Saying goodbye to the Katrina Class

May 20, 2009



The 2009 commencement ceremonies marked an historic end and a bright beginning for 769 newly minted alumni of the A. B. Freeman School of Business.

At the undergraduate level, this year's commencement was notable for the graduation of the so-called Katrina Class, the students who made the decision to return to New Orleans and Tulane after Hurricane Katrina forced the cancellation of what would have been their first semester in college. More than 250 undergraduate business majors were among the graduating students treated to an extraordinary unified ceremony at the Louisiana Superdome featuring a keynote address by Ellen DeGeneres.

For more coverage of Tulane's unified commencement ceremony and to see streaming video, visit http://tulane.edu/grads/streaming.cfm

Later that afternoon, the Freeman School recognized its graduate programs with a diploma ceremony in McAlister Auditorium. In addition to MBAs, MACCTs, MFINs and

PhDs, the ceremony honored the first graduating classes of two new programs, the Global MBA and the Bridge to Business.

The Global MBA was established two years ago to enable students to broaden their international experience by becoming part of a unique international cohort. Students from Freeman and five prestigious Latin American institutions travel the globe together, completing six courses in six different countries in pursuit of a Master of Global Management degree. The Bridge to Business certificate program was established last year to provide individuals holding non-business PhDs with the additional training necessary to teach in AACSB-accredited business schools worldwide.

The ceremony also marked the first time that graduates of the Master of Management program, a Latin American offering coordinated through the Goldring Institute for International Business, participated in a May commencement ceremony.

"So, yes, today is a very special day," said Angelo DeNisi, dean of the Freeman School, in recognition of the many firsts. "It is an honor to be with you on this special occasion."

Ashley Bernards (BSM '09) received the BSM Award for Scholastic Achievement, which recognizes the graduating BSM with the highest cumulative grade point average, and Kathleen Rice (MBA'09) earned the Marta and Peter Bordeaux Scholastic Achievement Award, which recognizes the graduating MBA with the highest cumulative grade point average. In addition, Reginald Coatney (MBA '09) received the Roger L. Cornelius Award and the Tulane 34 Award, which is presented each year to 34 Tulane graduates who have distinguished themselves throughout their collegiate careers.

The diploma ceremony ended with one more first. After Dean DeNisi congratulated the graduates, the Algiers Brass Band appeared to lead a second-line parade from McAlister to the Lavin-Bernick Center, where graduates and their families enjoyed a special reception in their honor.