

Third-time grad to speak at commencement ceremony

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Jonathan Santoro will receive his third degree, a doctorate of medicine, from Tulane University this month. To celebrate, he'll be sharing what he's learned in the past nine years when he steps to the podium as the student speaker at the [Unified Commencement Ceremony](#) on May 18 in the Mercedes-Benz Superdome.



Jonathan Santoro, 2013 Unified Commencement student speaker, says he plans to tell graduates to keep their focus on service. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Having attended the 2007 Unified Commencement ceremony to receive his bachelor's degree in neuroscience and in 2008 for his master's degree in the program, Santoro is familiar with previous student speeches, but he says that this year will have a bit of added pressure.

"I'm kind of in a pinch talking before the [Dalai Lama](#)! It's tough having one of the most influential people in the world speaking right after you," says Santoro.

He plans to speak about some of the lessons he has learned through his service work with Tulane. While at the School of Medicine, Santoro regularly volunteered with the student-led [health clinics](#) for the underserved. He also helped organize and raise money for the [St. Baldrick's Foundation](#).

He says the university's focus on service has helped to shape him into a more well-rounded person and has added to his abilities and skills as a physician. His experience in New Orleans, both pre- and post-Katrina, has been instrumental in creating the person he is today.

“I want to share with graduates that they should take what they did at Tulane and in New Orleans ? that spirit of rebuilding ? and bring it to the next stage of their life. Keep that focus on service. Tulane has given us a great toolkit for establishing ourselves and influencing the communities we live in, regardless of our profession,” says Santoro.

He plans to serve as a pediatric neurology resident at Stanford University where he aspires to specialize in neuro-oncology. He hopes to someday bring what he's learned back to New Orleans.