

President Cowen, academic leaders talk issues with 'Washington Post'

October 24, 2012 3:30 AM Carol Schlueter
cjs@tulane.edu

Tulane President Scott Cowen and five other leaders of national academic institutions, including the president of the Association of American Universities, all representing the AAU, sat down with the editorial board of the *Washington Post* in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday (Oct. 23) to discuss key issues of concern to higher education.



With the nation ready to elect its new president on Nov. 6, the AAU delegation discussed a wide array of important issues likely to face the nation's new leader and AAU universities, from pending Congressional budget decisions to student debt levels and default rates.

After the *Post* meeting, Cowen said the group focused primarily on the role AAU universities play in strengthening our country and in developing the next generation of engaged citizens and leaders.

"We started the conversation with one key question, 'How are universities advancing America?'" Cowen said.

“AAU universities have played a critical role in enhancing the competitiveness, stature and economic prosperity of the U.S. through their focus on research, teaching and civic engagement. Typically, AAU universities are anchor institutions in their communities and have a significant impact on economic and human development at the local, regional and national levels.”

The presidents met with editors and reporters from the *Post* at the conclusion of the AAU's semi-annual meeting held in Washington, D.C. At that session, Cowen was elected as [chair of AAU](#) for a one-year term.

The AAU is a nonprofit association of 59 U.S. and two Canadian preeminent public and private research universities. Tulane University has been a member of AAU since 1958.

The group of university presidents expressed their support for Congress to act before the Jan. 2, 2013, deadline to approve the national budget and avoid forced cuts across most federal programs that could endanger the nation's ability to innovate and compete.

Joining Cowen in the *Post* meeting were presidential leaders from Cornell and Johns Hopkins universities, the University of Michigan, the University of Californiaâ€”Berkeley and the University of Californiaâ€”Los Angeles.