

[Scott Cowen teaches leadership](#)

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President Emeritus Scott Cowen teaches students in his course, *The Mythology and Reality of Leadership*. Taught as part of the School of Liberal Arts' management minor (SLAMM), the class focuses on understanding the theory and practice of leadership through the eyes of real-world leaders. (Photo by Ryan Rivet)

It is a Tuesday morning, and [Scott Cowen](#) is engaging Tulane University undergraduates in a spirited discussion on a topic he knows well: leadership.

President Emeritus and Distinguished University Chair Cowen asks the students probing questions and peppers his lecture with anecdotes from his own experience as well as erudite references to articles and books.

Forty-one undergraduate students receive firsthand access to real-world leaders through their enrollment in Cowen's course, *The Mythology and Reality of Leadership*. Half the students are in the School of Liberal Arts' [management minor](#) and half are in the [social innovation and social](#)

[entrepreneurship minor.](#)

Cowen retired in 2014 as the 14th president of Tulane. His leadership during and after Hurricane Katrina has been hailed as visionary.

Because of his many personal and professional connections, Cowen has been able to attract guest lecturers who enthrall the students. For example, students heard from two true New Orleans change-makers.

Norman Francis, recently retired president of Xavier University, is the longest-running university head in history. Moon Landrieu served as New Orleans mayor from 1970 to 1978, and he is the father of the city's current mayor. Both men regaled the students with stories of rising from humble beginnings to become two prominent leaders in New Orleans history.

Their participation prompted Cowen to pose thought-provoking questions to the students, such as whether people can become transformational leaders if they did not lead during turbulent times.

A supportive professor, Cowen clearly believes that each of his students has the potential to become a transformative leader. Over the course of the semester, he is meeting with each student to discuss his or her own personal leadership development.

"The future of our country and the world depends on effective leadership, and I want Tulane students to be at the forefront of leading and changing our world," Cowen says.

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