



2009

Scott S. Cowen



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Dear alumni, faculty, staff and friends,

The university is well into the fall semester as I write this. Many of you returned to campus for Homecoming weekend, and I was gratified to hear from those who did how good it felt to come “home.” Tulane is moving forward with a vitality that to me suggests we have fully entered into the post-storm era. By that I mean that Tulane University is not simply back to where it was before Hurricane Katrina. The Tulane of today in many ways is different and stronger than the institution that existed in August 2005.

These changes are evident in the university’s students, faculty, curriculum and commitment to civic engagement [see the “Excuse Our Progress” item in the margin of this letter].

You’ll have to excuse the pun, but in the last four years we have engaged in a whirlwind of activity on many fronts as we steadily moved from recovery to renewal. The university is transformed and strengthened, and we are now growing from this position of strength.

*Top right photo: (From right) Tulane President Scott Cowen and Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal look on as Alan Levine, secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, signs a Memorandum of Understanding paving the way for a new public hospital.*

**MEDICAL CENTER PLANS  
MOVE FORWARD**

The plans for a new University Medical Center in New Orleans to replace Charity Hospital are now moving ahead, thanks to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Aug. 28. (See photo above.)

The compromise that received approval from the boards of both Tulane and Louisiana State universities establishes a governing board for a public hospital that will be the flagship for teaching Tulane and LSU medical residents as well as providing health care to the community.

A financing plan for the proposed 424-bed hospital still needs to be worked out. The estimated cost is more than \$1.2 billion.

*Office of the President  
6823 St. Charles Ave.  
New Orleans, LA 70118-5698  
Tel 504.865.5201 Fax 865.5202  
ssc@tulane.edu*



## EXCUSE OUR **PROGRESS**

The progress made at Tulane University in the last four years is nothing short of miraculous. Besides repairing the campus physically from more than \$600 million in damages, we have also made good on our promise to renew our beloved university, raise its academic stature, ensure its financial stability and increase its role in the community. Undergraduate applications have soared from around 18,000 the year before Katrina to 40,000 this year. Since Katrina, our first-year undergraduate classes have become among the most selective and academically qualified in Tulane's 175-year history. And our retention rate, a critical number that reflects the percentage of first-year students who return to a university to complete their degree, has risen substantially since Katrina and topped 90 percent this academic year. We also are seeing significant increases in enrollment and academic quality in virtually all of our graduate and professional programs since Katrina. This year brought 177 new medical students to Tulane from an applicant pool of approximately 9,500, which is a 50 percent increase from pre-Katrina. Our law school welcomed 282 first-year students, a nearly 16 percent increase from last year.

I'll share with you an example of what I'm talking about. This year we are rolling out a universitywide initiative in social entrepreneurship, building on our nationally recognized programs in public service and community engagement as well as the fact that we are ranked among the nation's top five graduate programs for entrepreneurial studies.

Social entrepreneurship is an innovative blend of social action and entrepreneurial strategies. Social entrepreneurs identify problems that plague communities and then seek out fresh approaches to address those problems. Our vision is that all Tulane students, no matter their career aspirations, will embrace and become engaged in social entrepreneurship.

Integrating social entrepreneurship into the Tulane experience is an idea that I've nurtured for some time. In August, we gained important support for the initiative when Ashoka, a global association of the world's leading social entrepreneurs, named Tulane as one of nine universities comprising its Changemaker Campus Consortium. Our students and faculty will be partnering with those in the other institutions to develop the skills as well as the mindset needed to be change-makers.

In November, we will be debuting the NewDay Social Entrepreneurship Distinguished Speakers Series that will allow prominent leaders from across the field of social entrepreneurship to share their own experiences, insights and recommendations with students and the community.

This spring, Tulane will launch the NewDay Challenge that will award a Tulane student or group up to \$20,000 in seed funding for a financially sustainable social enterprise. In addition, we will begin a national search for the Sacks Endowed Distinguished Chair in Civic Engagement and Social Entrepreneurship. The holder of this chair will oversee the development of Tulane's social entrepreneurship



**HOMECOMING 2009**

# 2009

## NEWCOMB COLLEGE INSTITUTE, MURPHY INSTITUTE DIRECTORS NAMED



SALLY KENNEY, an award-winning, tenured professor at the University of Minnesota, has been named the first permanent executive director of the Newcomb College Institute. Kenney also will hold the Newcomb College Endowed Chair and will become a faculty member in the Department of Political Science. The institute's interim executive director, Molly Abel Travis, will remain in that role until Kenney arrives in January.



STEVEN M. SHEFFRIN, professor of economics at the University of California–Davis and director of its Center for State and Local Taxation, will become the new director of the Murphy Institute in January. He recently completed a 10-year term as dean of the division of social sciences at UC–Davis. Sheffrin replaces longtime director Rick Teichgraeber, who returns full time to the faculty.



programs. Tulane also will raise funds for at least five professorships to support social entrepreneurship on campus. The professorships will be granted to any faculty member whose interests can be linked to social entrepreneurship, regardless of school or discipline.

Social entrepreneurs have been poetically called “society’s change agents.” In describing the nature of such agents of change, author David Bornstein, who has written extensively on social innovation, has this to say:

“*Social entrepreneurs identify resources where people only see problems. They view the villagers as the solution, not the passive beneficiary. They begin with the assumption of competence and unleash resources in the communities they’re serving.*”

In these words I find an inherent optimism, good will and confidence in humanity that should be part of any education. There is no place better than in an academic environment to holistically explore this rapidly developing movement. And, as you may have heard, there’s no place better than New Orleans, no place better than Tulane.

Since I’m on the topic of building on our recent accomplishments, I’ll share with you some examples of how we are quite literally building the institution. Among the developments that have been most satisfying for me to watch is the transition from repairing and overhauling buildings and equipment damaged during Katrina to the new construction and renovations that are entirely forward-looking and unrelated to the storm.

One of my favorites is the ambitious project to dramatically change a portion of McAlister Drive into McAlister Place (see photo above), a landscaped pedestrian mall with additional lighting, two pedestrian plazas and restricted traffic and parking. The project, which began this summer and will be completed by early next

## LENDING A HAND

Tulane University students are taking service seriously—helping to improve the quality of life around New Orleans and in communities halfway across the globe.



More than 1,000 Tulane students spent a Saturday volunteering during the 19th annual OUTREACH TULANE on Aug. 29, the fourth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. They visited 20 different locations for a day of service, painting and setting up classrooms at public schools, spreading mulch along new walking trails in City Park and raising funds for a shelter for abused women.

Medical students RYAN JUPITER and JACQUES COURSEAU are reaching out in a different way. Concerned about the health of New Orleans citizens, they launched an exercise and weight-loss program called “Don’t Weight to Lose” that is inspiring healthier lifestyles.

And a group of more than 30 Tulane students are on a mission to build two much-needed health clinics in the Central American country of Honduras. Through their MISSION HONDURAS initiative, the students hope to raise \$15,000 by November to build the clinics during a service trip to San Pedro Sula and surrounding mountain villages.

year, was funded by a generous gift from the Benenson family, who also underwrote the spectacular limestone monuments in Gibson Circle.

Also spectacular, in their own way, are the towering scaffolds that are encircling the venerable Dinwiddie Hall, which was built in 1923 and is now undergoing massive exterior and interior renovation. By the time work is finished in August 2010, Dinwiddie will be the first building on the uptown campus to achieve the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. That designation is based on a number of “green” considerations informing the renovation. Among these are the reuse of original building material, an improvement to the building’s infrastructure that will allow it to accommodate more efficient use of water and energy and the installation of a ventilation system that will boost air quality.

And I can’t resist sharing this final note about the project. David Curtis, grandson of the building’s original architect, Nathaniel C. Curtis, is leading the renovation. Both are alumni of our School of Architecture.

In a recently completed project that I’m sure is near and dear to the hearts of our students, a portion of the first floor of the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library has been transformed into the Learning Commons, a “cyber café” that has desktop PCs and Macs, outlets for wireless access and its own coffee shop.

Finally, the university recently received approval from the State Bond Commission for funding for a new 265-room residence hall that will go up near Newcomb Place and Willow Street. We expect to break ground in the spring semester.

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It’s my intention that these letters not only provide you with ongoing updates on important developments at the university but also to give you a feel for how things are here at Tulane.

And to that extent I can honestly tell you this: While there is not a day that goes by that I’m not reminded of the storm and everything that ensued from it, I am spending lot more of my time these days thinking about the future.

All the best,

Scott Cowen