

Exceptional SoPA grads recognized with prestigious Tulane 34 honor

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Tulane School of Professional Advancement graduates attend the Tulane 34 awards ceremony on Thursday, May 16, 2024. From left, Indigo Emanuel, Sonya Contino and Patrick Messmer. The honoree not pictured is Carol McMullen. (Photo from Tulane SoPA)

Each year, Tulane University bestows the esteemed Tulane 34 Award upon thirty-four of its most exceptional graduates. The 2024 cohort includes four remarkable individuals hailing from the [Tulane School of Professional Advancement](#) (Tulane SoPA).

These honorees stand out not only for their outstanding academic prowess but also for their remarkable leadership, commitment to service and dedication to academic excellence throughout their tenure at Tulane. The award, named for the year in which the university was founded, 1834, is a highly-anticipated tradition and a celebration of the excellence deeply ingrained within the Tulane community.

Indigo Emanuel, from Brandywine, Maryland, is graduating with a [Master of Science in Information Technology Management](#). Indigo was active in the Tulane community through her work in programs such as Girls in STEM and Boys in STEM and through her service as vice president for Tulane's Cookies and Code Club. She helped preserve local culture through archival work for the local Mardi Gras Indians by documenting important historical artifacts as well. Indigo's work reaches beyond New Orleans to the Washington, D.C. community through her collaboration with Black Data Processing Associates to mentor and inspire youth interested in coding and STEM fields. During her undergraduate junior year, Indigo joined NASA's software engineering division and she is continuing her work after graduation. Indigo is committed to applying what she's learned to make a significant impact on the world through her work.

Sonya Contino, from Fullerton, California, is graduating with a [Bachelor of Arts in Interactive Design](#) with a minor in digital media marketing and communications. Sonya won multiple ADDY awards from the national competitions put on by the American Advertising Federation for her work. Sonya shared her skills as a design coach where she helped her fellow students with software and design work. She also worked with Tulane Information Technology as a student worker while working full-time as a senior graphic and interactive designer at LG&P Agency. Despite this busy work schedule, Sonya joined the Public Relations Student Society of America and served as vice president of creative and interim president. Sonya also serves as a student member of the School of Professional Advancement's Honor Board. Following graduation, Sonya will use the skills she has acquired to propel her freelance design business to greater success. She also hopes to take on a leadership role in the agency where she currently works.

Carol McMullen, from Tegucigalpa, Honduras, is graduating with a [Bachelor of Arts in General Legal Studies](#). Carol served as the representative of the U.S. Coast Guard at Tulane while completing her studies. Despite the demands of active-duty service, Carol dedicated herself to excellence in her academic pursuits. She obtained additional certifications such as the Army Paralegal Competence certification, the

Legal Technology certification, and others to enhance her skills and capabilities. Her work resulted in her induction to Alpha Sigma Lambda honor society and Lambda Epsilon Chi National Honor Society for Legal Students. Following graduation, Carol will continue to serve in the Coast Guard. She eagerly anticipates assuming the role of a paralegal and using the skills she acquired through her academic program. She aspires to further enhance her expertise through practical experience and continued professional development opportunities within the Coast Guard.

Patrick Messmer, from New Orleans, is graduating with a [Bachelor of Arts in Homeland Security Studies](#) and a minor in human resource management. Pat succeeded in merging aspects of his full-time job as the Audubon Nature Institute's director of security and emergency services with his full-time course load. He provided the opportunity for students in the emergency management class to conduct a threat and hazard analysis at Audubon Zoo and Audubon Aquarium. The field experience allowed students to apply their classroom knowledge to a real-world setting. Pat also brought his experience as a paramedic and EMS educator to Tulane and taught a basic EMT class at the Tulane SoPA. He was selected to be part of the Dean's Student Advisory Board as well. Pat was appointed to the Association of Zoos and Aquariums Security Sub-Committee and was a part of the National Atmospheric and Oceanic Association's 2023 Dolphin Health Assessment in Grand Isle, Louisiana. Following graduation, Pat will explore opportunities to advance his career at the Audubon Nature Institute. He also plans to apply for the [Master of Public Administration](#) program at Tulane.