

Undergrad neuroscience program makes national list

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Neuroscience students work with Beth Wee, far right, director of undergraduate and master's programs in neuroscience at Tulane, in the program's teaching lab. Neuroscience is one of the top majors for undergraduates, many of whom plan to go to medical school or graduate school. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

In the year 2000, the first Tulane University undergraduate received a degree in neuroscience. The program has grown to be one of the largest on campus, with 337 majors enrolled this semester and 85 graduates receiving degrees in 2015.

The numbers only tell part of the story, however. Recently the educational website study.com recognized the Tulane program as one of the best in the nation, including it among the top 12 programs nationally.

"Tulane's strong showing in neuroscience is a wonderful example of the ways we connect the undergraduate experience to our professional schools," says Tulane President Mike Fitts. "That's a powerful combination. And it's great to see Tulane win this well-deserved recognition."

What's behind the growth of [undergraduate neuroscience](#) at Tulane?

"The brain is sexy," says [Beth Wee](#), director of undergraduate and master's programs in neuroscience at Tulane. Students "like our courses, they like our faculty, they like the program," which has roots extending back 30 years, when the neuroscience PhD program began at Tulane.

Many students in the program use it as a springboard to medical school — "pre-med requirements are embedded in our major requirements," Wee says — or graduate school. Some students want careers in research or in health-related fields, while others are would-be bioinnovation entrepreneurs.

What makes the Tulane undergraduate program stand out, she says, is that students get hands-on [research experience](#) working with faculty members in laboratories within the School of Science and Engineering, the School of Medicine and the Tulane National Primate Research Center. Students also can take advantage of internships and volunteer opportunities, working in hospital settings and at [K-12 STEM](#) (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) events.

Other neuroscience programs making the study.com list are Amherst College, Columbia University, Brown University, Johns Hopkins University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Vanderbilt University, the University of California–Los Angeles, the University of Southern California, Vanderbilt University, Middlebury College and Washington University in St. Louis.

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