

## Students Honored for Public Service

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The recipients of the 2010 Jim Runsdorf Excellence in Public Service Student Award have something in common ? both have spent the past four years working to improve public schools in New Orleans. Since 2008, the award has recognized Tulane seniors with outstanding commitment to civic engagement. This year's winners are Theodore Nathan of Montclair, N.J., and Frances Nguyen of Los Gatos, Calif.



Theodore Nathan, left, and Frances Nguyen are this year's recipients of the Runsdorf Award, established by Lee and Lucette Runsdorf in memory of their son, a Tulane alumnus. (Photo by Tricia Travis)

For Nathan, who graduates on Saturday (May 15) with a triple major in social policy and practice, international development and political science, living in New Orleans and working with organizations like TeachNOLA and FACE AIDS have helped him develop a sense of social responsibility that he says will continue long after graduation.

Nathan has been selected as a fellow in the New Orleans Mayoral Fellowship Program, a 10-month appointment. "I'm so excited that I have the chance to stay in New Orleans because I just don't feel that four years was enough to make the impact that I would like," he says.

Although Nguyen has not settled on her postgraduate plans, her latest leadership initiative has put medical school on her radar. This spring, Nguyen worked on a comprehensive sex-education program at William J. Fischer Charter School. The program educates seventh- and eighth-grade students on such topics as biology, contraceptive use, sexually transmitted infections and healthy relationships.

"In the interview they asked me what it would mean if I were to win the award," says Nguyen, who majored in sociology and minored in public health. "I didn't say this, but I thought to myself ? everything."

Nguyen and Nathan are examples of how Tulane students have embraced civic engagement since the public-service graduation [requirement](#) was implemented after Hurricane Katrina, says James Huck Jr., selection committee member for the [Runsdorf Award](#).

"Each year there are always more and more standout students," says Huck.