

Medical Degree in Six Years Plus One

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kbrannon@tulane.edu

The Tulane School of Medicine has created an innovative new program that enables top students to get their medical degrees faster and cheaper while giving back to underserved communities in New Orleans.



These undergraduates — first-year students (from left) Adil Yousuf of Kenner, La., Andrienne Roth of Austin, Texas, and Brian Templet of Seattle — are in the first class accepted into the Tulane Accelerated Physician Training Program. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

The Tulane [Accelerated Physician Training Program](#) allows undergraduates to complete their medical and undergraduate degrees within six years, with an additional year of public service. The accelerated degree track is modeled after successful six-year physician training programs in Europe.

While more than 30 U.S. universities offer six- or seven-year programs, the Tulane program is the first to have a mandatory year of public service built into the curriculum, says Dr. Marc Kahn, senior associate dean for admissions and student affairs for the medical school.

The program, offered jointly through the School of Medicine and the School of Science and Engineering, includes two years of undergraduate study followed by a year of public service through AmeriCorps/VISTA and the Tulane Center for Public Service. The public service year provides students with life experience outside the classroom before beginning four years of medical school, Kahn says.

The program is attracting students committed to service while offering a chance to reduce the substantial cost of becoming a doctor. The average cost for a medical degree in the U.S. is greater than \$180,000, Kahn says.

Adil Yousuf, whose childhood home in Chalmette, La., flooded after the 2005 levee breaches, is excited to spend a year helping his hometown. "It's great to be able to give back to the community," he says. "That one year means a lot to me."

The program also means students won't have to worry about getting into medical school as long as they maintain a 3.5 GPA. "That's a huge relief," Yousuf says. "And we get to be doctors sooner."

Plans call for accepting as many as 10 students per year.