

Social work professor receives awards for community-engaged scholarship

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Samantha Francois, PhD, assistant professor at the School of Social Work at Tulane, has been awarded the prestigious and competitive IARSLCE Early Career Award and the 2023 Barbara E. Moely Service-Learning Teaching Award for her dedication to community-engaged scholarship. (Provided photo)

[Samantha Francois](#), PhD, assistant professor at the School of Social Work at Tulane, has been awarded the prestigious and competitive [IARSLCE Early Career Award](#), which acknowledges and celebrates intellectual leadership through an emerging body of work that has begun to demonstrate broad and deep impact on community

engagement. Francois was selected among a pool of candidates nominated by national and international universities.

Francois is an exceptional scholar whose community-engaged research focuses on violence exposure, trauma and mental health in Black adolescents and young adults. Francois also serves as executive director of the Violence Prevention Institute at Tulane and co-director of the Center for Youth Equity, which is a CDC National Center of Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention. Her publications illustrate a sustained commitment to uplifting communities that are historically marginalized and oppressed. Myriam Huet, PhD, assistant director for research, assessment, and curriculum design at the Center for Public Service at Tulane, cited Francois' work as thoughtful, thought-provoking and actionable, already having measurable impact in New Orleans and the Gulf South region.

In addition to the IARSLCE Early Career Award, Francois is the recipient of the 2023 Barbara E. Moely Service-Learning Teaching Award, which is given in honor of professor emerita Barbara E. Moely, who founded service learning at Tulane in the 1990s. The award is presented annually to professors who embrace Moely's exceptional dedication to bringing classrooms to life through engaged community partnerships. The [Center for Public Service](#) will honor the 2023 recipients of the Barbara E. Moely Service-Learning Teaching Award at its annual Faculty Appreciation Reception on Thursday, March 23, from 4-5:30 p.m. at Cudd Hall.

Through Francois' teaching, students develop a sense of leadership, empathy and social responsibility for local and global communities. Francois has raised the voices of marginalized communities and elevates the expertise that community members offer through traditional higher education. She designs and executes research, teaching and service through an anti-racist and intersectional lens aimed at social transformation and community liberation.

"In my work as a scholar-activist, I aim to embody Tulane's motto, 'Not for oneself, but for one's own,' where I prioritize engaging, representing and centering oppressed and marginalized communities," Francois said.

Her teaching has emphasized community partnerships and relationships and centered the voices of marginalized communities to uplift and advance counternarratives to the status quo.

Huet commended Francois for building strong and responsive relationships with each partner and community, modeling this for her students, who in turn learn the principles of ethical community partnerships. Students are drawn to her classes, not just for her teaching, but for her mentorship and commitment to their personal and academic development. A student from Francois' class in spring 2021 wrote in their evaluation, "Dr. Francois puts so much thought and care into how she structures her lessons and facilitates our engagement with the course content. Everything we learned was able to be directly applied to experience in the field, and she actively encouraged student feedback and constructive criticism."