

'Trials and Triumphs' panel encourages student resilience

February 25, 2016 12:30 PM Melissa Felcher
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Faculty members and Forum Tulane panelists, from left, Latha Rajan, Michael Cohen, Rebecca Mark and Michael Cunningham discuss bouncing back from disappointment in a resilience-themed event on the Tulane University uptown campus. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

"Trials and Triumphs," an event sponsored by [Forum Tulane](#), the [Academic Advising Center](#) and the [Success Center](#), brought together some of the outstanding Tulane University faculty members to share their stories of disappointment, resilience and achievement on Wednesday (Feb. 24) in the Qatar Ballroom in the Lavin-Bernick Center on the Tulane uptown campus.

Led by [Peter Ricchiuti](#), assistant dean and clinical professor at the [A. B. Freeman School of Business](#), Trials and Triumphs consisted of four other faculty members — [Michael Cohen](#), [Michael Cunningham](#), [Rebecca Mark](#) and [Latha Rajan](#) — who were brave enough to share their own personal struggles and how they refused to let those struggles define or limit them.

“Resilience is completely uninterested in unfairness ... what kept me going was resiliency’s habit of being thoroughly, unequivocally in love with life,” Mark told the audience after discussing her life struggle with learning and physical disabilities, as well as homosexuality.

With an emphasis on resiliency and adaptation to constant change, the panelists discussed topics including depression, anxiety, racism, foreign exclusion, academic pressure, suicide, gender identity, health challenges and religion.

Although they each stemmed from different walks of life, the panelists were able to relate to issues that students not only struggle with today, but also trials that can apply to everyone regardless of their background.

When asked how she overcame personal challenges, both academically and socially, Rajan advised students to “always look for the opportunities within a challenge.”

At the end of the event, the panelists answered anonymous student questions and provided students with valuable life lessons and guidance.

“You may think you know how to get to where you’re going,” Cohen said. “But when you realize you don’t ... you just have to see where the path takes you.”

Melissa Felcher is a sophomore studying communication at Tulane University.

“Always look for the opportunities within a challenge.”

Latha Rajan