

His College Choice Is "Rapped" Up

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fsimon@tulane.edu

When Benton Oliver of Atlanta saw the three-inch square on the Tulane Dean's Honor Scholarship application, the self-professed "white male with good grades" (a 4.035 GPA) knew he wanted to do a scholarship project that would stand out. He wrote and recorded a rap called "I love Tulane." And he won a full-tuition scholarship to Tulane.



At his home in suburban Atlanta, incoming student Benton Oliver hones his songwriting and singing skills. (Photo by Jennifer Oliver)

Oliver's acceptance letter says that only 75 out of more than 1,000 applicants received Dean's Honor Scholarships.

For the "scholarship project" of the Dean's Honor Scholarship [application](#), the student has a simple sheet of paper with a three-inch square box drawn on it, with instructions to "do with this whatever you choose" to give further evidence of depth of thought, imagination and expression of creativity.

Oliver says that Tulane is the only university to which he applied that has a creativity-based scholarship for tuition.

A second [Dean's Honor Scholarship](#) winner in Vermont also performed a rap for his project, titled "American Revolution."

"We never have gotten raps before ? it's so funny we got two in one year and they both won," says Jeff Schiffman, senior associate director of [admission](#). "Students express their artistic creative talents, their passion for music, their strength in mathematics and sciences or anything else they choose in this project. The Dean's Honor Scholarship application and project are totally optional."

Tulane President Scott Cowen says, "After receiving more applications than any private university in the nation last year, we decided to require this year's [applicants](#) to answer more questions and write an essay on why they wanted to attend Tulane."

Nearly 38,000 potential students applied to be part of the 2011-12 class.

Oliver said he is "very excited" to be coming to Tulane.

"Tulane just felt right," Oliver says, "and then there's New Orleans ? the people and the food, Audubon Park, the zoo, the Mississippi River and the streetcar ?! what more could you want?"