

## **New President Mike Fitts finds his place**

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In his early rounds of meeting students, alumni, faculty, staff and administrators, Fitts has discovered, not surprisingly to him, an unparalleled enthusiasm at Tulane. It's in the DNA of the institution. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Mike Fitts has instituted his first policy as the new president of Tulane University: He walks rather than rides. He prefers to walk from place to place on the uptown campus because, he says, that way he can learn his way around.

And, he admits, he has lots to learn.

"It's a long process of being educated," he said. "Think about me as a kindergartner."

So he turns down rides in the dignitary's golf cart, the customary mode of transportation for a president going from meeting to meeting on the expansive, green Tulane uptown campus. (Although he does take cars to the downtown campus.)

Fitts' first walk across campus was on Feb. 4, 2014, to the Lavin-Bernick Center for the Board of Tulane announcement that he had been named the next president of Tulane University. The February event included hugs, standing ovations and accolades bestowed on Fitts and the man he succeeds, President Scott Cowen.

Then Fitts returned to Philadelphia where he continued as dean and Bernard G. Segal Professor of Law at the University of Pennsylvania ? a position he's held since 2000.

Throughout the spring, though, Fitts made several short trips to Tulane, getting to know as many people as possible and as much as he can about the university that he will lead, starting July 1.

When Tulane Board chairman Darryl Berger announced Fitts' selection as president, he said that members of the search committee tried to look into Fitts' heart. And they were pleased with what they saw.

"We're certain that he will be a leader who will bring people together, infuse them with a common vision, communicate beautifully with them and inspire everyone to achieve their highest aspirations," Berger said.

Fitts said that he does, indeed, already care deeply about Tulane.

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