

Tulane grad inspired to continue work supporting underserved small business owners

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Tarlton Walker, who will graduate with a bachelor's degree in finance from the A. B. Freeman School of Business, wants to work in the private equity investment space with a focus on supporting Black and Brown business owners in underserved areas. (Photo by Kacie Fayard)

In four years, Tarlton Walker has made the most of his time at Tulane as a member and leader of numerous student organizations, including the Black Student Union and the Alliance of Black Business Students.

He was also a resident adviser (RA) for the last two years, overseeing 60 undergraduate residents. It was an experience that became a big part of his life at Tulane, he said.

“As you go around campus, people know you in that position. You don’t really take off the RA hat,” he said. “You give it a lot of your time and effort. There have been countless times you don’t know who you are impacting through this work.”

Walker, in part, was inspired to be an RA by his dad, who was an RA at UC Berkley. He counts it as one of his many important experiences at Tulane. Joining Alpha Phi Alpha this spring semester is another.

“I know that it is always going to be a part of my life,” he said.

This month, Walker will graduate with a bachelor’s degree in finance from the A. B. Freeman School of Business. The plan for now is to work for the next three to five years and then return to school to get a master’s degree. Though his plans aren’t set in stone, Walker wants to work in the private equity investment space with a focus on supporting Black and Brown business owners in underserved areas. He noted how in lower-income communities, often basic amenities like grocery stores can be hard to come by.

“This is work I want to get involved in,” he said.

Originally from Los Angeles, Walker was selected as a POSSE Scholar to attend Tulane. Students who exemplify potential for leadership and academic excellence are recruited by the POSSE Foundation to attend four-year colleges and universities. Tulane is a partner of the foundation and welcomes a new group of students or “posse” each academic year from New Orleans and Los Angeles. He said the organization has been very important to him as he found support through his cohort and mentors.

“The POSSE community became a lifeline to my community. All of the members within POSSE collectively take care of each other and are all extremely active and connected to each other,” he said.

He also said that his experience working at the Lavin-Bernick Center for University Life was another form of support, finding a community among his coworkers.

Walker comes from a family where education was highly valued. His grandmother was a preschool teacher and he has several aunts who also worked in schools. The plan was always to go to college and graduate in four years, he said.

“I am the fourth generation to go through college. Being in school and getting my degree is an ode to my family,” he said.