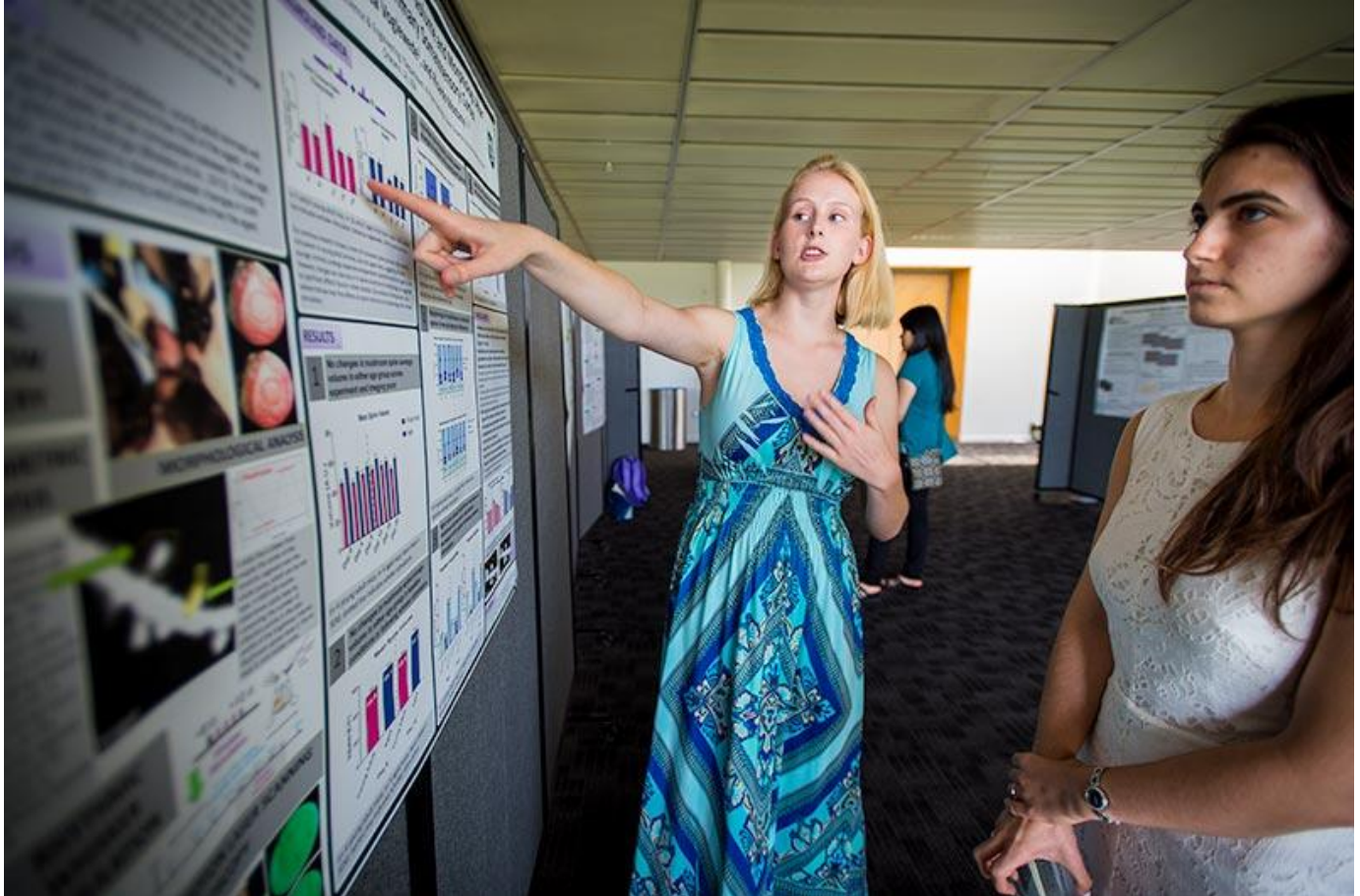


## Students flex their knowledge of neuroscience

August 10, 2016 8:45 AM Mary Cross  
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Kaeli Vandemark discusses her poster with Julia Chimienti. Participants in the Neuroscience Summer Research Program, both undergraduate students presented their research projects in the Lavin-Bernick Center on Friday (Aug. 5). The Tulane Neuroscience Program is now part of the Tulane Brain Institute. (Photo by Ryan Rivet)

Students gathered in the Qatar Ballroom on the uptown campus Friday (Aug. 5) for the culminating presentation of the nine-week [Neuroscience Summer Research Program](#).

The program grants undergraduate students the opportunity to gain lab experience and develop essential public speaking skills as they prepare for a final presentation discussing their individual neuroscience research projects with an audience of their

peers, faculty and graduate students.

Currently majoring in neuroscience and English, Tulane senior Clara Howell discussed her investigation of the cognitive ability of female zebra finches.

“The zebra finch is actually considered a model organism, because it does so well in the lab. I have a group of 16 that I’m working with,” said Howell, explaining that many scientists study the Australian songbird as a vehicle for researching learning and memory.

While honing their communication skills, Howell and other students enrolled in the program were coached in critical concepts, like ethical awareness, experimental design and data analysis.

Peter Bowling, academic services coordinator for the Neuroscience Program, said the program is a great professional development opportunity for students pursuing research careers in science.

“Students we accept into this program really are the cream of the crop,” said Bowling. “They get to know the particulars of doing research and the standard styles of poster presentations. Half hour talks are really common should students continue down the professional research track.”

The students also collaborated with high school students in the [Upward Bound](#) college preparatory program.

“Some of our students went there and gave presentations, and we also brought some Upward Bound students here to see some of the neuroscience labs,” said Beth Wee, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs in the School of Science & Engineering.

“They’re the ones who really want to do research; they’re not doing it to check off some box.”

— Beth Wee, associate dean for undergraduate programs in the School of Science & Engineering