

New dean of Newcomb-Tulane College seeks 'meaningful engagement' for students

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today@tulane.edu



Lee Skinner took over as dean of Newcomb-Tulane College in July and aims to continue the work the college has already done to help students be successful throughout their time at Tulane. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Lee Skinner, the dean of Tulane University's Newcomb-Tulane College since July, has a strong vision for the direction of the college and aims to engage all Tulane undergraduate students from the time they enter until they graduate.

Before arriving at Tulane, Skinner served as associate dean at Claremont McKenna College since 2013 and a professor of Spanish at the university. With the Tulane fall semester in its second week, she is busy meeting with students and student organizations.

“Hearing from students and getting their perspectives on their education is invaluable,” she said.

Newcomb-Tulane is the university’s academic home for all undergraduate students, and as Skinner describes it, “the heart of the undergraduate academic experience.”

“They use us as their home base while they’re going and having these varied academic experiences through the schools, through study abroad, so forth. We are the glue that cements it all together.”

Skinner said she wants to continue the work that Newcomb-Tulane College has already done to help students be successful throughout their time at Tulane and wants to help students be “meaningfully engaged” in their education.

“Students should be getting something of value out of every academic experience and encounter they have, even if they don’t realize at the time.”

She encourages students to reflect on their experiences and education and see “how they stack up together.”

“The student experience means to me that students have those value-driven moments, encounters, and long-term experiences too, that help them develop as fully realized human beings,” she said.

The undergraduate common core curriculum aims to allow students to develop the skills for gaining new information, but also keeping in mind the different perspectives of others, she said.

“If you’re a scientist you still need to understand what the humanists are thinking and how they experience their lives. You’re a history major ... well, it’s important to have a sense of what scientific reasoning is.”

She cites the Race and Inclusion course requirement and the Global Perspectives course requirement as great examples of students encountering those differences in the classroom.

“I would be concerned that we would not be preparing our students well to live in the actual world around us if we didn’t prepare them with these kinds of experiences.”

This article is condensed from one that originally appeared on college.tulane.edu. To read more about Dean Skinner’s goals for Newcomb-Tulane College [click here](#) and to read her message to the Tulane community, [click here](#).