

Dean meets with President Obama

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Nick Altiero, dean of the Tulane School of Science and Engineering, joined his colleagues from around the country for a reception at the White House at which President Obama announced his support for an effort to increase the yearly number of engineering graduates nationwide by 10 percent within a decade.



As chair of the American Society for Engineering Education Deans Council, Nick Altiero is leading an effort to increase the yearly number of engineering graduates nationwide by 10 percent within a decade. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

[Altiero](#) is a leader in this effort as chair of the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) Deans Council.

“The purpose of the meeting was to celebrate the progress we have made with respect to retention, graduation and diversity in engineering education and to acknowledge the work that still needs to be done,” Altiero said. “The United States won't be able to continue to compete, let alone lead, in the global economy if we don't graduate more qualified engineering students.”

A recent ASEE survey revealed a four-year engineers' graduation rate of 22 percent at public universities and 45 percent at private institutions.

Tulane's efforts to improve these rates include getting kids interested in engineering through its K-12 Science, Technology, Engineering and Math [outreach program](#); increasing internship and research opportunities for undergraduates, and enhancing service learning options through which students apply what they learn in the classroom to solve real-life problems.

At the meeting on Feb. 8, Obama told Altiero and his fellow engineering deans that he plans to “use the bully pulpit to emphasize how important your work is” and that “everyone in this administration is four-square behind you.”

In addition to engineering deans from around the country, the meeting included leaders of the “10,000 engineers” initiative launched by the President's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness.

Other government officials in attendance were Steven Chu, secretary of energy; Arne Duncan, secretary of education; John Holdren, presidential science adviser; Subra Suresh, National Science Foundation director; Valerie Jarrett, presidential senior adviser; and Alan Krueger, chair of the President's Council of Economic Advisers.