

President Fitts thanks faculty, staff for Tulane's success

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fdawson@tulane.edu

A video showing "The Power of Tulane" brought to life the new and renovated buildings on the Tulane campus at the State of the University address on Friday in McAlister Auditorium.

During Tulane University's [annual State of the University address](#) on Friday, [President Mike Fitts](#) recognized the dedication of faculty and staff members who make Tulane one of the nation's premier research institutions.

Citing several successes over the past year — from record-breaking fund-raising to a brand-new class of diverse and academically gifted first-year students — Fitts lauded the Tulane community.

"Tulane has always been a destination school," he said. "But today, we've become a dream school...to tens of thousands of young people around the world. That is

because of your hard work and passion, the people in this room. Tulane is an amazing place because you make it so.”

The address took place in McAlister Auditorium on the Uptown campus and was live-streamed to other Tulane locations.

Fitts introduced the university’s four new deans—[Inaki Alday \(School of Architecture\)](#), [Kimberly Foster \(School of Science and Engineering\)](#), [Brian Edwards \(School of Liberal Arts\)](#), and [Thomas LaVeist \(School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine\)](#)—describing them as “academic trailblazers; cross-field collaborators; and all-around rock-stars—dedicated to the kind of earth-shattering, innovative research Tulane specializes in.”

Tulane Spirit Awards were handed out to employees Dede Lawrence of Campus Services, Christina Wallace of Human Resources, and Avian Washington, a 32-year Tulanian also known as “Mr. Dependable,” who works in the Lavin-Bernick Center. The award winners received a statue and a Tulane-theme second-line umbrella.

Fitts announced updates to campus safety initiatives, including [Wave of Change programs and activities](#), and physical improvements to campus, including expanded lighting and camera coverage, a new partnership with Allied Security, and construction of two new police stations. A video overview showed the progress of new and renovated buildings on campus.

Fitts also mentioned in his address plans to implement more programming that increases and improves diversity on campus, including a new position, provost for diversity and faculty development; and, to the amusement of the audience gathered before him in the auditorium, LeBron James.

James, “every season, for 15 years ... has found new ways to elevate and evolve his game,” President Fitts said, noting that the university, like the NBA basketball player, keeps “adapting and improving faster than any of our peers.”

The event concluded with a second-line to the Lavin-Bernick Center for a reception.

[Read the transcript of the address here.](#)

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