

# TULANE SOPA

STUDENT  
CENTERED

COLLABORATIVE

*Representation*

*Access*

diversity

WHAT

IMPACT

inclusion

*equity*

IS YOUR

*creativity*

SUPPORT

GROWTH

WHY?

Engaging

team

Opportunity

*leadership*

COMMUNITY

TULANE UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT  
ACADEMIC YEAR IN REVIEW  
JULY 2023- JUNE 2024

## MARKETING TEAM

### **Alicia Jasmin, MPA**

Director of Marketing and Communications

### **Don Cooper**

Media and Communications Specialist

### **Andrea Sagnard**

Marketing and Communications Associate

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### **Ilianna Kwaske, PhD**

Interim Dean

### **Bill Rials, PhD**

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### **Christa Payne, MBA**

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Email questions or comments  
to [sopanews@tulane.edu](mailto:sopanews@tulane.edu).



# MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

It is with great pride and excitement that I share the Tulane School of Professional Advancement (SoPA) 2023-2024 Academic Year in Review. Within these pages, you will find highlights of the remarkable accomplishments achieved this past academic year. Each endeavor, big or small, embodies our commitment to excellence, access, and innovation.



Through our academic programs, we continue to provide high quality learning experiences for our students. From hacking challenges and a federal career fair to a Supreme Court tour and a new Center for Applied Research, our students are tackling real-world challenges and demonstrating the practical application of their skills. Also in the following pages, you will see examples of the creativity and talent within our community, exemplifying the fusion of artistry and technology, and you will be introduced to diverse students with inspiring stories and accomplishments. We are so proud of our students and alumni, along with the good work that happens at Tulane SoPA that contributes to our students’ success!

The pillars of our work at Tulane SoPA are quality, support, and access. With those in mind, the faculty and staff come together to help students meet and achieve their academic goals. We celebrate our students at Commencement and other ceremonies, and we honor our faculty at Convocation. Of course, we also take time to build our team through service work and creating space for community.

About our community – you are part of it and we appreciate your commitment to Tulane SoPA. As you read through the following pages and are reminded of the good work we are doing, please let us know your thoughts. Do you have ideas for applied projects that can be brought to the classroom, job opportunities for our students, partnerships for our school with businesses looking to develop their workforce? I welcome feedback and ideas to help spread the good word about Tulane SoPA, so do not hesitate to contact me at [ikwaske@tulane.edu](mailto:ikwaske@tulane.edu).

I look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead for Tulane SoPA!

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ilianna Kwaske".

Ilianna Kwaske  
Interim Dean

# OUR YEAR IN REVIEW



In January of 2024, the School of Professional Advancement transitioned from the leadership of Dean Suri Duitch to that of Interim Dean Ilianna Kwaske. To build on the momentum and important work happening at Tulane SoPA, Dean Kwaske began a listening tour gathering input from our stakeholders to craft a shared vision for the school’s future.

As part of that process, she hosted a retreat for all Tulane SoPA faculty and staff in May where she led the group on a journey to rediscover why Tulane SoPA is a necessary part of Tulane and the New Orleans community, and to imagine the school in the future.

The cover of this booklet showcases answers from Tulane SoPA faculty and staff to the question: What is our why? Those words will now guide you through our amazing year of supporting students to success.

Keep up with news from the Tulane School of Professional Advancement by visiting [sopa.tulane.edu/news](https://sopa.tulane.edu/news) and by following [@TulaneSoPA](https://twitter.com/TulaneSoPA) on social media.

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## EMPOWERING WOMEN BEHIND BARS

 [bit.ly/sopa-prison-prgm](https://bit.ly/sopa-prison-prgm)

Since 2018, Tulane SOPA has collaborated with Operation Restoration (OR) – an organization dedicated to supporting women and girls affected by incarceration— to provide access to high-quality education for students at the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women (LCIW) through the College-in-Prison Program.

Now, students at LCIW can earn a full bachelor's degree through the OR & Tulane SoPA College-in-Prison Program. In April 2024, LCIW was designated as an accredited campus instructional site of Tulane University, which allows the students to count the Tulane SoPA courses offered at LCIW toward a Bachelor of Arts in Social Science from Tulane. <<







## COMMENCEMENT SNAPSHOTS

The 2024 Tulane SoPA diploma ceremony, held Saturday, May 18, 2024, in McAlister Auditorium was a day filled with joy, pride, and unforgettable moments. Scan the QR code to relive the excitement of the occasion and see the smiles of graduates and their families as they commemorate this pivotal achievement. ⏪

*Photo credit | MillerFoto, SoPA News Staff*



SEE THE  
PHOTO GALLERY



## INDIGO EMANUEL SHINES AS 2024 STUDENT SPEAKER

[bit.ly/sopa-indigo](https://bit.ly/sopa-indigo)

Indigo Emanuel is a Tulane 34 honoree and the 2024 student speaker. Her journey into the world of coding began at the age of 12, setting her on a thrilling career path in information technology. Emanuel's selection by the dean to be the commencement speaker shines a light on her dedication and the inspiration she brings to her peers. Emanuel joyfully represented her graduating class, embodying the spirit of determination and excellence that Tulane SoPA champions. ⏪



## STUDENTS EXPLORE FEDERAL CAREERS

The annual Federal Career Fair, organized by Tulane SoPA's Emergency & Security Studies Program and held Thursday, April 11, 2024, allowed students to meet with representatives from federal agencies including the U.S. Secret Service, FBI, Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), U.S. Marshals Service, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), and many more to discuss careers in law enforcement, intelligence, cyber/IT, and emergency management. <<







## CHARTING A NEW COURSE FOR NURSING

[bit.ly/tu-nursing](https://bit.ly/tu-nursing)

Tulane University launched a new nursing program this fall through a collaboration between the Tulane School of Medicine (SoM) and the Tulane School of Professional Advancement (SoPA). The program offers a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and will help increase the state's healthcare workforce at a time when the need for such healthcare heroes is critical. <<



## MAT DEGREE EARNS ACCREDITATION

Tulane SoPA's Education Program has been granted accreditation at the initial-licensure level by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) for its Master of Arts in Teaching. Accreditation is granted when the Accreditation Council determines that an educator preparation provider (EPP) meets all CAEP Standards. Being CAEP accredited demonstrates the excellence of Tulane SoPA's Education Program. <<



## SoPA PROGRAM EASES PATH TO CPA LICENSURE

[bit.ly/sopa-cpa](https://bit.ly/sopa-cpa)

The American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) and the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) launched an innovative post-graduate program in the spring of 2024 in collaboration with Tulane SoPA. The program, which served as a pilot for future initiatives, blends rigorous online learning with on-the-job professional experience for college accounting graduates, offering a less costly and more flexible way to complete the 150-hour course credit requirement to become a licensed CPA. <<



## OSINT GRADUATE CERTIFICATE ADDED

Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) is at the forefront of data collection, analysis and decision-making. Unthinkable 20 years ago, the internet has revolutionized the OSINT collection. Governments, businesses, and private individuals use OSINT techniques to collect a fantastic amount of publicly available information for analysis. The OSINT graduate certificate at Tulane SoPA incorporates a systems approach relevant to the diverse field connected to open-source information. Courses focus on practical applications including information collection and technique, information analysis, ethics, and information operations. <<



## STUDENTS TACKLE HACKATHON

[bit.ly/techchallenge24](https://bit.ly/techchallenge24)

Tulane SoPA Information Technology Programs, in partnership with the Idea Village and Operation Spark, hosted a free Cybersecurity - Public Utility Hack Challenge event for students of Tulane University, Delgado University, Dillard University, University of New Orleans, Southeastern Louisiana University, and Operation Spark graduates at the HQ of Operation Spark in New Orleans. Students demonstrated their skills in detecting, analyzing, and mitigating a cyber attack. <<



## BEYOND THE BENCH

On May 10, 2024, Tulane SoPA students in the General Legal Studies program stepped away from the classroom for a tour of the Louisiana Supreme Court. The court houses numerous historic documents within its Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson Supreme Court Museum including items from the historic civil rights case, Plessy v. Ferguson. <<







## AGAINST ALL ODDS

**Lorilei Bozeman**, a Master of Education (MEd) student specializing in Special Education, has maintained a perfect 4.0 GPA despite battling breast cancer with chemotherapy and a double mastectomy during her first semester. Her passion for inclusive education drives her goal to ensure students with high-incidence disabilities thrive in postsecondary settings. Bozeman's leadership extended to her roles as a chemistry teacher, secondary school director, and Key Club advisor. Although she had to give up this service last year due to her illness, she remains committed to serving her community in any way she can. As Bozeman eloquently puts it, "Life's challenges are merely opportunities for change." ⌄



## LEADING THROUGH LXD

**LeeSandra Moore**, a Math and Science Instructional Specialist for schools in the Greater New Orleans area, has made a profound impact by introducing innovative instructional methods to middle school educators. Currently pursuing a Master of Education (MEd) specializing in Learning Experience Design (LXD), her commitment to creating inclusive and engaging learning experiences is evident in her exceptional assessment projects and rapid mastery of program outcomes. Moore's passion for education and empathy for learners make her a valued asset, enriching both our MEd program and educational community. ⌄



## ETHICAL TECH FOR VOTERS

**Lashandra "Shan" Pitts** is a 2023 Tulane SoPA graduate having earned a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities. Pitts is making significant strides as the State IT Director for the Georgia Democratic National Committee, where she integrates her information technology background and humanities degree to approach technological challenges. Pitts ensures that ethical considerations and societal benefits are at the forefront of her work, reflecting her dedication to creating meaningful, positive change through technology. ⌄



## FEMINIST THEORY FOR ALL

**Celina Benoit**, a 2024 Master of Liberal Arts (MLA) graduate, has dedicated herself to making intersectional feminist theory accessible to a wider audience. Her final paper, which examined the psychological and social impacts of colorism on Black women in the United States, not only delved into the historical roots of these biases but also proposed actionable steps for transformative change through dialogue and understanding. Driven by a commitment to create inclusive and transformative community spaces, Benoit plans to launch social media channels on Instagram and YouTube that will provide Black women with content on feminist theories, advocacy and action. ⌄

Start your journey by visiting [sopa.tulane.edu/apply](https://sopa.tulane.edu/apply).



## CALL ME AUTHOR

[bit.ly/sopa-books](https://bit.ly/sopa-books)

Richard Mihans, PhD, a senior professor of practice in Tulane SoPA's Education Program, sought a different approach to teaching students about the psychology involved in developing stories that explain sophisticated topics from a perspective that a child would understand. By the end of the course, three students — and Mihans — were on the path to becoming published children's books authors. <<



## GOING FOR GOLD

[bit.ly/sopa-addy2024](https://bit.ly/sopa-addy2024)

Tulane SoPA Media + Design student, Lisa Greene, earned a Gold ADDY Award in the Sales & Marketing category during the 2024 National American Advertising Awards for her 27 Club beverage packaging design (pictured). The awards ceremony took place on May 31, 2024 and was the culmination of several students' journeys through the local and district ADDY competitions. <<

Each beverage in this collection is crafted to honor the spirit and artistry of these music legends, inviting you, their fans to toast to their timeless contributions to music and culture.

Please enjoy responsibly.

<b>ROBERT JOHNSON</b> WHISKEY, COINTREAU & PEPPER BITTERS	<b>JANIS JOPLIN</b> VODKA, ELDERFLOWER & SPARKLING WATER
<b>JIM MORRISON</b> WHISKEY, BITTERS & SPARKLING WATER	<b>JIMI HENDRIX</b> HENDRIX GIN, HIBISCUS & SPARKLING WATER
<b>KURT COBAIN</b> GIN, CAMPARI, APEROL & SPARKLING WATER	<b>AMY WINEHOUSE</b> VODKA, GINGER LIQUOR & SPARKLING WATER





## A SIP OF SUCCESS

[bit.ly/sopa-frenchtruck](https://bit.ly/sopa-frenchtruck)

Britney Giardina, a full-time French Truck Coffee barista and graphic design student in Tulane SoPA's Media + Design program, was commissioned to create the second tumbler in the company's new series of exclusive designs. Her limited-edition design sold out shortly after its release. ⏪



## SUPER BOWL SWAG

[bit.ly/sopa-superbowl](https://bit.ly/sopa-superbowl)

When Super Bowl LIX heads to New Orleans in 2025, Tulane SoPA grad Tahj Williams' artistry will shine through her contribution to the official NFL logo. Williams, who is Queen of a New Orleans Black Masking Indian tribe and a graduate of Tulane SoPA's information technology program, was commissioned to design a logo for the big game as a tribute to the city and its local culture. Williams makes history as the first artist outside of the league to create the championship game emblem. ⏪



**225**  
DEGREES  
EARNED

**134**  
CERTIFICATES  
AWARDED

# GRADS AT A GLANCE

COMMENCEMENT 2024

*\*Data includes Dec. 2023 and May 2024 graduates*

Graduates hail from 31 states with most students from Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, Florida and California.



**51% from Louisiana**

**38%**  
BIPOC

**66%**

of graduate degrees  
earned 100% online.



Most popular degrees:

BA in Health in Wellness  
BA in Homeland Security Studies  
MS in Sport Studies





## WELCOME TO SoPA METAVERSITY

The Tulane SoPA Metaverse site was launched to focus attention on virtual world learning simulation affordances. In addition, the site includes use examples and resources for students and faculty interested in learning more about virtual world simulations and educational games. <<



## AI MEETS HEALTH

The Kinesiology Club at Tulane SoPA gathered in February for a conversation about the use of artificial intelligence in the health field. Adjunct faculty member Ted Vickey, PhD, served as the club's guest lecturer for the evening. The presentation centered around the use of AI, particularly in today's wearable technology used increasingly in the health and fitness industry. <<







## A NEW LEGACY BEGINS

The Inaugural Black Alumni Weekend on February 22-24, 2024 celebrated the successes and achievements of the university's Black alumni and students while also providing an important space for fellowship and camaraderie. <<



## UMOJA AND LAVENDER CEREMONIES

Tulane SoPA values diversity and is committed to creating a culture of belonging. With support from the the Carolyn Barber Pierre Center for Intercultural Life, Tulane SoPA undergraduate and graduate students from the class of 2024 who identify as Black participated during the annual Umoja cultural achievement ceremony held on the Uptown Campus. Graduates received a commemorative lapel pin to signify that they are now a part of one of the greatest alumni networks in the country, Black Alumni Network of Tulane University (BANTU), which offers resources and opportunities to get involved at every turn.

Many of Tulane SoPA 2024 graduates attended the Lavender Graduation, which highlights the academic accomplishments of LGBTQ+ identified students, students of color, and their allies. <<



## TEAM SPIRIT

On Thursday, May 16, Interim Dean Ilianna Kwaske hosted a day-long retreat for faculty and staff. The retreat was a refreshing blend of professional development and team-building activities. The group collaborated on topics such as fostering community, aligning on shared purpose, and imagining Tulane SoPA in the future. <<



## HEROES ON WHEELS

[bit.ly/sopa-service2023](https://bit.ly/sopa-service2023)

Ahead of the National Veterans Wheelchair Games hosted in New Orleans July 24-30, 2024, Tulane SoPA faculty and staff helped the organization prepare for the big event by unpacking and cleaning the game's special flooring delivered to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs warehouse in New Orleans East. <<







## HUB FOR INNOVATION

[bit.ly/applied-research](https://bit.ly/applied-research)

The new Center for Applied Research, housed within the Tulane SoPA John Lewis Public Administration Program serves as a pipeline for bringing civic-leadership talent to the local community and bolstering community engagement throughout the New Orleans area. The center is focused on addressing our society's most pressing questions and informing emerging solutions in real-time. <<



## NEW EMT COURSE MET WITH HIGH DEMAND

[bit.ly/sopa-emt](https://bit.ly/sopa-emt)

A hybrid course at Tulane SoPA, in collaboration with Tulane Emergency Medical Services (TEMS), is giving students from all walks of life the opportunity to learn what it takes to be an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), whether pursuing emergency response as a career or learning new skills to supplement their ongoing education. The EMT course was first introduced at Tulane SoPA in early 2024 and drew so much interest that a waiting list was immediately created. The 15-week class includes online coursework, weekly in-person sessions and other hands-on training. <<



## JOHN LEWIS PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM HONORED

The Tulane SoPA John Lewis Public Administration Program was awarded the prestigious 2024 Pacesetter Award, bestowed by Tulane University's Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. The award recognizes the program's outstanding commitment to fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion within our university community. Scan the QR code for a video of Program Director, Dr. Halima Leak Francis speaking about the award. <<



SEE THE VIDEO



## CELEBRATING FACULTY EXCELLENCE

[bit.ly/sopa2024convocation](https://bit.ly/sopa2024convocation)

Tulane SoPA hosted a celebration of teaching excellence during the annual Faculty Convocation held Friday, April 12, at the 1834 Club. Honorees were introduced by the nominating student, creating an emotional moment for the faculty and attendees.

Honorees include: Top row, from left: Kristie Aylett, Leah Peterson, Kayla Jutzi, Jacqueline Epstein, and Reine Bouton. Bottom row, pictured with Bill Rials, Interim Associate Dean, second from left, and Ilianna Kwaske, Interim Dean, second from right, are Sukari Ivester, far left, Suri Duitch, center, and Tihara Sommers, far right. Not pictured: Justin Schaeffer, Ted Vicky, Richard Mihans, Tamzen Jenkins, James DeMeo, and Demetrius Rogers. <<





# THANK YOU

MORE THAN \$120,000 FROM ENDOWMENTS  
SUPPORTED SOPA STUDENTS THIS YEAR

**BRIAN AND JILL ROWE  
FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP**

For SoPA students who  
are U.S. military veterans  
or on active duty

**HARRAH'S SCHOLARSHIP**

For SoPA students in  
ethnic minority groups

**OSHER RE-ENTRY  
SCHOLARSHIPS**

For adult students  
re-entering higher  
education

**THE ELMO AND MARGARET  
ALLEN WALTZER  
SCHOLARSHIP**

For high-achieving part-  
time SoPA students

**AAUW FELLOWSHIPS  
AND GRANTS**

For women scholars pursuing  
academic work and innovative  
community projects to  
empower women and girls

**LOUIS E. BARRILLEAUX  
SCHOLARSHIPS FOR ALPHA  
SIGMA LAMBDA MEMBERS**

For members of Alpha  
Sigma Lambda, the national  
honor society for part-time  
college students

**JAMES MONAGHAN AND  
ALANA BISHOP MONAGHAN  
SCHOLARSHIP**

For SoPA students with a  
declared major or minor in  
Homeland Security Studies

**TIDEWATER/THOMAS J.  
ASSAD SCHOLARSHIP**

For meritorious part-time,  
undergraduate SoPA students  
majoring or minoring in  
Humanities or English


**PHI THETA KAPPA  
SCHOLARSHIP**

For members of Phi Theta  
Kappa national honor  
society in good standing at  
the time of graduation



**\$39,151**  
RAISED DURING  
GIVE GREEN 2024

SCAN TO GIVE.

 [giving.tulane.edu](https://giving.tulane.edu)

EVERY GIFT MAKES  
AN IMPACT.





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