

Upward Bound student learns the lab

August 17, 2017 3:15 PM New Wave staff
newwave@tulane.edu



N'Dea Preatto, a high school student in Tulane's Upward Bound program, shines in her summer internship at the Tulane School of Science and Engineering. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

On the cusp of her senior year at Edna Karr High School, Tulane Upward Bound student N'Dea Preatto hoped her summer internship would be a chance to apply her interest in forensic biology. In the end, the depth of exposure her lab time in the [Tulane School of Science and Engineering](#) provided would exceed her expectation.

Each summer high school student enrolled in Tulane's Upward Bound program, based at the Cowen Institute, participates in on-campus internships intended to provide exposure to life on a college campus and the academic or professional interests of its participants.

“Tulane and Upward Bound provided me with a really amazing opportunity to work in a science environment,” said Preatto, who spent her summer working under the guidance of Laurie Earls, assistant professor in the [Department of Cell and Molecular Biology](#). “I learned more here than I would have learned in any other summer job.”

Tulane hosts the interns in support roles across many departments on campus. Preatto’s evaluation by the lab’s staff was so impressive that she was offered an extended residency in the Tulane Brain Institute’s pathology lab following her summer internship.

“We have previously had second- and third-year undergraduates who were not able to master the techniques,” said Leslie Kelley, a Tulane lab technician who served as Preatto’s primary instructor and liaison in the lab. “We were very impressed with how quickly Preatto was able to learn these new skills.”

As the lab’s first Upward Bound intern, Preatto’s success will likely result in an expanded partnership with Upward Bound and the Department of Cell and Molecular Biology for future students.

Tulane Upward Bound was recently awarded two grants from the U.S. Department of Education to double the number of students served. The program provides weekly tutoring, career exploration, individual counseling, FAFSA assistance, supplemental academic support, ACT workshops and college prep courses to eligible high school students.

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