

Delegation works to expand studies in Cuba

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cjs@tulane.edu

A successful trip to Cuba in December by a Tulane delegation will expand the university's ongoing relationship with the University of Havana and other Cuban institutions into public health and scientific arenas.



At the University of Havana for talks with colleagues are Tulane School of Science and Engineering faculty members from left, Tom Sherry, Sunshine Van Bael, Brad Rosenheim and Cori Richards-Zawacki. (Photo by Ana Lopez)

Cuban academic leaders and Pierre Buekens, dean of the Tulane [School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine](#), agreed to reinstitute the school's two-week summer program in Cuba starting this May, said [Ana Lopez](#), associate provost for faculty affairs, who led the delegation.

Tulane had offered a summer program in Cuba for its master of public health students prior to 2004, when the U.S. government restricted travel and academic work in Cuba. "We were very eager to reinvigorate that program," said Lopez, "particularly with the arrival of [Arachu Castro](#) to Tulane."

Castro, who came to Tulane Jan. 1 as the Samuel Z. Stone Chair of Public Health in Latin America, joined Buekens on the Cuban trip.

Four faculty members from the Tulane School of Science and Engineering were in the delegation and met with counterparts at the University of Havana to exchange research and discuss future collaboration. Back at Tulane, Lopez said, “We will be meeting soon to see what we can do to link research efforts and make more sustained, larger-scale exchanges possible.”

The Cuba relationship “has enormous potential,” said trip participant Tom Sherry, professor in ecology and evolutionary biology. “I’d love to open that door for some of my future students. It fits well with Latin American studies, and it fits well with Tulane’s stated interest in environmental and international programs.”

The public health program will be the second Tulane summer institute in Cuba. Last year, Tulane brought back its [Summer in Cuba Program](#) for undergraduates. The application deadline is Feb. 22 for that program, said Lopez, who also is director of the [Cuban and Caribbean Studies Institute](#).