

# Dean Pierre Buekens returns to his researching roots

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On June 30, Pierre Buekens, MD/PhD, will step down as dean of the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine to focus on new goals as a professor and researcher. (Photo by Gigsy)

On June 30, Pierre Buekens, MD/PhD, will mark the end of the academic year by stepping down as dean of the Tulane University [School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine](#) to reenter the classroom as a professor and to focus on conducting research.

Buekens has led the school since 2003.

After a one-year sabbatical, Buekens will return to the school's faculty as the W.H. Watkins Professor of Epidemiology.

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— Pierre Buekens, W.H. Watkins Professor and Dean of the School of Public

"I'm happy to stay at Tulane. I have several new research projects, and it's time for me to concentrate on them," said Buekens, who also directs the [Office of Global Health](#) and just completed a two-year term as chair of the Consortium of Universities for Global Health.

Buekens' current research interests span the globe. He has studied the [Zika virus](#) in Honduras, syphilis in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia and Chagas disease in Argentina, Honduras and Mexico.

Celebrating the school's 2012 centennial and working with faculty members, he said, are among his proudest achievements as dean.

He has navigated the school past the challenges brought by Hurricane Katrina and helped it thrive by expanding its externally-funded research.

"I enjoyed helping to launch the school into a new trajectory with a very strong research portfolio, which has increased significantly during the last 15 years," said Buekens.

"I am convinced that the school is well-positioned to continue being successful and to play a significant role in improving public health around the globe," he added. "We're now ranked 12th among the country's public health institutions by *U.S. News and World Report* and ready to move into the top 10, I hope."

Additionally, Buekens guided the launch of the school's innovative undergraduate program.

"The number of students majoring in public health is increasing year after year," he said, noting that there are currently more than 600 public health majors.

Buekens will cap off his tenure as dean at the [2018 Unified Commencement Ceremony](#), where he will lead this year's public health graduates into the Mercedes-Benz Superdome for the last time on Saturday, May 19.

"It will be a special moment," he said.