

Energy Summit Aims to Spur Collaborative Research

March 16, 2010 4:15 AM Mark Miester
newwave@tulane.edu

Since 2008, the Tulane School of Science and Engineering and the A. B. Freeman School of Business have been collaborating on research into next-generation fuels for clean power, including butanol from sugar cane waste products, but more research is needed, says Geoff Parker, director of the Tulane Energy Institute. Promoting this coordination across units is the goal of [Tulane Energy Summit](#) on Friday (March 19).



The Tulane Energy Summit is one way to prepare to take advantage of multidisciplinary opportunities that have been coming up as part of stimulus funding, says Geoff Parker, director of the Tulane Energy Institute. (Photo by Jackson Hill)

"A lot of times when we apply for grants or funding, we have some pieces of the puzzle, but we might have to scramble to identify all capabilities we need," says Parker, associate professor of economic sciences. "Many of the challenges are really multidisciplinary now and require coordination across units."

Sponsored by the Provost's Office and organized by Parker and Doug Meffert, deputy director of the [Tulane/Xavier Center for Bioenvironmental Research](#), the one-day summit represents the first attempt to bring together researchers interested in energy from across the university.

Faculty members from chemical and biomedical engineering, economics, business, environmental studies, public health, law and other disciplines will make brief presentations about their current research.

"This is one way to prepare to take advantage of some of the multidisciplinary opportunities that have been coming up as part of the stimulus funding," Parker says. "It's really about knowing what Tulane's capabilities are."

Much of the university's recent energy research has been coordinated through the [Clean Power and Energy Research Consortium](#), a collaboration between Tulane and five other universities in Louisiana established to address critical scientific, engineering and economic issues associated with power and energy generation. Given the complexity of the subject, Parker says a multidisciplinary approach makes sense.

"There are economic issues, there are scientific issues, there are cultural issues," Parker says. "In order to make progress, you really need a multidisciplinary approach to understand the problems and then help fashion improvements."

Mark Miester is the editor of Freeman magazine for the A. B. Freeman School of Business.