



Focusing on Higher Education's Role in Rebuilding New Orleans & Gulf Coast

A panel of the campus heads of three New Orleans universities will kick off the April 2-4 forum on the role of Louisiana's higher education expertise and research in rebuilding the environmental, social, health and business landscapes of New Orleans and the Gulf coast. Titled, "Science Recovery and Discovery: Role of Higher Education in Securing a Sustainable Future," the forum will be held at the New Orleans Marriott Hotel on Canal Street.

The 6 p.m. Sunday (April 2) panel, comprised of Tulane University President **Scott Cowen**, University of New Orleans Chancellor **Timothy Ryan**, and Xavier University President **Norman Francis**, will be moderated by Commissioner of Higher Education **E. Joseph Savoie**.

The first in a post-Katrina series hosted by the Louisiana Board of Regents and Louisiana EPSCoR, the forums complement the Regents' Post-Katrina Support Fund Initiative, a five-year program allocating approximately \$25 million from the Board of Regents Support Fund, beginning 2006-07, to assist in the recovery and rebuilding of New Orleans and the Louisiana Coast.

Forum objectives include the development of new paradigms to rebuild more secure and sustainable communities, continuation of higher education's pace setting scientific research relevant to Louisiana's economic recovery and advancement, maintenance and elevation of the trajectory of science and education in the State, and the extension of hope and opportunity to current and future Louisiana scientists and students.

Ten forum speakers confirmed as of late February are, in alphabetical order:

Henry Falk, Director, Coordinating Center for Environmental and Occupational Health and Injury Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. Falk is also Director of the National Center for Environmental Health and Assistant Administrator, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

William H. Hooke, Senior Policy Fellow and Director, Atmospheric Policy Program, American Meteorological Society. A former Director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) U.S. Weather Research Program Office, Dr. Hooke is also a former Chair of the White House National Science and Technology Council's Subcommittee on Natural Disaster Reduction where he coordinated the efforts of 19 federal agencies.

Shirley Laska, Director, Center for Hazards Assessment, Response and Technology (CHART) and Professor of Sociology, University of New Orleans (UNO). A former UNO Vice Chancellor for Research, Dr. Laska founded the Environmental Social Science Research Institute, a precursor to CHART. An environmental and natural hazards sociologist, she recently testified before the U.S. House of Representatives Science



Committee, Subcommittee on Research, on the role of social science research in disaster preparedness and response.

Maureen Lichtveld, Professor and Chair, Tulane University Environmental Health Sciences. Dr. Lichtveld is a former Director, Workforce Planning and Policy, and Associate Director for Workforce Development, in the Public Health Practice Program Office, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She directed the Global and National Implementation Plan for Public Health Workforce Development, and a national system of 22 centers to strengthen bioterrorism and emergency preparedness by linking academic expertise and assets to state and local health agency needs.

Jerry M. Melillo, Co-Director, Ecosystems Center, Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, MA. Dr. Melillo is a former Associate Director for Environment of the President's Office of Science and Technology Policy and a former Director of the National Science Foundation's Ecosystems Studies Program. He focuses on the impacts of human activities on the biogeochemistry of ecological systems.

Robert E. O'Connor, Co-Director, National Science Foundation, Decision, Risk and Management Sciences, Social and Economic Sciences Division, Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences. Dr. O'Connor, a Professor Emeritus of Pennsylvania State University's political science department, serves on the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction of the National Science and Technology Committee of the President's Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Ed Seidel, Director, Louisiana State University and A&M College (LSU) Center for Computation and Technology, and Floating Point Systems Professor, Departments of Physics & Astronomy, and Computer Science. Dr. Seidel headed the numerical relativity group as a Professor at the Max-Planck-Institut für Gravitationsphysik (Albert Einstein Institut) in Germany from

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1996-2003, where he maintains an affiliation. He led the European Commission's EU Astrophysics Network, was a leader of the GridLab project, and is co-chair (emeritus), Global Grid Forum's Applications Research Group, and Chief Scientist of the Louisiana Optical Network Initiative.

Robert R. Twilley, Director, LSU Wetland Biogeochemistry Center and former Director, Center for Ecology and Environmental Technology and distinguished professor in Louisiana Environmental Studies. Dr. Twilley's research interests include ecosystem ecology, estuarine and coastal ecosystems, and ecosystem management and restoration of coastal regions. He is a member of the Science and Technology Working Group, that is developing a comprehensive restoration plan for the Louisiana Coastal Area.

Dennis E. Wenger, Founding Director and Senior Scholar, Texas A&M University Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center. Dr. Wenger served four years as Co-Director of the University of Delaware Disaster Research Center. He has engaged in disaster and hazard research for over three decades, focusing organizational and community preparedness, response, and recovery. He served on the President's 1979 Commission on the Accident at Three Mile Island and drafted the Commission's report, *Emergency Preparedness and Response*.

James Lee Witt, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, James Lee Witt Associates, LLC, a consulting and emergency and disaster preparedness consulting firm hired by Governor Kathleen Blanco to oversee Louisiana's Katrina reconstruction efforts. Mr. Witt, Tuesday's luncheon speaker, has over 25 years disaster management experience, culminating in his appointment as Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), where he served from 1993-2001 and oversaw federal relief for over 350 disasters. He is credited with turning FEMA from an unsuccessful bureaucratic agency to one that was internationally lauded for its all-hazards disaster management. In 1996, President Clinton elevated Mr. Witt to Cabinet status - a first for a FEMA Director.

The Forum's five confirmed plenary session moderators are, in alphabetical order:

John Clements, Chair and Professor, Department of Microbiology and Immunology, Tulane University School of Medicine. Dr. Clements, who maintains an active research program focused on

the development of vaccines against infectious diseases, also has a long-standing interest in biodefense. He has served as Officer in Charge of the U.S. Marine Corps Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Warfare Defense School at Camp Lejeune and chaired the committee to review Military Infectious Disease Research Programs for the Department of Defense. A United Nations Weapons Inspector (Biologic), he was a member of the Iraq Survey Group in Baghdad.

Jeffrey Lybarger, Assistant Director, Preventive Medicine Residency Career Development Division, Office of Workforce Development, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A medical officer and epidemiologist, Dr. Lybarger has served with CDC and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) for some 27 years, including 12 years as Director of the Division of Health Studies.

Douglas Meffert, the Eugenie Schwartz Professor in River and Coastal Studies, Tulane University, and Deputy Director, Tulane/Xavier Center for Bioenvironmental Research. Dr. Meffert is also Program Director of Tulane's RiverSphere, a planned \$69 million Mississippi River research and education center and Co-Chair of the Sustainability Subcommittee of Mayor Ray Nagin's Bring New Orleans Back Commission.

LuAnn White, Director, Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine Center for Applied Environmental Public Health, which includes the Center of Excellence in Environmental Public Health Tracking. A Professor in the Department of Environmental Health and Diplomate of the American Board of Toxicology, Dr. White's research focus is the prevention of health effects in humans from environmental and occupational agents and environmental risk communication.

Stuart Wolf, Professor of Materials Science and Engineering and Physics, University of Virginia. Dr. Wolf is a former Program Manager at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), where he supervised projects such as Spintronics, Frequency Agile Materials for Electronics, Quantum Information Science and Technology, Advanced Thermoelectrics, Advanced Magnets for Power Systems, and Superconducting Hybrid Power Electronics. A fellow of the American Physical Society, he spent 31 years at the Naval Research Laboratory both as a scientist and scientific manager.

For registration and/or more Forum information, go to <http://www.laregents.org>.



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