

Student's Work in Brain Awareness Leads to Service Award

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The human brain always has fascinated graduate Melissa Herman. In her first year of college, she joined the [Tulane University Neuroscience Association \(TUNA\)](#), a special-interest group. When she was a sophomore, Herman found a way to share enthusiasm about neuroscience with high school students by launching an after-school neuroscience teaching program at the New Orleans Charter Science and Mathematics High School, rotating a half-dozen Tulane students as tutors.



Melissa Herman was able to present her research on strokes at the International Stroke Conference in Hawaii with grant support from Newcomb-Tulane College, Newcomb College Institute, and the Center for Public Service. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Herman says the support of the [Tulane Neuroscience Program](#) and the [Changemaker Institute](#), offered by the [Tulane Center for Engaged Learning and Teaching](#), helped the program succeed.

“I'm concerned about the sustainability and scalability of the program,” says Herman, who was TUNA president during her senior year. She has identified TUNA leaders to carry on after she graduates on Saturday (May 18). This spring, TUNA received Organization of the Year at the Student Crest Awards held by the Tulane Office of Student Programs and the Office of Student Affairs.

Herman served a [public service internship](#) with New Orleans Emergency Medical Service. She also works on a research team with [Dr. Sheryl Martin-Schild](#), director of the Stroke Program at Tulane University Hospital and Clinic, studying disparity of health care across New Orleans. The combined experiences led to development of a “stroke hot spots” map of the city, showing areas of high risk for strokes, which can be used for health education and further research.

Herman will pursue a 13-month internship as program assistant for the Danish Institute for Study Abroad in Copenhagen, facilitating the science and health programs. When she returns, Herman wants to pursue a master of public health degree.

Herman is one of two graduates receiving the [Jim Runsdorf Excellence in Public Service Award](#) this year in recognition of their significant contributions to the New Orleans community.