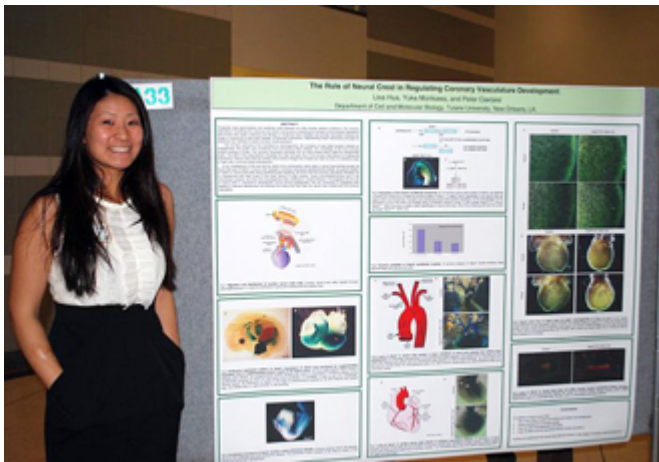


The Beat Goes on

November 01, 2010 10:30 AM Carol J. Schlueter
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When teams of volunteers from Tulane step off for the American Heart Association's Start! New Orleans Heart Walk on Nov. 20, they will be supporting a cause that hits close to home. In Louisiana, one in four deaths is due to heart disease, records show.



Lisa Hua proudly shows her research work at a poster session during a Health Sciences Research Days session. (Photo from Lisa Hua)

Tulane walkers raised more than \$10,000 at last year's [heart walk](#) and hope to surpass that number this year. But the university's ties with AHA go well beyond volunteerism ? currently Tulane is receiving \$797,000 in research grants from AHA.

For fourth-year graduate student Lisa Hua, whose passion is studying how blood vessels form in the heart, the Nov. 20 walk is a reminder of the career she is following in the Tulane [Department of Cell and Molecular Biology](#). Hua recently received an AHA predoctoral fellowship award to fund her graduate studies at Tulane.

"I am so happy that Tulane is getting recognition from this award and honored to represent Tulane University," said Hua. "The cell and molecular biology department

has provided me with an excellent graduate education so I view this fellowship as a credit to my wonderful mentors and advisors.”

Working with David Mullin, associate professor, and Yuka Morikawa, research assistant professor, Hua is investigating how the two major blood vessels of the heart form in mammals.

“Our long-term goal is to learn how to induce vessel growth from pre-existing vessels,” Hua says. “An understanding of the factors regulating major blood vessel formation in the heart may lead to discovery of genes encoding proteins that can be used to treat patients with heart attacks.”

The AHA fellowship program helps students initiate careers in cardiovascular and stroke research by providing research assistance and training.

As for the heart walk, teams are still being formed on the uptown and health sciences campuses. To participate, e-mail [Leigh Tenewitz](#), the American Heart Association representative.