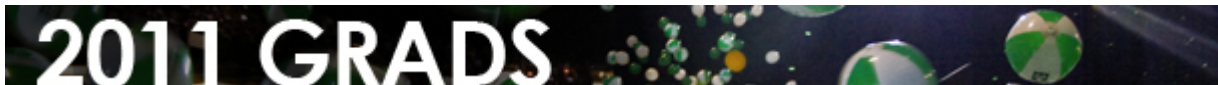


High Marks for Public Service

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Through a public service internship this spring, graduating Tulane senior Andrea Gallagher has gained valuable experience in her public health major, while contributing to research that may improve the health of premature babies.



Graduating senior Andrea Gallagher, left, is working on a research project involving care of premature infants in the neonatal intensive care unit at Ochsner with nurse Shelley Thibeau. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Gallagher collected data in the neonatal intensive care unit at Ochsner Medical Center in New Orleans. The research project, led by nurse Shelley Thibeau, focuses on investigating the use of breast milk to swab the mouths of premature infants on mechanical ventilators as a method of oral hygiene versus traditional methods that use saline.

“I was a little unsure if I would like working in a hospital setting, but this has confirmed my desire to pursue a master of health administration degree,” says

Gallagher, who will enter the Tulane [MHA program](#) in the fall.

Law Loving, a junior majoring in public health and economics, also had a public service internship with Ochsner this semester. His project involved assessing the effectiveness of a new “clinical transformation” model on medical-surgical units at three hospitals. The assessment involves surveying healthcare workers and doing direct observations to understand how the new system, which involves improving patient outcomes, will work.

“Karen Rice, program director of the center for nursing research at Ochsner, is supervising the students and reports that they are doing excellent work,” says Vincent Ilustre, executive director of the Tulane [Center for Public Service](#). “She is so impressed by their ability to assist with research-related activities and by the quality of the executive summaries they are writing.”

More students than ever are participating in the public service internship program, which is an option for completing the second tier of the Tulane [graduation requirement](#).

“This semester we have 119 students in internship positions and for this summer we've received more than 120 applications,” says Monique Labat, public service internship program manager. Many of the summer internships are done in the home cities of the students.