

Professor recognized for his work in climate change

April 23, 2014 11:15 AM Kirby Messinger
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Climate change is one of the hottest topics of our time, and investing in the work of scientists can take us one step closer to making the best choices to confront global warming. Tulane University took an important step to recognize one of its outstanding environmental scientists on April 16 by appointing School of Science and Engineering professor Torbjörn E. Törnqvist as the inaugural Vokes Geology Professor.



James Orth, left, president of the Tulane University School of Science and Engineering Board of Advisers, presents an investiture certificate to Torbjörn E. Törnqvist at a ceremony on April 16. (Photo by Tracie Morris Schaefer)

[Törnqvist](#), a member of the faculty in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences since 2005, is studying how our rivers, coasts and oceans respond to climate and [sea-level change](#) over times ranging from centuries to hundreds of thousands of years. This research helps predict future climate changes worldwide.

“When I entered this field it wasn't a trendy topic,” said Törnqvist. “It just shows that you should follow your passion because you never know what may happen down the line.”

His current fieldwork is focused on the Mississippi Delta and the adjacent Gulf Coast. In addition to its relevance to climate change, this research also focuses on the rates of coastal subsidence in Louisiana. Törnqvist's research group uses the information gathered to provide a framework for coastal restoration.

The professor's fascination with the rivers and terrain in his native Scandinavia started his passion for environmental sciences.

The Vokes Geology Professor is named in honor of world-renowned paleontologists Harold and Emily Vokes, who served on the geology faculty at Tulane.

The Vokeses' good friend and colleague, George Herman, funded the professorship in the couple's honor. Herman donated the funds to support a professorship in geology because he was inspired by the important work at Tulane and wanted to maintain geology as an educational foundation in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences.

"I'm so happy to be here for this glorious day," said Emily Vokes, who celebrated Törnqvist's accomplishments at the investiture ceremony.