

Student has a passion for medical research

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Tulane University medical student Michael Halstead's passion for research is taking him to Bethesda, Md., as part of the elite inaugural class of 45 students chosen for the National Institutes of Health Medical Research Scholars Program.



Medical student Michael Halstead is embarking on a yearlong research program at the National Institutes of Health campus. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

What set Halstead apart from the hundreds of medical, dental and veterinary students vying for placement in the yearlong program is the commitment to research he demonstrated throughout his time as a Tulane undergraduate and medical student.

"I've always enjoyed the fact that with science the questions are never fully answered. It is a constant quest to find the solution," says Halstead, a fourth-year medical student from Indialantic, Fla.

At the National Institutes of Health campus, Halstead will be partnered with a physician-scientist mentor who will help guide his research project. His research interests focus on neurology, specifically on strokes and traumatic brain injury.

Halstead says that what makes neurological trauma so interesting is the effect it can have on a person's ability to interact with his or her environment.

“Stroke is a leading cause of disability in our country. Vascular injuries not only have the potential to limit a patient's ability to function independently but also can impede their ability to communicate with those around them. This leads to not only a large physical disability but adds to the emotional burden of neurologic injury.”

His research will focus on the development of novel interventions for the acute phase of neurologic injury, in addition to interventions that will assist patients during recovery. He hopes to help individuals regain function and productivity following trauma.

Halstead expressed excitement for the research project. “I know that I want to be involved in research throughout my career. This is an amazing opportunity to learn from professionals who do this day-in and day-out at one of the leading medical research institutions in the world.”