Hundreds turn out for Homecoming/Reunions 2017

November 20, 2017



Homecoming/Reunion Weekend attracted hundreds of Freeman alumni, parents and friends to campus in November.

With clear skies and unseasonably mild temperatures, Homecoming/Reunion Weekend 2017 attracted hundreds of Freeman alumni, parents and friends to

Tulane’s uptown campus for a Wave-themed weekend of fun.

Things kicked off on the morning of Nov. 3 with tours of the-soon-to-be completed Goldring/Woldenberg Business Complex. Director of Alumni Relations Mia Miller and Project Manager Josh Beezley led alumni and parents through the space and answered questions about the new building, which will add 85,000 square feet of new and renovated space to the business school’s footprint when it opens in January 2018.

Later that afternoon, Freeman School Dean Ira Solomon met with alumni and parents in Goldring/Woldenberg Hall II and delivered an update on the school.

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> Ian Bremner, left, who graduated from the Freeman School's MBA program in 1967, tours the under-construction Goldring/Woldenberg Business Complex, which is slated to open in January 2018.

“Though you might not know this, we are over the course of the last six years the fastest-growing business school in the United States,” Solomon said. “But the numbers don’t tell the full story. The real story is in the quality of the young women and men who are coming here to study with us. They are truly outstanding, and the bottom line is — as I often tell people — I would not be admitted to this school for which I serve as dean.”

Dean Solomon also fielded questions on everything from joint-degree programs and data analytics options for students to job placement statistics and the future of the full-time MBA program.

“The full-time MBA since 2008 has been in a shrinking mode,” said Solomon, who identified a number of business schools that have recently shut down their full-time programs. “We don’t have any intentions of doing that at this point in time. Our plan is instead to figure out ways to create more customization in the full time MBA space and provide opportunities for people who already have certain kinds of knowledge, certain kinds of experience to fast track their way into the second year of the MBA.”



Dean Ira Solomon listens to a question during his Homecoming Q&A with alumni and parents.

Following Dean Solomon's talk, faculty members Serena Loftus and Mark Powers spoke to alumni as part of the university-wide "Back to the Classroom" lecture series. Loftus, an assistant professor of accounting who studies how psychological processes shape reactions to accounting information, discussed her research on the use of pronouns in accounting reports. In a paper that received a lengthy write-up in *The Wall Street Journal*, Loftus argued that investors react to accounting data more positively when managers use "we" to present good news and "I" to present bad news.

"People actually respond more positively when the manager takes ownership of the bad news using 'I,'" said Loftus. "This is counterintuitive to some managers but provides some insights from broad observations that they can apply in their world."



Professor of Practice Mark Powers spoke about incorporating real-world experience into the classroom as one of this year's homecoming presenters.

Powers, a professor of practice and the former CFO of JetBlue Airways Corp., spoke next about how he incorporates his JetBlue experience into the classroom.

“I try to bring direct experience in,” said Powers. “I by and large use cases to teach and during every one of these cases, I stop and say, ‘Alright, let me tell you what’s really going on.’ At the end, we’ll talk about what the students need to know and why. I want my students to walk out of here with something that they can actually use when they get a job.”

In acknowledging Loftus and Powers, Dean Solomon said the professors represent the two sides of the Freeman School’s teaching strategy — the deep knowledge that comes from PhD researchers like Loftus and the broad real-world experience of faculty like Powers.

“What we’re trying to do is to put these two types of expertise together,” said Dean Solomon. “And it’s my belief that when you marry them together, you can end up with some truly outstanding educational experiences for our young women and

men.”

That evening, the Freeman School hosted a graduate alumni party at the Chicory in the Warehouse District for this year’s reunion classes. Alumni from all the classes celebrating milestone graduation anniversaries were represented, from members of the class of 2012 celebrating their five-year reunion to members of the class of 1967 celebrating their 50th. Representing the 50-year MBA class were Ken Boudreaux, Bill Gibbons, Bill Jennings, Hardee Kilgore, Claude Schlesinger, Eric Smith, Frank Tapparo and Ian Bremner.

“It was so great to see old friends again, even if I wouldn't have recognized some of them,” quipped Bremner, the retired business development manager for Foster Wheeler Engineering & Construction Co. “I don't think I'd been back to the campus in those 50 years. I had a hard time orienting myself with all the new buildings that have gone up, but the new business school building is just indescribable. It’s fantastic.”

A special guest at this year’s party was Jeffrey Barach, emeritus professor of management, who taught many members of the 50-year reunion class when they were students.



Members of the MBA class of 1967 presented the combined gifts from this year’s reunion classes to Freeman School Dean Ira Solomon during the graduate alumni reunion party at the Chicory on Nov. 3. Pictured, from left to right, are Frank Tapparo, Ken Boudreaux, Hardee Kilgore, Bill Gibbons, Ian Bremner, Eric Smith, Dean Solomon, Bill Jennings and Jeffrey Barach, emeritus professor of management, who taught members of the class.

Members of the class of 1967 also presented Dean Solomon with a check for $421,624, representing the total of this year’s reunion class gifts.

The next day, the action shifted to the Lavin-Bernick Center Quad for tailgating before the Tulane – Cincinnati game. Alumni and parents had the chance to mix and mingle and enjoy food and refreshments courtesy of the Freeman School before the game.

To see more photos from Homecoming 2017, visit the Freeman School’s Flickr page.