

Letter from the President



FALL 2020

Dear Tulane Community,

In August, Tulane University celebrated two exhilarating arrivals: NASA astronaut, Doug Hurley (E '88), piloted the SpaceX Crew Dragon *Endeavour* safely back to Earth on August 2, after a two-month stay at the International Space Station. One week later, Tulanians on Earth experienced an exciting and safe homecoming of our own: students, faculty, and staff returned to campus after five months of meticulous, far-reaching and innovative planning. Guided by our in-house public health and medical experts, as well as health officials at the city, state, and federal levels, Tulane established what may be as comprehensive an array of health and safety initiatives as any university in the nation.

The extensive measures we formulated to promote the safety of our community started well before students arrived to campus. Before moving in, students first spent two days in downtown New Orleans at the Tulane Arrival Center for a COVID-19 testing program facilitated by Campus Health and the School of Medicine. Upon clearance to move onto campus, arriving students were greeted by 18 large, temporary structures on the Newcomb Quad, Berger Family Lawn, and Monroe Quad. These extraordinary facilities, outfitted with state-of-the-art technology and climate control, serve as additional classrooms, dining halls, and performance spaces that promote social distancing and safety. These spaces also help us to maintain our unique, relational culture under difficult circumstances, facilitating the creative connections and academic collaboration that punctuate the on-ground Tulane experience. A committee of students, faculty and staff also developed new and engaging programming to advance that critically



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Only the Groundbreaking

Tulane researchers are at the forefront of combatting COVID-19, conducting groundbreaking research on the disease to better understand and fight it on many fronts.

Excitingly, **TULANE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND TROPICAL MEDICINE** will join a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) study to provide estimates of how many people in the New Orleans area have COVID-19 and overall infection rates over time. Also, Tulane researchers released a peer-reviewed study that detected coronavirus in wastewater — these findings could help identify where outbreaks are occurring, so that they can be quickly contained.

Tulane researchers are making important discoveries in understanding — and ultimately combatting — this new virus. They found that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, can remain infective in aerosol for up to 16 hours. Tulane has also developed a robust COVID-19 testing program and is working to develop highly sensitive blood or saliva tests that rely on nanotechnology to help doctors quickly diagnose COVID-19.

The Tulane National Primate Research Center is establishing a research program to develop a vaccine for the virus using animal models of the disease. In addition, researchers at Tulane University School of Medicine have designed a synthetic protein that acts as a decoy to intercept and neutralize the virus before it can cause infection.

ONLY THE Remarkable

Anneliese Singh began as the university's inaugural chief diversity officer (CDO) in July and vows to build diversity across campus.

What attracted you to this position?

As a New Orleanian and Tulane graduate, this feels like an exciting new opportunity and phase in my life to come back home and do the work I love. I am excited to become a part of the social change network that already exists at Tulane and collaborate to move these efforts forward.

What are some of the first actions you plan to take in your new role at Tulane?

Listening with cultural humility is my first action. I want to listen to new partners and long-standing social justice champions, both on and off-campus.

Is this the best or most difficult time to be a chief diversity officer?

This has the potential to be the best time to be a CDO because there is so much readiness for change as a result of a series of injustices we have seen play out nationally and internationally. As Tulane and New Orleans community members, we have the opportunity to act on that readiness and create transformational change right now.

important connectivity while adhering to the strict city and campus guidelines around in-person gatherings.

As we continue with our efforts to promote a safe, engaging fall semester, Tulane, with 186 years of experience fighting infectious disease, is also working at the front lines of the pandemic. As always, we are future-focused. In addition to continually testing members of the Tulane and New Orleans community and caring for COVID-19 patients, our researchers are hard at work mapping the spread of the virus, studying its origins, and developing new treatments, tests, prevention protocols and vaccines. Tulane experts from a wide range of fields are working together and collaborating with their peers around the country and world. They are also providing their expertise and insights on national and international platforms through interviews with major media and virtual events such as the *Plug-In*, *Tulane Innovation*, and *Presidential Speaker* series. Through these and numerous other events we are keeping our alumni and friends connected in new, imaginative ways, enabling us to engage with more people than ever before.

Over the past few months, we have also witnessed a national reckoning on a centuries-old problem: systemic racism and inequality. In June, I announced a series of important steps to promote a more diverse, equitable and inclusive Tulane, including an expanded commitment to racial equity education; significant increases in financial support for marginalized campus communities; a series of community discussions to examine our path toward justice; commitment to a more diverse staff, faculty and student body; and a refocused, reimagined Presidential Commission on Race and Tulane Values. This is all the beginning of much-needed change, both here at Tulane and around the world.

I have never been more inspired by the determination, resilience and hard work I have seen from the entire Tulane University community, both in our efforts to realize a safe, on-ground fall semester and in our commitment to a more just Tulane. But our work continues as we navigate through this unprecedented period. Tulanians adapt, adjust and respond to profound global challenges, both new and old. I remain grateful for you – our alumni and dearest friends – and treasure your engagement and support. You help pilot Tulane’s soaring trajectory and guide our safe landings.

Stay connected. Stay involved. Stay safe. And Roll Wave!

Warmly,

Learn more about the *Only the Audacious* campaign and how you can be involved at audacious.tulane.edu



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Only the Excellent

To allow the return to campus for the fall 2020 semester Aug. 19, Tulane University has taken monumental steps to protect the health of the Tulane community, while maintaining and enhancing the quality of Tulane’s educational experience.

Over the summer, Tulane built 13 temporary classrooms, five teaching facilities for performance classes such as dance, and a dining pavilion in order to accommodate socially distant learning and dining experiences. State-of-the-art technology will allow classes to be taught both remotely and in person.

“We are committed to offering a rewarding education with significant face-to-face engagement,” said Robin Forman, senior vice president for academic affairs and provost.

Prior to returning to campus, students, faculty and staff will be required to take part in Tulane’s free COVID-19 testing program. The program will be run by Tulane University School of Medicine, a leader in developing and improving the fastest, most accurate COVID-19 tests. Tulane has also partnered with the Hyatt Regency Hotel downtown to establish the “TU Arrival Center” as a testing site for all students before they move onto campus.

Students, faculty and staff will be required to wear face coverings in common areas and follow other precautions such as social distancing and frequent handwashing, as well as daily symptom monitoring.

▲ Clockwise from top: A research group meets at an outdoor classroom on the Pierson Patio; A student meets with a health educator to review guidelines for safe social behaviors for when students move onto campus; An Information Technology manager instructs student employees on the Student Support Squad on assisting faculty with virtual class technology support; Office plexiglass installation in preparation for students’ return to class