

Newcomb Institute Leader Dedicated to Women's Education

January 27, 2010 12:30 PM Mary Ann Travis
mtravis@tulane.edu

The first thing to do is build on the legacy of Newcomb College, says Sally Kenney. Kenney officially became the first permanent executive director of the Newcomb College Institute on Jan. 1.



Sally Kenney brings expertise in law, political science and public policy to her new position as executive director of the Newcomb College Institute. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Kenney is determined that the institute will be at the national forefront of women's education and research.

"We are defining what the vanguard of women's education for the 21st century looks like," she says.

During its existence from 1886 to 2006, Newcomb College set new, academically rigorous standards in women's education. That history of excellence is a major reason that its successor, the [Newcomb College Institute](#), is poised to follow the

same innovative path, says Kenney, who also holds the Newcomb College Endowed Chair.

With substantial support from the Newcomb endowment and the backing of Tulane administrators, the institute has financial resources that set it apart from most other "women's-focus enterprises in the country, if not the world," says Kenney. Connecting to women undergraduates in all fields of study is at the heart of the institute's mission, she says.

Student leadership programs; faculty research and development; the Newcomb Center for Research on Women, including its library and archives; and the Newcomb Alumnae Association of 23,000 alumnae are the primary functions of the institute.

Kenney, a political scientist, previously was professor of public affairs and director of the Center on Women and Public Policy at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. She is completing a book, forthcoming from Routledge Academic Publisher, on women in the judiciary, focusing on gender and judges.

At Tulane, in addition to her administrative duties, Kenney plans to teach political science courses with service-learning components. The commitment she's seen to community engagement, as well as the central role that women students, faculty and administrators play, drew her to Tulane.

"I appreciate how much women are the brains and doers of this campus," she says.