Goes highlights growth, AI initiatives in ‘State of the School’ address

November 21, 2025



Freeman School Dean Paulo Goes touched on topics including growth, new programs and preparing students for an AI-powered future during his annual State of the School address, which took place at the school on Nov. 14 as part of Tulane's annual Wave Weekend celebration.

In keeping with his background in management information systems, Freeman School Dean Paulo Goes kicked off his annual "State of the School" address with some data analysis.

“We had 685 freshmen declare business as their major this fall,” Goes told a packed audience on Nov. 14 as part of Wave Weekend ’25, Tulane’s annual homecoming, reunions and parents weekend celebration. “When I came here four years ago, it was around 500; now it’s almost 700. And then I did the math: That’s about 37% of Tulane’s freshman class. So I’m happy with that. Having excess demand means

you’ve got a good business, right?”

Even more impressively, Goes noted that Freeman’s yield — the percentage of students offered admission who end up enrolling — was 71%, the highest of any unit at Tulane and a clear indicator of the B-school’s growing reputation.

“People know Freeman is a great quality school,” he said. “I meet with parents and alumni all over the country, and that’s the feeling I get. People are very happy with what we’re putting together here.”

For this year's State of the School, Goes discussed new programs, highlighted notable accomplishments and outlined some of the strategies Freeman is employing to prepare students for an AI-powered future.

“Technology moves fast, and the faster these waves of transformation come at you, the more you need to teach in a way that ties what we do in academia with practice,” he said. “Sometimes we have to learn together with industry, because things like AI are so new.”

The key to that, Goes said, is experiential learning. He cited the undergraduate capstone class, which connects seniors with consulting projects for real businesses, and the MBA program’s Impact Capstone, which puts students to work on high-value, strategically important projects for companies like Entergy, the Port of New Orleans and Louisiana Children’s Medical Center (LCMC), as examples of how Freeman is connecting students with industry practice.

At the undergraduate level, Goes also highlighted the recently launched industry certificates program. Students seeking careers in Real Estate Finance, Sports Management, Hospitality, Energy or Business Analytics & AI can now complete a sequence of courses to gain industry-specific knowledge in these high-demand fields. Nearly 200 students are currently pursuing certificates, and Goes said he expects that number to rise next year with the addition of a new certificate program in Investment Banking.

He also noted that the hospitality certificate will be opening to students from across the university in fall 2026, one of a number of new options created to meet the needs of non-business students.

“A lot of students want to know some business but don’t necessarily want to be a business major, so we established a new minor in business that’s open to every student on campus,” Goes said. “If you’re in engineering, public health, social work or liberal arts and want to learn some business, you can complete sequence of courses in finance, accounting, marketing and business analytics that enables you to understand the language of business and how to interact with business people.”

While full-time MBA enrollment was level this year at around 25 students, an achievement given the difficult environment for international students, Goes said he hopes to increase enrollment by 10-15 students in the next few years. The area of graduate education he expects to see the biggest growth, however, is programs for working professionals, including the Online MBA, the Professional MBA and the Executive MBA. The Freeman School recently reorganized the Stewart Center for Professional & Executive Education to lead all of the school's efforts to serve the needs of working professionals.

“I am a big believer that the market for MBAs is growing faster at the working professional level than the full-time level,” Goes said. “We launched the Online MBA program two years ago, and we already have 92 students in the program. A lot of working professionals don't care if they're on campus or not. They just want a good education from a top business school, and that's what we are."

Following Dean Goes’ talk, Freeman presented a panel on AI education featuring Musa Caglar, professor of practice and director of the Business Analytics & AI certificate program; Rob Lalka, professor of practice in management and co-instructor of a new course in tech ethics; and Yatish Hegde, lecturer and faculty director of the Master of Business Analytics & AI program.

Those events were part of a busy weekend at the B-school that also included the annual Graduate Alumni Reunion Cocktail Party, which this year took place at Common House on Friday evening; a Latinx networking reception featuring remarks from Alejandra Guzman (MBA '12); Freeman's annual Black Alumni Bubbly & Brunch; and alumni tailgating on the Berger Family Lawn before the Tulane-Florida Atlantic University game.



Members of the MBA Class of 2005 strike a pose in celebration of their 20th reunion at this year's Graduate Alumni Party at Common House. Pictured, from left to right, are Jonathan Jones, Katherine Lowe Thome, Wendy Gehring, Gusty Denis, Camille Terk, Daniel Mirelez, Lara Seeberg and Nebojsa Kostic.

To see photos from the Graduate Reunion Cocktail Party at Common House, visit the Freeman School's Flickr page.