

Tulane celebrates nursing program graduates at pinning ceremony

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Graduates of Tulane's nursing program celebrated their accomplishments at a special pinning ceremony.

Tulane University celebrated the first cohort to complete its new accelerated nursing program at a recent Nursing Pinning Ceremony held on Tulane's downtown campus.

Dean of Nursing Brenda Douglas called the event, held at Diboll Auditorium and Gallery in the Tidewater Building, both the realization of a long-term vision and the start of a new legacy for Tulane Nursing. The accelerated nursing program, offering a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 16 months, launched in fall 2024.

Douglas said the first cohort will be remembered as pioneers who helped set the standard and shaped the program's culture.

"The pin you will receive today is a symbol of trust, responsibility and the profound impact that you will have on the lives of patients, families and communities," Douglas told the group.

Amelia Manning, dean of the School of Professional Advancement (SoPA), added that the moment was significant for Tulane and the region's health care community and lauded the group for its dedication. SoPA runs the nursing program in collaboration with the School of Medicine.

"If you take a step back and you think about where you started, just over a year ago, and where you are today, and the level of preparation, the level of work, the intensity of the experiences that you had, it's just incredible, what you have accomplished," she said. "You're ready to take on what will come in front of you, and you will do so with the same grace and grit and tenacity that has gotten you to this point."

The day was "tremendously exciting," for both Tulane and the community's health care, said Lee Hamm, dean of the School of Medicine.

"The people that really should be excited are the people in the lives that you're going to touch," Lee Hamm told the graduates. "You'll have a profound impact on them."

Keynote speaker Ruby Brewer, a member of the Tulane University Nursing Community Council and senior vice president and chief nursing officer at East Jefferson General Hospital, urged graduates to lead with integrity, service and compassion, calling the pinning ceremony a commitment to the profession and the community. Last year marked the one-year anniversary of a partnership between LCMC Health, which includes East Jefferson General Hospital, and Tulane University to expand access to comprehensive and specialty care across Southeast Louisiana, enhance the region's capabilities as a destination for medical innovation and training and provide vast community investments and benefits.

"Embrace every challenge and opportunity to grow," Brewer told the class. "Every patient as a chance to learn, and every day a step closer to the nurse you aspire to be."

Student speakers Emma Littell and Emma Roberts reflected on the cohort's experience in the program and the bonds formed along the way.

"It's been really special," Roberts said, who also received the Emma I. LeDoux Community Service Award.

Graduate Callie Elizabeth Pescay was awarded the Clinical Excellence Award and the Academic Excellence Award for the highest GPA.

Graduates are prepared to take the National Council Licensure Examination and begin careers as registered nurses.

"It feels kind of surreal. I feel like I've been waiting for this moment for, like, years of my life," said graduate Devan Denton. "And I think it hasn't quite set in yet."