

Program Offers Lab Experience to Minority Students

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newwave@tulane.edu

Undergraduates from New York, Tennessee and Louisiana are getting hands-on research experience in the Tulane School of Science and Engineering laboratories through the Louis Stokes Louisiana Alliance for Minority Participation. The 10-week summer program is funded by the National Science Foundation and Louisiana Board of Regents.



Working in a Tulane science lab are, from left, students Clarice Richardson, Lauren Thompson, Ashley Scott and Jose Martin Sosa during the summer program sponsored by the Louis Stokes Louisiana Alliance for Minority Participation. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

The goal of the [program](#), says director Hank Bart, is to increase the number of minority students completing bachelor's degrees in science, technology, engineering and math, "and ultimately to recruit them into graduate school." [Bart](#) is a professor of ecology and evolutionary biology.

Ashley Scott, a junior at the University of Tennessee, joined the program to get exposure to laboratory research, but now has bigger ideas. "I never thought I would go to graduate school," says Scott, "but after this program, I started seeing the options and what's possible."

Students participate in discussions, take practice GRE tests and learn to prepare effective graduate school applications.

Clarice Richardson, a student at Medger Evers College, also finds time for sightseeing.

"I've been all over the city, and she's my tour guide," Richardson says, pointing to her lab-mate, Lauren Thompson, a senior at Xavier University. They are analyzing DNA samples of fishes to date the species, and writing about their research.

Tulane senior Martin Sosa is studying the mechanics of blood flow to develop disposable, postage stamp-size devices that could be used to test for tuberculosis, malaria and other diseases in countries with limited access to medical facilities.

Sosa originally planned to work in industry, but now may join the biomedical engineering graduate program to do research.

"You have a big problem that needs to be fixed," says Sosa, "and the way you do it is by solving a lot of little problems along the way. I really like that process."

Participants will present posters describing their research on July 28 from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. in room 201 of the Lavin-Bernick Center.

Belinda Lacoste is a student studying journalism in the School of Continuing Studies and a staff member who writes for the School of Science and Engineering.