great hurdle left. We have not yet bridged the racial and economic barriers within our own community.

We must diversify our students, our faculty and our administration to build an institution that mirrors the society around us. We simply cannot fulfill our mission of creating great leaders when there are people missing from our table. We will not be whole until we have *all* of our best and brightest.

As I reflect on the inaugural event, it reminds me of the grandeur of universities. Their unrivaled stability and strength are built on their ability to adapt and change. They must prove relevant to the outside world.

Tulane is the university that the 21st century needs.

Together, we will make Tulane a place that is known worldwide for instilling creative combinations of knowledge in all of our students. We will create campus spaces that function like bustling open markets, connecting people and ideas more seamlessly than ever before, or anywhere else. We will grow Tulane's global traditions into a fully international center for intellectual pursuits.

It is a great and humbling responsibility to lead any university. It is the privilege of my life to lead Tulane.