

Tulane students to present work at Harvard conference

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Community engagement advocates, from left, Praveena Fernes, Hannah Altman and Preston Mills, will share at national meetings their research project on cultural sensitivity training for Tulane students serving the New Orleans community. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Three Tulane University students will present their work at the [Engaged Scholarship and Social Justice Undergraduate Research Conference](#) at Harvard University on April 9. Tulane senior Preston Mills and sophomores Hannah Altman and Praveena Fernes will share the progress of their research project on cultural sensitivity training for Tulane students serving the New Orleans community.

Mills, Altman and Fernes are [community engagement advocates](#) (CEAs) who, according to Altman, “are trained to respond to issues of intersectionality and diversity specifically as it affects engagement with the community.” Intersectionality concerns intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination or discrimination.

CEAs work through the Tulane [Center for Public Service](#) and the [Office of Multicultural Affairs](#) to facilitate workshops in classrooms, student organizations and service-learning courses.

The goal of the students' research project is to create a facilitator's handbook that better engages students and faculty on issues of intersectionality, diversity and social justice in these CEA-facilitated workshops. They are collecting survey data from workshop participants to guide the development of the handbook.

"We are really excited to continue to gather data and feedback in order to create an effective tool that we can start using in the fall," Fernes says. "We're excited to meet with other students and organizations at Harvard to compare notes, and see what we can do better and what we can share."

The students were selected to feature their project alongside 15 other community engagement projects from different universities.

"The Tulane Center for Public Service and Harvard Public Service have a long history of collaboration," says Agnieszka Nance, executive director of the Tulane Center for Public Service. "The students' attendance will solidify and strengthen the ties between the two universities in the realm of community engagement and social justice."

Altman and Fernes will present their work again at the [Gulf South Summit on Service Learning and Civic Engagement through Higher Education](#) in Atlanta later that week.

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