

Design grad loves supporting local businesses and community

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Megan Lauland always knew she was a creative person. So, when it came time to choose a college, Tulane University and a major in design felt like the perfect fit. (Photo by Kenny Lass)

Megan Lauland always knew she was a creative person. So, when it came time to choose a college, Tulane University and a major in design felt like the perfect fit.

Lauland grew up in Metairie, and she was familiar with Tulane. She knew that it was a close community where she would be able to connect with professors and students. But Tulane's design program in the School of Architecture and Built Environment exceeded her expectations.

"The studio environment, the close attention and being able to talk about [her] work," are some of the top attributes of the program, according to Lauland.

A highlight of her Tulane experience was landing an internship in which she ended up working with one of the city's most popular Carnival krewes. It all began with an assignment in a graphic design class in which students got to pick a topic for which they could advocate.

"I wanted to focus on supporting New Orleans' local businesses," Lauland said.

She developed a brand guide and campaign for a theoretical local mobile application that would function like Yelp, except searches would only yield results showcasing local businesses.

When Lauland presented the campaign in class, her professor put her in touch with the Urban Conservancy of New Orleans, a non-profit organization, which shared a similar vision of strengthening local businesses. To support its Stay Local Program, the Urban Conservancy created an internship position for Lauland where she used her graphic design skills to highlight some of the less apparent sustainability goals of local organizations and businesses. One of the successful stories she highlighted was the Krewe of Freret's decision to eliminate plastic beads this year in favor of sustainable throws.

"These are the connections I want. I want to get to know people. I love being able to get to know the types of people that make up this city," she said.

Lauland said that she is also interested in furniture and interior design and, in addition, worked as a teaching assistant for Tulane's Fundamentals of Design class. She eventually worked in the Digital Fabrication Lab at the Tulane School of Architecture and Built Environment, monitoring the 3D printer, plotter and laser cutter machines.

“I am there to facilitate student and faculty projects, but I love seeing what work everyone is doing,” she said. “I like to help and teach people. I see myself returning to the education world eventually.”

While she is not ready to leave New Orleans, she got a taste of life abroad last fall when she went to study at the National University of Singapore.

“I think I grew from going outside of the country. I really want to go back. I felt like I really jumped into the deep end, but of course I will always consider New Orleans/Metairie my home,” she said.

Lauland is currently applying to jobs locally but is also looking forward to a couple of months of rest following graduation.