



2009

Scott S. Cowen



April 6, 2009

Dear alumni, faculty, staff and friends,

If you live in New Orleans you are familiar with the local inclination to divide history into two parts: Before Katrina and After Katrina. If you are reading this from another area of the country, take my word for it. Even after nearly four years, the distinction between how things were before the storm as opposed to how they are now invariably comes up in both private conversations and public discourse. And it is an understandable perspective for a city still engaged in recovery.

I mention this because this spring will mark another milestone in the post-Katrina life of both Tulane University and New Orleans—the graduation of the class of undergraduates and medical students whose first year of study was badly disrupted, but not ended, by the storm. These students are the last of our graduates, including those from our graduate and professional schools, to have had their lives directly impacted by Katrina. And during the last four years they have perhaps had the most opportunity to help in the recovery of New Orleans through civic engagement.

As most of you know, after Katrina Tulane engaged in a renewal process that resulted in not only a smaller and stronger institution, but one whose mission embraced civic engagement as a way to marshal our resources to assist in the recovery of the area while offering our students the kind of experiential education they could receive nowhere else. We emerged from that process as the only major research university in the country to integrate public service into its core curriculum.

'TULANE ON TRACK'

During these uncertain economic times, Tulane needs the support of its alumni, friends and donors to keep the university on track. The "Tulane on Track" appeal was created to highlight Tulane and New Orleans in a creative way and remind the Tulane community why this city and university are so special.

As President Scott Cowen says, "At Tulane University, we are singularly focused on our most important job, which is keeping the university moving forward even during these tough times. In this spirit, we want to make sure we can continue to provide scholarships to our outstanding students and to support our community engagement initiatives in health care and public school reform."

A special website has been created with short videos about interesting Tulane people and programs—<http://tulane.edu/ontrack/>. The overall goal of this vital campaign is to raise \$15 million from 15,000 people by June 30.



Office of the President

6823 St. Charles Ave.

New Orleans, LA 70118-5698

Tel 504.865.5201 Fax 865.5202

scowen@tulane.edu

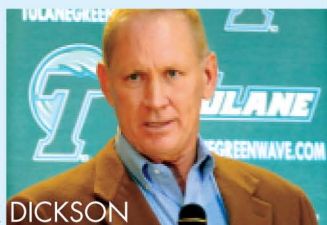


JOE KLEIN

"We're not going to know tomorrow whether [Obama's foreign] policy works, and we're not going to know if his domestic policies will work. These things take time. They are complicated. They are subtle."

—In his March 11 lecture, best-selling author and *Time* magazine political columnist Joe Klein applauded the students in the audience for their eagerness to become actively involved in politics. The lecture was part of a new series by Newcomb-Tulane College.

QUOTES ON CAMPUS



RICK DICKSON

"This is a good example for the rest of the community. It's how we rebuild ourselves, by coming together. When we come together, we can do great things."

—Tulane athletics director Rick Dickson showed his community spirit during a November press conference held to announce that the NCAA Men's Basketball Final Four will be held in New Orleans in 2012. Dickson led the 75-person Local Organizing Committee in making the successful bid.

Our efforts in civic engagement encompass faculty-driven programs such as academic service learning and research, student-initiated community service, and staff-supervised community activities.

Tulane's **CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE**, which administers the university's public-service graduation requirement for undergraduate students as well as serves as an umbrella for university-community partnerships, has received numerous honors. The center was awarded Program of the Year in 2005 by National Society for Experiential Education; named to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for Hurricane Relief Service in 2006, 2007 and 2008; and selected for the Carnegie Community Engagement Elective Classification for Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships in 2008. This February, Tulane was singled out by the Clinton Global Initiative University for its commitment to open community-based health clinics. (See news brief on back page.)

Such recognition is a result of teamwork between faculty, staff, community partners and especially our students, who come to Tulane not only because they want their education to be experiential but because they want to make a positive difference. Here are just a few of their stories.

NOLA FUND

DENALI LANDER, a Tulane senior from Boulder, Colo., majoring in English and history, is serving as the director of the NOLA Fund, a program that provides free, after-school technology classes to New Orleans-area high school students. Denali, along with **MATTHEW LIMBACK**, a Tulane senior from Detroit majoring in psychology and economics, spends three hours a week at the New Orleans Charter Science and Math High School teaching computer literacy. High school students who successfully complete the course leave the program with their own laptop computers.

Denali inherited the program from her brother, **KEVIN LANDER**, and three of his friends—all of whom are Tulane students—who founded the program in the immediate aftermath of Katrina. Now, with the four founders serving on the board of the nonprofit organization, NOLA Fund raises financial support through the organization's website.



Tulane senior Denali Lander, standing, coaches Desmond Foucha during the NOLA Fund's computer literacy classes.

HEALTHCARE GUIDE

Second-year medical student **RICHARD BRUCKER** created NolaFreeHealthCare.com, an online listing of New Orleans-area clinics that offer free or low-cost medical care to those who don't have insurance and can't afford health care. The listing, which also is distributed via paper pamphlets at area homeless shelters and community centers, includes each clinic's hours of operation, cost of health care, population served and the types of medical care offered at the facility.

Richard created the listing more than a year ago as a resource for the city's homeless population and has continued to expand the information to include resources beyond programs strictly aimed at helping homeless individuals. The site includes links to maps with directions to each clinic. It also features information about low-cost prescription drug programs, including a custom search feature that allows users to determine quickly if a drug is available at the discounted rate.



Law students (from left) Jimi Palacios, Sarah Runyon-Davis and Greg LaBorde are certified to help people with low to moderate incomes in filing their taxes.

Richard, who volunteers at Ozanam Inn homeless shelter in New Orleans, is getting national recognition for his work. In March, he received the 2009 American Medical Association Foundation Leadership Award at a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

TEAM PLAYER

Tulane football senior **CRAIG GELHARDT** once again was recognized for his contributions off the field and in the New Orleans community with his selection to the inaugural Conference USA Spirit of Service Award team in January of this year. The award recognizes the community service efforts of the league's student-athletes, based upon significant community service, good academic standing and participation in their elected sport.

Craig, a three-year letterman on the football field, received the honor after being named to the 17th annual Allstate American Football Coaches Association Good Works Team earlier this season. He has helped rebuild and beautify New Orleans as a member of Student Advocacy for Equitable Recovery. Craig is a computer Internet application development major who is a six-time member of the Tulane 3.0 Club and was named to the 2007 and 2008 C-USA Commissioner's Honor Roll.

TAX RELIEF

Now in its 12th year, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program set up shop this spring to offer assistance in completing and filing federal taxes for qualified moderate- and low-income individuals.

The program, which is operated and staffed by Tulane law students, prepared more than 150 tax returns last year. It is being coordinated this year by law students **DREW HARPOOL**, **NICHOLAS HITE** and **GREGORY LABORDE**, and staffed by approximately 40 student volunteers, all of whom are trained and certified as tax preparers.

Through coordination with the Student Bar Association and the Pro Bono Program Office, students receive credit toward their pro bono graduation requirement of 30 hours. Tulane Law School was the first in the nation to require pro bono work for graduation.

URBANbuild

Construction on the latest URBANbuild house got under way in early January. Twenty-five students in the School of Architecture are building the house—the fourth for URBANbuild—in Central City. URBANbuild is a design/build studio in which teams of students take on the design and construction of



DONNA BRAZILE

"It's time we hurry history and the best way to do it is to visualize yourself as a powerful person, whether in politics, academia, media, the sciences or whatever professional endeavor you might take on."

—Political campaign strategist and native New Orleanian Donna Brazile called for women to be proactive in defeating the stereotypes they face in professional arenas. Her appearance was part of a three-day Newcomb College Institute leadership summit held in February.



FRANCIS COLLINS

"God's plan included the mechanism of evolution. It's all intentional, to create this marvelous diversity of living things on our planet. ... I can find God in the laboratory or I can find God in the cathedral."

—Dr. Francis Collins, the former director of the Human Genome Project and author of *The Language of God—A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*, argued against the idea that science is inherently at odds with the belief in God during a Veritas Forum held on campus in February.

COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH

In February, Tulane was featured at this year's gathering of the Clinton Global Initiative University, a project undertaken by former President Bill Clinton to harness the power of universities to address issues concerning poverty, human rights, climate change, education, energy and other worldwide challenges. Clinton singled out Tulane for its commitment to work with local neighborhoods in opening a system of community-based health centers to provide high-quality health care for those who cannot afford health insurance.

This is an initiative that began in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, when Tulane students, faculty and medical center staff worked in the streets to deliver health care to residents who were living in a city without power and water and whose medical infrastructure had been washed away. That emergency response has been developed into a program of neighborhood-focused, team-based healthcare delivery. It is serving as a model for training the next generation of physicians, nurses, social workers and pharmacists by working in partnership with communities to create sustainable healthcare enterprises.



Thanks to a gift from the Qatar Katrina Fund, there are now three neighborhood health clinic initiatives: one at Covenant House in downtown New Orleans, another in partnership with the Mary Queen of Vietnam Community Development Corp. in New Orleans East, and a third mobile initiative. This health clinic on wheels opens its doors to patients in the parking lots of churches, schools and shopping centers.

a prototypical home for a neighborhood in New Orleans. The first set of prototypical schemes was developed by the studio just six months after Hurricane Katrina devastated the city's housing stock. This fourth construction prototype is a study in sustainable building practices.

URBANbuild is part of the Tulane City Center, which houses the Tulane School of Architecture's applied urban research and outreach programs. Programs of the City Center share a focus on improving cities—particularly our home city of New Orleans—through fostering research, developing flexible and innovative urban strategies and adhering to environmentally and culturally informed principles to guide the design and revitalization of modern cities.

SERVICE LEARNING

Undergraduate students taking a class in physical geology are monitoring the effects of erosion on a Louisiana barrier island and documenting threats to the island's survival. Back in town, another group of students is working on developing fundraising plans for area nonprofit organizations. And still another group is learning the basic concepts of environmental sociology and environmental activism—and then participating in a recycling project.

In each instance students are working in the community to fulfill their public-service graduation requirement. Incoming undergraduates are required to complete one semester of service-learning course work. This is followed by another semester in which students choose from a variety of public-service components.

We currently offer more than 110 courses that include a service-learning component. Students spend 20 or 40 hours (depending on the class) completing their service throughout each semester.

“Learning by doing” enables students to apply academic knowledge and critical thinking skills to meet genuine community needs.

In his address to the Tulane class of 2007, commencement speaker Brian Williams of NBC News said this: “There wouldn't be a Tulane without New Orleans, and I am absolutely convinced there would not be a New Orleans without Tulane.”

That is quite a compliment, and it also suggests quite a responsibility. But not a new one. The medical school that would grow into Tulane University was founded 175 years ago in 1834 to respond to the scourges of yellow fever and other life-threatening diseases that quite literally plagued the city, and the university has remained an integral part of civic life ever since. Public service is not new to Tulane, as many of you know because you also volunteered your time while at the university.

As we approach this year's commencement, I am reminded that 40 years ago we graduated a cadre of students who can identify with the class of 2009. Members of the class of 1969 were barely freshmen in the fall of 1965 when Hurricane Betsy, a Category 3 storm, struck, becoming the benchmark of destruction for New Orleans—until Katrina.

In December 2006, I had the great pleasure of meeting a group of Newcomb College alumnae from that class. They were all friends and had arrived in New Orleans from every corner of the nation to work with Habitat for Humanity in the city's effort to rebuild. This December marked the group's third trip to New Orleans and from what I understand, they plan on coming back until the job is done.

Before Katrina, After Katrina. It's good to know that some things don't change.

Scott Stowen