

Faculty Impresses Liberal Arts Dean

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As the fall semester gets into full swing, Carole Haber, new dean of the School of Liberal Arts, says that she is struck by a lovely phenomenon. She's observed that faculty members at Tulane genuinely like the students they teach.



The Tulane community has been “incredibly welcoming,” says Carole Haber, new dean of the School of Liberal Arts, who is in her first semester on campus. She was formerly at the University of Delaware. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

“They think the students are smart. They think they are good writers. They think they are engaged. They like teaching them,” says [Haber](#), who arrived at Tulane from the University of Delaware on July 1.

Haber finds that people at Tulane are looking forward and are enthusiastic about the future. “They certainly have been incredibly welcoming,” she adds.

Every academic department that she oversees has accomplished teacher/scholars, she says. “This is a remarkable small school that stresses undergraduate education at its heart. Undergraduates are taught by really good professors. There is this belief

that you bring your research into the classroom. And the students get excited about it.”

A major task ahead for Haber is developing a strategic plan for the [School of Liberal Arts](#). She'll be sending out questionnaires and forming committees to begin the process this fall.

Haber admits that strategic planning can sometimes be challenging, but she has found faculty and staff members as well as chairs of departments excited about the opportunities presented in devising a strategic plan. “People are happy to be here. They want this place to succeed. ”

The strategic plan will shape the future of the school for the next five to 10 years, says Haber. It will “build on the diverse strengths of the school and weave the strands that hold various departments together into something that gives us an identity.”

The School of Liberal Arts is a relatively new school at Tulane, formed in late 2005 in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina as part of the [Renewal Plan](#).

Several doctoral programs were suspended in the Renewal Plan. In addition to creating a strategic plan for the school, Haber will be assessing ways to expand graduate education at the School of Liberal Arts.

Haber, a professor of history, has appointed sociology professor Kevin Gotham and associate professor of art Jeremy Jernegan as associate deans. “The office combines individuals from the range of disciplines — the humanities, the social sciences and the arts,” says Haber.

Gotham is the associate dean for academic affairs. He's focusing on developing academic programs, including PhD and other programs. Gotham is the author of *Authentic New Orleans: Tourism, Culture and Race in the Big Easy* (New York University Press, 2007).

While Gotham has been on the faculty at Tulane since 1997, he spent the last two years at the National Science Foundation as program director for sociology and law and social sciences. Haber expects that Gotham's expertise in obtaining grant support for research will be useful to the liberal arts faculty. Gotham also will help with strategic planning.

Jernegan serves as associate dean for finance and planning. He is a ceramics sculptor, whose work has been exhibited in New Orleans and New York. He has taught at Tulane since 1990.

Haber says that she is relying on Jernegan's experience as chair of the Newcomb Art Department, balancing budgets and dealing with space issues, to assist her in those areas. Jernegan also will be involved in strategic planning and accreditation for the school.

Both Gotham and Jernegan will continue to teach.