

First-year Students Learn Through Entertainment

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Blossoming into an annual freshman favorite, the “Last Student Standing” competition, held Monday, Aug. 25, in McAlister Auditorium, garnered a total of \$500 in bookstore gift certificates as top prize.



Kendall Plain of Baton Rouge, La., wins over the crowd of first-year students during Monday's competition with his music-filled presentation in the “favorite course” category. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Mary Ann Maguire, associate dean of [Newcomb-Tulane College](#) and host of the event, said that she came up with the idea as a way to introduce incoming first-year students to the breadth of academic experiences available at Tulane. The “Last Student Standing” competition also serves as a means of introducing university rules and expectations to incoming students in a memorable fashion, she said.

“This gives new students a chance to learn about academic options that they may not have considered before,” said Maguire. “They can hear directly from students who have participated in these courses and programs. It's more than just talking heads.”

Contestants for “Last Student Standing” were narrowed during the spring semester through an application process, including an essay. One finalist was selected from each of the competition's four categories: study abroad, public service, internship and favorite course.

The four finalists each received a \$250 gift certificate for the Tulane University [Bookstore](#) with a second \$250 gift certificate at stake for the best presentation during the competition held during Welcome Week. With the first-year student body as the judge, contestants took to the stage with only one rule ? no PowerPoint presentations.

From music to poetry, each finalist tried to capture the most votes from the audience with a five-minute performance.

“I managed to work, in an environment that I adore, researching my thesis while providing health care for the poor,” said Amy Finch during a poem about her [study abroad](#) experience in Salvador, Brazil.

Other finalists were Joseph Rohr, a double major in biochemical engineering and French who spoke ? partially in French ? on his [public service](#) experience working at Ecole Bilingue, a New Orleans French immersion elementary school, and Anne Herold, a public health and political science junior who interned with the Voodoo Music Festival in New Orleans.

The grand prize was awarded to Kendall Plain, a business finance major and music minor whose presentation came complete with two musical selections on his saxophone, Mardi Grasâ?style favors that he tossed into the audience and an enthusiastic rousing for his favorite course in the [Newcomb Department of Music](#) ? an applied music course in jazz band.

“The class is basically a jam session,” Plain told the cheering crowd. “We get to take knowledge and critiques straight from the musicians we love.”

Newcomb-Tulane College is the academic home for all full-time Tulane undergraduate students.