

## **Tulane alum uses energy innovation to drive local economic development**

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School of Liberal Arts alumnus Cameron Poole is leading New Orleans in energy and economic development, and his time at Tulane prepared him for that path. (Photo by Tyler Kaufman)

When Cameron Poole came to Tulane from New Jersey with an undecided major, he never suspected, a decade later, he would be a local leader in the energy space.

“I think Cam senior year of Tulane, even, didn’t expect this journey to land here,” said Poole.

Poole, who graduated in 2020 with a degree in political economy and international development, recently moved from energy and innovation manager at GNO, Inc. to a

new role as director of strategy at Newlab New Orleans, a venture platform that helps startups developing critical technologies in a given region — including those required for the future of energy.

“What’s super exciting about something like Newlab is that it’s really helping build bottom-up growth in the New Orleans area,” Poole said. Newlab New Orleans will be built at the former Naval Support Activity site in the Bywater neighborhood. It will provide a physical space and funding for local startups, giving them the opportunity to work with global leaders and companies in the energy industry.

“I’m focusing on energy innovation and looking at how we do that in a manner that drives economic growth and development in this region,” he said.

In his role, Poole recognizes the importance of Tulane’s upcoming [Future of Energy Forum](#), Sept. 10-12. “At Newlab, our mission is to enable technologies that have the potential to transform industries. The Tulane Future of Energy Forum is an invaluable venue to advance conversations that will ultimately shape the energy future of Louisiana and across the globe,” he said.

As an undergraduate, Poole interned at the New Orleans BioInnovation Center. He said he was surprised to find how well his studies at Tulane, which focused mainly on politics, were relevant to his role. “Political economy is a way of viewing decision-making globally, and you can apply that to private-sector agents as well as the public,” he said.

After graduation, he landed at GNO, Inc. “I knew nothing about energy, but I knew I wanted to do economic development,” he said. “I was ready to throw myself into research to try to perform on this job.”

In that same spirit of exploration, Poole wants to encourage students to attend the Future of Energy Forum to learn from the panels and to network. “Students should 100% be dropping in,” he said.

By helping to bring economic growth through energy and other forms of innovation to New Orleans, Poole feels like he is giving back to the city that has become his home over the past decade.

“I’m a guy from New Jersey who moved to New Orleans for school,” he said, “but along the way, working here, getting through a pandemic here, it became home. A home that I wanted to contribute and help build and see opportunity in.”