

Expanding Study in Cuba

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cjs@tulane.edu

With interest in Cuban studies on the rise at Tulane, provost Michael Bernstein is leading a delegation to Havana this week in hopes of reinstating a summer program that will add to a semester-long study opportunity in Cuba already available to Tulane students.



A Tulane delegation will meet with officials at the University of Havana (above), about study opportunities for Tulane students. (Photos by Michael Democker)



The planned summer study program will center on Cuban history, culture and language. Above is the historic Catedral de San Cristobal.

Tulane began the summer program in 1999, but it was suspended in 2004 when President George W. Bush restricted academic trips to Cuba. President Barack Obama has rolled back those restrictions, so Tulane is eager to begin its summer studies in Cuba once again.

The Tulane group will meet with University of Havana officials to reaffirm the existing Memorandum of Understanding for the semester of study and to discuss reinstating the summer program in 2012.

“They (University of Havana) are looking at us very kindly for the summer program,” says Ana Lopez, associate provost and director of the [Cuban and Caribbean Studies Institute](#) at Tulane. “We're very pleased we have established this 'foot in the door' with our record of success there.”

In addition, Lopez says that Tulane now has “an extraordinary group of faculty,” from the departments of Spanish and Portuguese and history to the [Stone Center for Latin American Studies](#) who do research on Cuba and teach Cuba-related courses. This will only strengthen the international study opportunities, she says.

“After so many years of frustration, to be able to jump-start things again is amazing,” Lopez says.

In the proposed four-week summer program, students take courses in language, Afro-Cuban religion and culture, and Cuban history, all taught in English. The 10-week semester abroad program, however, requires a high level of Spanish because those students enroll directly at the University of Havana.

Joining Bernstein and Lopez on the Cuba trip are Tom Reese, executive director, and Valerie Marshall, director of external affairs, both with the Stone Center, as well as Molly Travis, associate dean for international programs and executive director of the [Center for Global Education](#).