

Learning to give

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The mission of Big Class is to cultivate and support the voices of New Orleans writers ages 6-18 through creative collaborations with schools and communities. (Video from YouTube)

Tulane University students enrolled in the “Philanthropy and Social Change” course got a real-life lesson in philanthropy by awarding \$50,000 in grants to seven New Orleans nonprofits.

The Philanthropy Lab, a foundation supporting philanthropy education at universities, sponsored the course for the second year; it wrapped up with an awards ceremony in December.

Tulane President Mike Fitts addressed the students at the ceremony. “Every day of your life will bring opportunities to matter – to solve problems, to change systems, to serve people, to make the world just a little bit more fair, a little bit more kind. I can’t wait to see what you accomplish with your lives,” he said.

The course is available through the School of Liberal Arts Management Minor (SLAMM), which introduces non-business majors to management practices and principles through a liberal arts perspective.

Michele Adams, an associate professor and chair of the Department of Sociology in the School of Liberal Arts, is the director. She said the students started in the fall with a list of 45 nonprofits—all partners with the Center for Public Service. Students were divided into five teams, through which they conducted research and interviews and undertook site visits.

“It’s a really difficult task because all the nonprofits in New Orleans are doing amazing work,” she said.

Cody Beaird, a senior majoring in economics and philosophy and minoring in SLAMM, was part of the team that awarded a grant to Big Class, a program that cultivates young New Orleans writers by collaborating with schools and community groups.

“Their passion for education was evident immediately,” said Beaird.

Kortney Morrow, Big Class’s development manager, said the organization’s leaders were excited about how inquisitive the Tulane students were during the grant application process. “It’s great to see students at Tulane invested in the New Orleans community,” she said.

Students awarded money to the following nonprofits in five categories:

Community: Lowernine.org

Education and Arts: Big Class

Social Services: Kedila Family Learning Services, Project Lazarus

Well-Being and Quality of Life: Unity of New Orleans

Youth and Sports: A’s and Aces, Youth Empowerment Project

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