

Welcome New TAA President Chris Ralston

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For Chris Ralston (L*99) there's a lot that goes into what makes Tulane such a special institution — from its home city of New Orleans to its rich history and unique traditions. But ultimately it comes down to the people. “You have this excellent institution that is known for its academics and so many other things, but it also has a sense of having fun. There is something about the relationship between Tulanians that's very genuine and collegial.”

Ralston, who is a partner with Phelps Dunbar LLP in New Orleans, added, “Alumni benefit from staying engaged with an institution that they love. There's the opportunity for the institution to benefit from these alumni who want to give back and want to make an impact and want to do something positive and see the institution thrive.”

He noted that he was particularly pleased that his tenure will coincide with the rollout of the Tulane Alumni Association's strategic plan. "The strategic plan is designed for collaboration throughout the university so that the alumni association can help the various stakeholders and schools within the institution. I really hope that we can be more visible through collaborative work that helps the various stakeholders fulfill the university's mission and realize the priorities that President Fitts has set."

It's an ambitious mission, but an important one for Ralston. "Any institution that we've gone to and spent so much time at eventually becomes a part of us in a way. It's natural to care about and want to see this institution do better and improve. It's important that we all take an interest in something that is a part of us - in seeing it last and endure."

In addition to Ralston's new role, DeAnn Golden (NC '92) will become president-elect, with Mike DePaul (B '84) serving as vice-president and John Suarez (B '04, B *10) as secretary/treasurer. Joe Shorter (TC '98) and Andy Schiffman (A&S '79, B *80) will also join the board as club representatives, along with Robyn Davies (LA '12), Cynthia Tea Ferguson (E '89) and Valerie M. Morgan (SW '13) as at-large and school representatives. Ashley Kiefer (SE '10, M *15), will serve as the new *ex officio* member of the board, representing the School of Medicine Alumni Association.