

President-elect Michael Fitts ready for challenge of leading Tulane

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mtravis@tulane.edu

"I am honored and humbled," said Michael A. Fitts at the [announcement](#) in the Lavin-Bernick Center on Tuesday (Feb. 4) that he will become the 15th president of Tulane University on July 1, 2014.



Andy Wisdom, Darryl Berger and Michael A. Fitts (left to right) share the stage in the Lavin-Bernick Center at the announcement on Tuesday (Feb. 4) of Fitts as the next president of Tulane University. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

[Fitts](#) is currently dean and Bernard G. Segal Professor of Law at the University of Pennsylvania.

"Let me say: I love Tulane and what it stands for," said Fitts. "I am so looking forward to getting to know up close the entire Tulane community. The strengths of Tulane are like no other. "

Fitts said he is well aware of the lofty expectations for propelling Tulane forward in its teaching and research missions. "I am incredibly invigorated by the challenge. This is so exciting." A transcript of his remarks is available [here](#).

The appreciative audience of more than 300 students, faculty, administrators, board

and staff members responded to Board of Tulane chair Darryl Berger's introduction of Fitts with a standing ovation.

In the eight-month search for the new president of Tulane, the board looked for many qualities and Fitts embodies them all, said Berger. Fitts is a distinguished scholar, an outstanding leader, a strategic thinker and a prodigious fundraiser.

Berger said that the choice of president is the most important decision a university board of trustees makes. Fortunately, a board doesn't have to make such a decision often.

Berger praised Tulane President Scott Cowen, who shared the stage with Fitts, Berger and Tulane board presidential search committee chairs Rick Rees and Andy Wisdom.

Cowen will step down on June 30, after serving as president for 16 years. "It is impossible to not at least reflect on how deeply and profoundly blessed we have been to have Scott as our leader," said Berger.

Cowen, for his part, said that he is "relaxed and relieved" that Fitts has been named president. "This is a magnificent day for our university," said Cowen. "Mike understands that being Tulane's president is not merely a job or a position, it's a labor of love."