

## In her words: Rhonda Coignet talks about new role at School of Medicine



Rhonda Coignet began working at Tulane University in 1996 and is now taking on a new position at the School of Medicine. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

*Rhonda Coignet, MBA, a longtime employee of Tulane University, is now Senior Director for Graduate Medical Education at Tulane University School of Medicine - where she works alongside [Dr. Paul Gladden, the Designated Institutional Official for Graduate Medical Education \(GME\)](#). After a few months in her new role, Coignet talked with us about how she's working to help the Graduate Medical Education programs run efficiently and effectively.*

### **What experiences in your career have led you to this particular role?**

I'm very process and systems focused. I've always held positions that give foundational support to others, so that they can do their jobs more effectively. In this role, that means having a broad perspective of graduate medical education - and being the administrator, organizer and coordinator - to oversee programs and keep up with required accreditation-related functions of the institution.

As Senior Director, I'm the administrative counterpart to Dr. Gladden, the Designated Institutional Official for our residency and fellowship training programs. We have 39 programs and more than 500 residents and fellows, and it's a big undertaking for any one person to oversee alone. It's a collaborative partnership that involves many people throughout the SoM.

**What are your goals?**

Continuous improvement. You can never get to a point where you say, "Okay, we're done, we're good, we can stop now." Accreditation and educational requirements change, and there are always opportunities to improve our programs and how we work. That's important, for the institution and the GME office. We should be open to new ways of doing things so that we can continue to support our residents and fellows and serve our community.

**What do you see for the next year - 2022 - in GME at the Tulane School of Medicine?**

We've made tremendous progress over the last several months, and there's potential for more improvement. The prospect is energizing and challenging. There are better days ahead for GME and our community.