Tulane parent shares insights from a career in energy

March 13, 2017



Tulane parent Larry Ornstein, center, shared insights from his more than 40 year career in energy as part of the Career Management Center's Lunch and Learn series.

Current Tulane parent Larry Ornstein joined Freeman School of Business students on March 9 for “Lunch and Learn,” a series sponsored by the Freeman Career Management Center and the Tulane Energy Institute. Ornstein, who retired in December 2014, is a former senior vice president of Hess Corp., then a Fortune 100 global oil and gas company.

Until March 2013, Ornstein served as chief financial officer of the $25 billion-revenue-per-year Refining & Marketing Division (R&M), where he oversaw all finance and accounting functions as well as budgeting, strategic planning and M&A activities. He was also responsible for the Energy Risk & Performance Management

group, the Global Process Excellence function and was executive sponsor for Hess' Leadership Development and Mentoring programs.

In a career that spanned more than 40 years with Hess, Ornstein directed nearly every major financial function in the company's R&M division and ran the supply side of the operation (refining, trading, storage and marine). He was instrumental in the 1998 formation of HOVENSA, a 500,000-barrels-per-day oil refinery joint venture with Petroleos de Venezuela S.A. (PDVSA), the national oil company of Venezuela, located in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Ornstein, who serves on the advisory board of the Tulane Energy Institute, credited hard work, commitment and "not taking no for an answer" as keys to his longevity with the company. During the hour-long discussion and Q&A session, he was frank, honest and direct when it came to sharing what he felt were the keys to his success.

"I may not have been the smartest guy in the room," Ornstein said, "but I knew no one there could outwork me, which is key to getting ahead." He also outlined four key areas of development that young professionals entering the workplace can use to maximize their success.

1. Be noticed – "Never just hang out in the background. Stand up and talk…get noticed"
2. Think long term – "Don't just think about now. Help the company think strategically and plan for the future."
3. Leave a legacy – "You probably won't stay with one company as long as I stayed at Hess, so what legacy are you leaving behind? What are you going to be known for in this organization?"
4. Become critical – "Strive for breadth; make yourself a valuable member to the organization and have solid knowledge over several areas."

Ornstein said he enjoyed the opportunity to speak with students in an open forum such as the CMC "Lunch and Learn," and he hopes to do it again.