



Scott S. Cowen



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Dear alumni, faculty, staff and friends:

What do you think of when you think of Tulane? I hope you envision the green spaces, the exciting world of learning and discovery, and the promise of a bright future. Nineteen months after Hurricane Katrina, as our recovery continues, I can assure you all of those things are still here and getting even better.

Chances are, when you think of Tulane, you also think of New Orleans—not only the New Orleans of your memories but the images and stories of New Orleans you've seen since the storm.

What you might not realize is what a leading role—an important role—Tulane is taking in the recovery of its hometown. More than ever in its history, the university has opened its doors to the community, gone out into the community, and lent its expertise to our city as it comes back to life. We believe Tulane's role in the city's recovery is unprecedented in American higher education and will make it an even stronger and more distinctive university in the future.

OVERHEARD AT TULANE

"Every one of you has an obligation to take what you have gained here and go and be successful, but always look back, look down and look across from you to somebody who may not be on a path. You have got to make sure that service to others is an essential component of your life."

—Colin Powell, former U.S. Secretary of State, speaking to students at "Perspectives: A Leadership Speaker Series" on Feb. 28



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"Islamic terror is not so much a clash of civilizations as a clash of identity. America stands for something. Arabs may hate us but they admire our society. We have to maintain our standards."

—Lawrence Wright, Tulane alumnus and winner of the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction, speaking on Feb. 7 as part of the Duren Professorship program



OVERHEARD AT TULANE

"New Orleans has informed my writing very profoundly to the extent that I have a personal style, a voice on the page, a voice that's distinctive. I don't know what it is exactly; it's a kind of irony, a kind of catchiness. It's a voice and sound that I hear in not many other places."

—Michael Lewis, columnist and author of *Liar's Poker* and *Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game* at the March 29 Direction Lecture Series



WALKING THE WALK: GOOD IDEAS, GOOD MEDICINE, GOOD DEEDS

Over the past 19 months, Tulane has stepped out in some big ways to help in New Orleans' recovery.

Good Ideas. One way in which Tulane has benefited and continues to help in New Orleans' recovery goes to the heart of our mission as an institution of higher education.

On an institutional level, we have developed programs to look at recovery from an academic standpoint. One of the things that Katrina brought to light was the dismal state of public K-12 education in New Orleans, and one of our first goals at Tulane was to help address those problems. I'm pleased to say that through a generous—and unexpected—major endowment gift from alumna Carol Lavin Bernick and the Lavin Family Foundation in December, we were able to establish the Scott Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives to support the educational reforms developed by the City of New Orleans' Bring New Orleans Back Commission in the months following Katrina. We have recently begun our first major project, in conjunction with the New Orleans City Council Education Committee and the Greater New Orleans Education Foundation, to launch a study gathering data and community opinion regarding the state of public schools in Orleans Parish. The study will examine the structural, operational and academic changes that have occurred within the public schools since Hurricane Katrina. It also will identify the successes that the school system has experienced and the key challenges the public schools currently face, giving us a road map with which to plan future initiatives.

Another new program stemming from our response to New Orleans' recovery issues is the Partnership for the Transformation of Urban Community. The partnership's Institute for the Study of Race and Poverty held its first program in early March, a summit on structural racism attended by more than 80 New Orleans community activists. This institute holds great promise for addressing issues of race and poverty that characterize New Orleans and many other urban areas.

Good Medicine. As a leader in graduate medical education as well as a leading healthcare provider in New Orleans, students and faculty from the Tulane School of Medicine and the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine have played key roles in helping resuscitate the struggling local healthcare system. Despite almost overwhelming challenges, Tulane has continued to do what it has done since its founding in 1834 in response to another local healthcare crisis, yellow fever: to train future physicians and to provide quality health care to local citizens. Since just after Katrina, we have been seeing patients in a clinic we established at Covenant House on Rampart Street. Since then, more than 8,000 adult patients and approximately 1,500 children have been treated. We also continue to train and supervise 327 Tulane residents and fellows in 40 programs—they are a key component of medical care in New Orleans. Finally, members of our health sciences center faculty continue to play leadership roles in planning as the state looks at the direction in which it would like to move the healthcare system for indigent and uninsured patients.

Good Deeds. One thing became very clear as Tulane prepared to reopen after Katrina, and as we looked around at the pace of recovery and the tremendous needs of New Orleans. It was evident that Tulane would need to play a key role in that recovery not only as an institution, but also as a community of individuals.

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Public service is nothing new for Tulane. Through CACTUS (our active group of student volunteers) and our growing service-learning program, we had already established ourselves as national leaders among higher education institutions that incorporate public service into their academic programs. As part of our Renewal Plan, we established a Center for Public Service to coordinate public service components into all of our academic programs and help our students meet the new public service requirement for graduation. I am proud to say that Tulane is the only major research university in the U.S. that has a required public service component in its core curriculum. In operation less than a year, the center has already had an enormous impact, from bringing in students from other colleges to work on recovery projects, to hosting a regional summit to identify best practices among schools interested in increasing their public-service components, to sponsoring volunteer programs in everything from gutting flooded homes to building new homes.

In the space of this letter, I could not even begin to touch the surface of the recovery efforts undertaken by individual faculty, staff members and students. They have built houses, completed environmental studies, and offered expertise on everything from legal issues to demographics to disaster planning. They have worked recovery topics into their classes, and volunteered their leisure time. I am so proud of the way the Tulane community has responded during this recovery period. The School of Architecture's URBANbuild program is just one example. Using brainpower (and "sweat equity") from Tulane faculty and students and funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and Neighborhood Housing Services, Tulane students have designed a modern "shotgun" home and built it in New Orleans' Tremé neighborhood on the site of a flooded-out home. Recently, that new home was sold to a New Orleans police officer and his family. Another URBANbuild home is under way in a Central City neighborhood. We're rebuilding New Orleans one house at a time.

TALKING THE TALK: GOOD NEIGHBORS, GOOD EXAMPLES, GOOD FRIENDS

Just as Tulane has gone into the community to help in the city's recovery, we've also opened our doors for the community to come to us.

Good Neighbors. One of the little-publicized aftermaths of the post-Katrina flooding was the toll it took on many of New Orleans' public performance spaces, so one way in which Tulane could help the city's cultural community get back on its feet was by providing venues for events. Over the past year, on any given day on the Tulane uptown campus, you could find not only our own vast offerings of movies, dance performances, recitals or theatrical productions, but also performances by New Orleans ballet and opera companies, concerts hosted by New Orleans Friends of Music, a martial arts show hosted by a local Shaolin institute, or an exciting concert by the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra, which now makes its home on the Tulane campus.

Good Friends. While Tulane has always had an abundance of cultural offerings and public events, the past year has seen an explosion in the number of high-caliber programs we have offered to the community at large. From the amazing Rebirth conference last summer, which we hosted in conjunction with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, to the recent revival of the university's student-run Direction Lecture Series, the number of speakers and events we have been able to offer not only the university but also the people of New Orleans is astounding.



"I believe it's possible, if we work together, to see further reduction in domestic violence and crime overall. We have to believe in ourselves."

—Janet Reno, former U.S. Attorney General, speaking on Feb. 1 at a program sponsored by the Tulane Law School Domestic Violence Clinic

OVERHEARD AT TULANE



"Your self-worth is about self-respect and self-confidence. About self-regard. About straightening your back. Walking. Taking action with courage and compassion, with malice toward none but with righteous indignation against injustice and unfairness."

—Cornel West, speaking Jan. 16 at the 2007 Martin Luther King Convocation

"His (Einstein's) slow ability to learn how to talk meant he thought in pictures. He thought in images. He thought imaginatively. All the great Einstein breakthroughs are not done by really hard applications of hard mathematical equations but by imaginative thought experiments."

—Walter Isaacson, chief executive officer of the Aspen Institute and a member of the Board of Tulane, delivering the first presentation of the revived Direction Lecture Series on March 15. He discussed his forthcoming biography on Albert Einstein, *Einstein: His Life and Universe*.



OVERHEARD
AT TULANE

"What we do that is unique is language."

—Acclaimed author and Nobel Prize laureate Toni Morrison speaking to a packed house on April 12 as part of the English department's Creative Writing Fund



Here are a few of the things you could have seen and heard on campus in just the past three months:

- Poet and Nobel Prize laureate Toni Morrison reading from her work.
- Author Michael Lewis discussing his experiences and writings.
- Gen. Colin Powell urging our young people to use their talents to serve others.
- Author and businessman Stephen Covey talking about empowerment and leadership.
- Aspen Institute president and author Walter Isaacson, discussing the life of Albert Einstein.
- Former U.S. Attorney Gen. Janet Reno expounding on domestic violence.
- Pulitzer Prize winner Lawrence Wright explaining the intricate workings of al-Qaeda.
- Social commentator Cornel West challenging people to speak out boldly against injustice.
- Consultant and author James Carville on American politics.

And—coming up: former Vice President Al Gore on May 1 and, speaking at our May 19 commencement, NBC Nightly News anchor Brian Williams, who has truly been a friend to New Orleans over the past 19 months.

Good Example. Finally, Tulane cannot help New Orleans recover without recovering ourselves, and I'm pleased to say we've made tremendous progress not only in terms of the physical recovery of our campuses but in moving forward as well.

A big step came in December and January with the grand opening and move-in to the new Lavin-Bernick Center for University Life. To call the LBC a "student center" is to do an injustice to the beauty of this building and the boost it has given our uptown campus. In just a few short months it has already become the center of campus life for students and faculty alike.

We also are moving ahead with plans for our athletics programs. The renovations to Turchin Stadium are under way, and we have established a schedule to bring back to 16 our NCAA Division I athletics teams, some of which were temporarily suspended following Katrina.

We're still working to get the message out to prospective students and their parents that Tulane is back and better than ever, and I have full confidence that the incoming class for fall 2007 will be of the size and standard we have come to expect of our wonderful Tulane students.

In closing, let me repeat something I have said often in the past 19 months, but which remains as true as ever: a strong Tulane University needs a strong New Orleans, and vice-versa. We will continue to work diligently to not only make Tulane the best it can be, but also to create in New Orleans the kind of city we all want it to be.

All the best,

Scott S. Cowen