

Tulane students teach prisoners through new program

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newwave@tulane.edu



Tulane doctoral student Annie Freitas is leading the Newcomb Prison Project run by the Newcomb College Institute. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

If Annie Freitas has her way, some Tulane University students are going to go to prison.

Freitas is the head of The Newcomb Prison Project, a new initiative of the Newcomb College Institute that will connect students with local organizations to help bring classroom-style learning to both incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people.

“New Orleans has the highest incarceration rate in the world and prison education has been shown to significantly decrease recidivism,” said Freitas, a doctoral

student in the [City, Culture, and Community](#) interdisciplinary program. “Given our location, I think we have a moral obligation to be a voice for social justice and education in the criminal justice system.”

Freitas is no stranger to teaching in prisons. During her undergraduate years at Scripps, she worked for a program with a similar mission as an instructor of creative writing. Her hope is to give students at Tulane a comparable opportunity.

“There was a great program that took college students into juvenile halls and prisons to teach poetry, creative writing and debate classes,” said Freitas. “I consider it the most important part of my college experience.”

The Newcomb Prison Project will host speakers, film screenings and workshops that explore the intersections of race, class, gender and incarceration, and the effects of education on prison reentry rates.

Samah Ahmed is a junior majoring in public health at Tulane University.

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