

Tulane Hosts Gates Millennium Scholars

March 30, 2010 12:00 PM

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A group of 65 students from universities across the United States convened at Tulane for a Gates Millennium Scholars Foundation Graduate School Institute on March 22-23. The institute, administered by the United Negro College Foundation, provides high-achieving, low-income minority students with an opportunity to complete an undergraduate degree and explore graduate schools.



During the Gates Millennium Scholars Institute meeting on the uptown campus, Brian Mitchell, center, Tulane associate provost for graduate studies, speaks with, from left, students Jazzmin Cooper of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Onel Martinez of the University of Washington and Whitney Jones of the University of Arkansas. (Photo by Rick Olivier)

Michael Cunningham, associate professor of psychology and African and African diaspora studies, gave the institute's keynote speech.

"We need to change the story of student achievement associated with students of color," Cunningham declared in his presentation. His talk explored myths and realities about minority achievement, drawing from his own research.

Graduate School Institutes provide a forum for scholars to explore opportunities in science, technology, engineering, math and education disciplines. The institutes continue to financially support scholars pursuing advanced degrees in one of these disciplines.

At the institute held at Tulane, sessions offered tips on applying to graduate school, networking, taking the GRE graduate school entry exam and pursuing a research-oriented academic career.

Byron Hughes, a master of public health candidate in community health sciences, participated in the graduate student panel. He shared his academic journey growing up in Houston, earning his undergraduate degree from a historically Black university, and now studying at the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. Hughes explained that he chose Tulane because of the opportunity to work directly in the community.

Jeffery Johnson, associate dean for admissions and student affairs at the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, arranged for the institute to be held at Tulane.

["The institutes foster community among the scholars, and at the same time this presents Tulane as](#)

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an option for them to consider for their master's or doctoral degree," he said.

Johnson commended the assistance of Brian Mitchell, associate provost for graduate studies. "Brian Mitchell was a champion in making this institute a reality."

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