

Student activist honored by Campus Compact

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At its core, community service isn't simply the efforts of an outside individual, distinct from the larger collective, but rather energy devoted to the sustenance and betterment of a community of which you consider yourself wholeheartedly a part. Tulane junior Derek Rankins has received a national honor for embracing this vision, orienting himself toward the construction of a more just society.



Junior Derek Rankins is among 162 students nationwide to be named a Newman Civic Fellow by Campus Compact. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

For his work in organizing the New Orleans-based People's Institute for Survival and Beyond and the Tulane-based Students Organizing Against Racism, Rankins has been named a 2012 Newman Civic Fellow by [Campus Compact](#). He is among 162 inspiring student leaders nationwide nominated for the honor by college and university presidents.

A New Orleans native, Rankins works with the People's Institute to train fellow students to combat racism while respecting the community they are working within. Rankins said he feels Tulane's commitment to civic engagement and its success in finding community partners are laudable, but added that he'd like to see students

receive more training before they start their service assignments.

On campus, Rankins coordinates events through Students Organizing Against Racism, a group he says isn't afraid to take on difficult issues. "The conversation about race is an uncomfortable one for many," says Rankin. "Some people interpret discomfoting things as hostile towards them, and that is not the case. SOAR is about a community where all people have equity."

Rankins plans to pursue a doctorate in sociology and African Diaspora Studies with a focus on education, and hopes to found a K-12 charter school based on anti-racist principles.

Campus Compact is a national coalition of almost 1,200 college and university presidents who are committed to fulfilling the civic purposes of higher education.

Cody Wild is a sophomore studying English and political economy.