

Alumna takes on Capitol Hill

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Tulane alumna Meredith Beers is gaining practical policymaking experience and graduate credit as she works in Washington, D.C., as a Congressional Fellow on Women and Public Policy at the Women's Research and Education Institute.



At the White House, Meredith Beers attends the official arrival ceremony honoring Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom. (Photo by Karla Dhungana)

Beers, a 2007 Newcomb College graduate, is working in the office of Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) on projects revolving around chemical plant security. During her career, Beers says she has garnered real-world experience in a variety of internships that range from preparing the emergency response guide for all hazards ? including animal escapes ? at the Smithsonian's National Zoo to fitting respirators on first responders to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

In addition to her professional accomplishments, Beers has a lasting commitment to higher education. As an undergraduate, she was an active participant in Newcomb

programs and now serves on multiple alumni boards. She also earned a master of public health degree from Tulane, with a specialty in environmental health sciences and disaster management, and is pursuing her doctorate.

The annual WREI fellowships go to a select number of graduate students with a proven commitment to equity for women. Thanks to support from the Collins C. Diboll Foundation, the [Newcomb College Institute](#) at Tulane was able to fund Beers' participation in 2012.

As a former WREI Fellow, Sally J. Kenney, executive director of the Newcomb College Institute, knows the value of the program for emerging leaders in public policy.

“Working for chairman Hawkins of the House Education and Labor Committee from 1986-1987 on civil rights oversight was one of the most exciting and transformative experiences of my life,” Kenney says. “We know applied learning experiences such as these open doors and change lives, which is why the Newcomb College Institute and Tulane University are so committed to them.”

The institute will sponsor another [WREI fellow](#) in spring 2013. Tulane affiliates may submit their applications directly to [Sarah McAllister](#) of the Newcomb College Institute.

Aidan Smith is external affairs officer for the Newcomb College Institute.