

"Krewe" takes fresh look at New Orleans

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mtravis@tulane.edu



Tulane University student Sarah Rappaport, center, checks in with Sci High students Terrell Davis, left, and Kyla Dabney. Rappaport mentored the younger students as part of a service-learning creative writing course. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

A saxophone player under a French Quarter lamppost is a common image of New Orleans. But it's a view of the city that Michael Luke asks his students to move beyond.

Luke, a professor of practice in the Tulane University [English Department](#), teaches a creative writing course with a [service-learning](#) component.

His students read nonfiction books with a literary flair such as *Nine Lives* by Dan Baum, *The Earl of Louisiana* by A.J. Liebling and others. Luke has them read these books “to challenge their notions of New Orleans,” he said.

He also insists that they approach their writing assignments in a journalistic way, requiring that the students go off-campus into the city to interview people whose stories may be underreported or overlooked.

“An important element of how service learning works is getting out into the community,” said Luke.

Luke's college students partner with high school students from the New Orleans Science and Math High School ([Sci High](#)) to write stories, take photographs and create graphic images. The tangible result is *Krewe*, a 70-page booklet printed this week.

It's the second semester that Luke's class has produced such a book. He said that it is gratifying to see the reaction of students “holding the actual product.”

Story topics range from absinthe to mosquito control to Vietnamese food to the importance of the Saints football team in uplifting the spirits of firefighters ? and everyone ? in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

Tulane student Sarah Rappaport, who contributed an article about oysters as a way of life, mentored Sci High student Kyla Dabney, whose story is about [Grow Dat Youth Farm](#).

Rappaport said that she liked going out into the community to interview people ? and working with Dabney.

“I think the community approach works well,” said Rappaport. “It expanded my horizons as a writer.”

To obtain a copy of *Krewe*, email [Luke](#). The Tulane’s “Sci High Student Journalism Project is supported, pedagogically and financially, by the [New Orleans Center for the Gulf South](#).

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