

Mellon Graduate Fellows pursue certificate in community-engaged scholarship

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Fellows of the Mellon Graduate Program in Engaged Scholarship were honored at a Dec. 6 reception marking the program's launch as well as the new graduate certificate in community-engaged scholarship. From left: program manager James Garrett; fellows Kirsty Escalante, Taofeeq Adebayo and Jenn Miller Scarnato; associate administrative professor and program director Ryan McBride; and fellow Ari King. (Photograph by Gigsy)

Tulane University's inaugural cohort of 12 fellows of the [Mellon Graduate Program in Community-Engaged Scholarship](#) recently capped off their first semester of work in the humanities or humanistic social sciences with a focus on community-engaged scholarship.

The fellows will be the first to earn Tulane’s new graduate certificate in community-engaged scholarship.

Last year the [Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#) awarded Tulane [\\$1.5 million](#) to launch and support the certificate, an initiative of the [Office of the Provost](#) and the [School of Liberal Arts](#) in collaboration with the [Center for Engaged Learning and Teaching](#) and the [Center for Public Service](#).

“I had this dream to make science available in local languages, starting with my own language, Yoruba,” said Mellon Fellow Taofeeq Adebayo, a linguistics doctoral student from Nigeria. “What I hope to do is translate science textbooks for seventh-graders or eighth-graders and then go to schools to teach those kids in the local languages so that it can complement the instruction they receive in English.”

Fellows have the flexibility to pursue individual ideas within a common framework.

“We are reading a lot of the same theory, and we’re having conversations, so they’re grounded by a program that is in some ways set. But they’re all taking it in their own directions,” said program director Ryan McBride.

“[The Mellon program has] provided me with a strong network of people ... to help me along with my own ideas,” said archaeologist Kirsty Escalante, who through the Department of Anthropology studies Mayan culture in Mexico and Guatemala.

Fellows are also working with a faculty steering committee to develop a two-year program structure for future cohorts that also includes four faculty and four community partners.

Ari King, an urban studies doctoral student, said having support from Mellon allows her to frame herself “as a scholar who’s committed to community-engaged research, and I think a lot of us feel that way.”

Applications for the next cohort of graduate students, faculty and community partners will be accepted this spring.

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