

# COSFA UPDATE

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## MAS Liaison Report

### Perfect Storm and the Health Professions Introduction:

Michael Goodman, Associate Vice-President for University Financial Aid at Tulane University School of Medicine extended a warm welcome to attendees. He noted that New Orleans is alive and well; the French Quarter is open, the St. Charles Trolley is running, and Mardi Gras was "on". He shared tips on how to "properly" catch the trinkets thrown from the parade floats – if they fall on the ground, don't bend over and pick them up, put your foot on them and then wait for the crowd to back-off (it worked!).

Why spend all this money on Mardi-Gras when there is so much rebuilding to be done? Mardi-Gras is not negotiable. That's that. It is the city's fundamental quintessential celebration. New Orleans has to have Mardi Gras because it is beaten and broken, and needs to send the message that they are resilient. Mardi Gras is the embodiment of the spirit of New Orleans and their love for life.

His introduction was inspirational and a perfect segue to the opening plenary:

### ***The Perfect Storm and the Health Professions*** **Blenda Wilson, Ph.D.**

The increased responsibility for financing higher education placed on families, coupled with the **The**-complexities of demands for first-class medical care, inadequate national healthcare policy, skyrocketing costs, and escalating debt levels of health professions students are only a few of the elements characterize the health care crisis.

Dr. Wilson views financial aid administrators as advocates for access to higher education; especially for underserved populations. There needs to be a shift in culture from private profit to public

good. Health care is treated as a commodity and as such, is fundamentally flawed. We need a social and public policy that addresses this.

Governments' disinvestment in both higher education and health care has created an environment where the health care workforce is under compensated, lacking in diversity, under trained in technology, and inefficient burdened by bureaucratic red tape of the insurance industry and the federal tort system (lawsuits). Health care spending continues to rise exponentially, while wages lag far behind. These unrelated, mutually exclusive events, meet to create the Perfect Storm.

The need to increase the workforce, prepare for an aging population, and the overall increase in demand for specialized health care will soon become apparent in the uneven pipeline in education. The Financial Aid Administrators roles are central to maintaining and building the quality of health care in this country by advocating policies and programs which increase access and mitigate debt.

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