The Tulane 34 Award is presented to 34 graduates who have distinguished themselves throughout their collegiate life. Students are recognized for their exemplary leadership, service and academic excellence. Named for the year the university was founded, 1834, Tulane 34 is among the most coveted university-wide honors bestowed upon students.
2024 Tulane 34 Recipients

Farah Allouch
Edith Amponsah
William Bai
Jade Flora Barnblatt
Kalsey Belle
Alyssa Renee Bockman
Tuhin Choudhary
Tahlor Cleveland
Sonya Francesca Contino
Camille Croft
Jeffrey De Mond
Indigo Emanuel
Zoe Friese
Theo Hilton
Alexandria M. Hoyt
Sion James
Yuqi “Jessie” Ji

Nina Kisanga
Tabitha Mascobetto
Carol McMullen
Akshay Mehra
Patrick Charles Messmer
Amelia Nugent
Cameron W. Ott
Annie Preaux
Maria L. Ramsey
Tina. K. Reddy
Hartley Reese
Grant James Roquemore
Akira Shelton
Shayne M. Shelton
Zoë Retrey Silverberg
Aliyah Wilcox
Devin Ariel Williams
Farah Allouch, from Tripoli, Lebanon, is graduating with a doctor of philosophy in epidemiology. She published several first-authored and co-authored academic manuscripts that were covered in *U.S. News & World Report* and other major news outlets. In addition, Farah was one of five finalists for the American Heart Association Jeremiah and Rose Stamler Research Award for excellence in research. Her campus activities included serving as the student representative for the Epidemiology Chair Search Committee and as a member of Dean LaVeist’s Student Advisory Council and the Public Health Doctoral Student Association. After graduation, Farah will pursue a postdoctoral position to continue honing her research skills and expand her research interests. Following that, she will pursue a career in research and teaching as a faculty member.
Edith Amponsah, from Accra, Ghana, is graduating with a doctor of medicine. Edith, a certified doula, started a labor support group for patients delivering at Tulane Lakeside Hospital while a student. Edith also led the Racial and Social Justice in Medical Education Committee, a group that works to implement policies to eliminate racism in medicine and create equitable medical education. She led the Student Admissions Board and planned the first Second Look Day at the Tulane University School of Medicine. Edith’s academic strengths led to her selection as a DeBakey Scholar. Under that program, she studied the relationship between adverse childhood events and pregnancy outcomes. In addition, Edith has published papers and presented at national conferences about maternal health. Following graduation, Edith will complete her residency in obstetrics and gynecology at Duke University.
William Bai, from San Jose, California, is graduating with a bachelor of science in cell and molecular biology. William founded RoboRecovery, a nonprofit organization to expand access to robotics programs in New Orleans. As that organization grew, William joined several social venture accelerators, including 4.0 Schools and Tulane’s Changemaker Institute, where he collaborated with others to promote educational equity, studied marketing and legal details of social entrepreneurship, and shared insights on social impact projects. As a premedical student, William researched vaccine immunology at the Tulane Norton Lab on the downtown campus. He conducted a three-year independent research project investigating the topic and presented his work both in and out of the lab. Following graduation, William will work as a research technician at the Duke University Department of Orthopedic Surgery while applying to medical school.
Jade Flora Barnblatt, from San Francisco, is graduating with a master of business administration in analytics and strategic management. Jade received the V. Hamvasy and J. Bagel Fellowship and served as the president of the Freeman School of Business Graduate Business Council. She is the founder and chair of the New Orleans Book Festival Student Advisory Committee which helps students across the university be involved in the nationally-known event. Jade also serves as the operations and student coordinator for the Book Festival. Jade is already active in the Tulane alumni network. She is a Gold Krewe member and served as an executive board member and vice president with Tower and Crescent while an undergraduate. She is a member of the Graduating Class Gift Committee and encourages her peers to donate to support the A. B. Freeman School of Business. After graduation, Jade will spend time with her family and travel before returning to the technology industry to pursue a career in executive and corporate marketing.
Kalsey Belle, from Souvenir, Seychelles, is graduating with a master of business administration with concentrations in energy and analytics. Her activities at Tulane include organizing a service event with The Green Project where Tulane graduate students and alumni helped recycle paint into new colors, such as “Rip Tide.” Kalsey encouraged cultural exchange and integration between American and international students through events like Culture Fest and by partnering students with local families to celebrate Thanksgiving. In addition, she helped new international students settle in to campus life in her work as an orientation leader.

Kalsey, an international Fulbright Scholar, was inducted into Beta Gamma Sigma honor society in recognition of her scholastic achievement. After graduation, Kalsey will participate in a post-academic training program on the clean energy transition landscape of the United States, then will return to the Seychelles for her Fulbright residency. Her goal is to advocate for and drive the policy change needed for the country to decarbonize its energy sector and attain energy security and sustainability.
Alyssa Renee Bockman, from Pittsburgh, is graduating with a bachelor of science in engineering in biomedical engineering and a computer science certificate. Alyssa has been involved with Society of Women Engineers throughout her time at Tulane. She served as freshman and sophomore representative as well as vice president and president, and represented the Tulane chapter at national conferences in 2021, 2022 and 2023. As part of her senior capstone service learning project, Alyssa got involved with the Toddler Mobility Trainer project. The chest strap component she redesigned is used by the organization globally, as is the material procurement tool she created to streamline ordering processes. Alyssa has also been involved in K-12 STEM outreach programs at Tulane, including GiST and BaTS, FIRST Robotics and other events. After graduation, Alyssa will join Caterpillar’s Engineering Rotational Development Program in Chicago. She also plans to continue working on accessible, low-cost healthcare designs.
Tuhin Choudhary, from Chicago, is graduating with a doctor of medicine and a master of public health in social, behavioral and population sciences. She researched the effects that post-infection consequences have had on Ebola survivors and their household contacts in Sierra Leone and took the lead on analyzing the resulting data and writing a manuscript about her findings. Tuhin is interning for the U.S. State Department’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief policy program where she has gained a better understanding of health policy and public health initiatives. In New Orleans, Tuhin has helped relaunch and restructure the Fleur de Vie NOLA East Clinic which had been on hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, she advocated for translation services for the clinic’s non-English speaking patients. Tuhin traveled to Cairo, Egypt to participate in the U.S. State Department’s Alumni TIES Women’s Leadership in STEM conference in 2023. Following graduation, Tuhin will start a combined internal medicine-pediatrics residency program at Tulane.
Tahlor Cleveland, from Los Angeles, is graduating with a master of architecture with a certificate in historic preservation. Tahlor worked to reinvigorate Tulane’s chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architecture Students. As president of NOMAS, she revived the Tulane competition team for the Barbara G. Laurie Student Design Competition and secured full funding for the team to attend the national conference in 2022 and 2023. Tahlor served as a representative on the Architecture Graduate Government where she advocated for diversity and inclusion in the student body as well as faculty and staff. After graduation, Tahlor will work with Canopy Team in Baltimore. Canopy Team is a women-led, multi-disciplinary practice specializing in civic and community spaces. In September, she will start a year-long fellowship with the Getty Conservation Institute’s Buildings and Sites Department on the African American Historic Places Project in Los Angeles.
Sonya Francesca 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.
Camille Croft, from Port St. Joe, Florida, is graduating a year early with a bachelor of science in management in finance with a legal studies in business minor. As a sociology research assistant, Camille learned about inequitable housing in New Orleans and the impacts of Hurricane Katrina as she quantified themes from video and phone interviews for inclusion in a Tulane professor’s book, to be published in 2026. Camille investigated and interviewed people who were to be tried for capital crimes as part of her work as a criminal investigative intern with Orleans Public Defenders. She also worked as a financial analyst as part of the Darwin Fenner Managed Fund course where she created financial models and company valuations to guide allocation of more than $1 million of the Tulane Endowment Fund. In addition, Camille helped students learn about Tulane through her work as a Green Wave Ambassador and Undergraduate Admissions intern. After graduation, Camille will work as an investment banker in New York City.
Jeffrey De Mond, from Red Bud, Illinois, is graduating with a doctor of medicine and a master of public health in global community health and behavioral sciences. They served as the 2024 class president throughout their medical school career and served as a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) curriculum facilitator as part of the Racial and Social Justice in Medical Education Committee. Jeff was the student representative for the Tulane School of Medicine Professionalism Taskforce and volunteered with the Acacia NOLA HIV/HCV/Syphilis Screening Program for the past four years. They were a research coordinator/sub-investigator for multiple projects, including a study comparing rates and outcomes of violent trauma between New Orleans and Auckland, New Zealand. Jeff was selected by their peers for membership in the Gold Humanism Honor Society for exemplary compassion in the care of patients and was a junior inductee into the Alpha Omega Alpha honor society. Following graduation, Jeffrey will complete a general surgery residency at Oregon Health and Science University.
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.
Zoe Friese, from Phoenix, Arizona, is graduating with bachelor of arts degrees in political economy and environmental studies and a minor in Chinese. Zoe discovered her interest in Chinese language and culture during a gap year program in mainland China before coming to Tulane. She continued her immersion in Mandarin at Tulane through the U.S. Department of State’s Critical Language Scholarship Program through which she studied in Dalian, China and Tainan, Taiwan. She also studied in Cambodia and shared her passion for language and cultural learning with others as a peer adviser in the Office of Study Abroad. For her honors thesis, Zoe researched how environmental activists in Taiwan and the U.S. collaborated to oppose a global petrochemical corporation and presented her research experiences at the 4S Honolulu Conference in November 2023. Among her many campus involvement roles, Zoe cites her work with the Tulane Undergraduate Assembly as the most rewarding. After graduation, Zoe plans to pursue a career in environmental advocacy before returning to graduate school in the near future. She is currently a finalist for the Princeton in Asia fellowship.
Theo Hilton, from Athens, Georgia, is graduating with a doctor of philosophy in anthropology. His interests in community, fairness and advocacy have informed his activities while a student at Tulane. Theo’s dissertation focused on how current protocols for determining the protected status of historic sites exclude Black and Indigenous communities. Adjacent to this work, Theo gave a talk, “Infrastructure, Feeling and the Future in Oakville’s Saint Paul Hall,” to help build connections between his colleagues, students and research participants. He was an inaugural fellow in the Mellon Community Engaged Research Program where he worked to advocate for stronger leadership roles and higher compensation for non-academic partners. Among many other activities, Theo brought community news and feedback to WTUL 91.5FM listeners as its news director. Theo has accepted a position at the science branch of the Environmental Protection Agency’s Gulf of Mexico division in Gulfport, Mississippi where he works to integrate social dimensions, environmental justice and place-based knowledges into applied research and educational programming. He plans to continue living in New Orleans with his partner and son in a big house full of friends.
Alexandria M. Hoyt, from Orlando, Florida, is graduating with a bachelor of science in psychology with minors in exercise science and health and wellness. Allie was a student organization ambassador in the Student Organization Center. In this role, she helped leaders run their groups and determined organization budgets along with the other members of the LBC Allocation Committee. Allie also worked as a student assistant in sports medicine where she helped student athletes with preventative care and first aid and served as a link between the athletic trainers and student assistants. At the Goldman Center for Student Accessibility, Allie was a community resource and representative for students with disabilities on Tulane’s campus. When she wasn’t working, Allie volunteered with local groups and served as Morale Chair and Historian for Tulane’s Phi Mu sorority, among other student organization activities. She was inducted into Omicron Delta Kappa and Psi Chi honor society. After graduation, Allie will pursue her master’s degree in counseling at Wake Forest University.
Sion James, from Sugar Hill, Georgia, is graduating with bachelor of science in management in legal studies in business. Sion is a point guard and team captain for Tulane’s basketball team. He has received many awards for his work on the team, including the 2022–2023 and 2023–2024 AAC Basketball Sportsmanship Awards, and has maintained a steady schedule of academic and community work off the court as well. He launched the Sion James Foundation to support and provide programming for underserved children and homeless adults and interned with United Through Sport where he created programs to get children in Buenos Aires, Argentina active and involved. Sion was selected as the American Athletic Conference Student Athlete Advisory Committee chair and Division I SAAC representative. He represents more than 7000 student-athletes in this role. Sion has made the Dean’s list every semester and was inducted into Chi Alpha Sigma, an honor society for student-athletes. After graduation, Sion will enter the NBA draft to begin his professional basketball career. He plans to pursue a business development role in the NBA in the future.
Yuqi “Jessie” Ji, from Beijing, is graduating with a bachelor of science in psychology, a bachelor of science in management in marketing and a minor in anthropology. Jesse studied abroad at the East China Normal University in Shanghai, Trinity College Dublin, and the National University of Singapore while a Tulane student. She shared her experiences with international education as a peer advisor for the Office of Study Abroad where she helped students find the program that best matched their aspirations. Jessie has dedicated many hours to community service programs, including the New Orleans Health Department, Start the Adventure in Reading and more. On campus, Jessie was a member of the Tulane Crew Team and exhibited her artwork as part of a show in the Carroll Gallery among other experiences. Jessie is a global ambassador for the Office of Study Abroad and looks forward to traveling after graduation to gain a more in-depth understanding of international cultures.
Nina Kisanga, from Mason, Ohio, is graduating with bachelor of arts degrees in English, anthropology, and linguistics with a minor in Africana studies. Nina was the vice president of community engagement for Green Wave Ambassadors and worked as an Admissions intern. She served as a liaison between GWA and their campus partners and ensured tour guides provided up-to-date information about the various offices and resources on campus. Nina also worked as a research intern with the history department where she spent nine months researching Black sex workers’ actions against a segregational city ordinance in New Orleans in 1917. Her work is part of the “Don’t Stand Alone” traveling museum exhibit in the Small Center for Collaborative Design in New Orleans. Nina’s research experiences also include her work as an Africana Studies undergraduate fellow with Professor Z’étoile Imma on cultural continuities between West Africa and the African diaspora through analysis of folktales. Nina was named the Africana Studies program’s Senior Honors Scholar for her work and her scholarship. Following graduation, Nina plans to take a gap year to gain professional experience after which she will seek a graduate program that focuses on community work and engaged and activist scholarship.
Tabitha Mascobetto, from South Brunswick, New Jersey, is graduating with a bachelor of arts in philosophy. She said writing and defending her undergraduate thesis was “one of the most intellectually exciting projects” she has engaged in. Tabitha’s work focused on moral development, or how people can learn to become better at doing the right thing. Her interest in ethics led her to help start the Tulane High School Ethics Bowl program for New Orleans schools. The program encourages students to think through the ethical considerations of real-world issues. Tabitha received a fellowship from the U.S. Department of Education to study abroad in Sao Paulo, Brazil, which she described as one of her favorite experiences. Tabitha’s campus involvement includes working as a resident advisor and serving as editor of the Tulane Undergraduate Research Journal. Following a post-graduation trip to Switzerland to visit one of her best friends, Tabitha plans to spend the summer celebrating her brother’s wedding and enjoying her family before starting a doctoral program in philosophy in the fall.
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.
Akshay Mehra, from New Delhi, India, is graduating with a doctor of philosophy in computer science. Akshay has worked on understanding and improving the safety and reliability of state-of-the-art machine learning models. His research led to multiple publications in some of the most prestigious machine learning and computer vision conferences, including NeurIPS. Based on his research, Akshay secured internships at top research labs such as the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and Apple Research, where he worked with top researchers to enhance the robustness of machine-learning models and make them ready for use in real-world scenarios. During his time at Tulane, he also mentored undergraduate students looking to get into machine learning research and served on the program committees of various workshops about the safety of machine learning. After graduation, Akshay will join Dolby Laboratories as a research scientist where he will work on the development of cutting-edge machine learning systems.
Patrick Charles 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 School of Professional Advancement. SOPA selected him 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.
Amelia Nugent, from Denver, Colorado, is graduating with a bachelor of arts in political science and a bachelor of science in public health, along with a minor in Spanish. Amelia helped register more than 150 students to vote as part of her role on the Tulane Civic Engagement Coalition. She served as the Elections and Transitions chair of the Tulane Undergraduate Assembly and said the experience allowed her to help engage the student body to make change on Tulane’s campus. Amelia also served on the Newcomb Tulane Curriculum Committee and on the Dining Request for Proposal Committee as a result of her work with TUA. Amelia studied abroad in Seville, Spain and said the experience changed her life. She learned about Spanish culture and history and her experiences with the Spanish healthcare system inspired her to complete her public health capstone project on achieving universal healthcare in the United States. Following graduation, Amelia will work as a health policy consultant and study for the LSAT for a year before applying to law school.
Cameron W. Ott, from West Monroe, Louisiana, is graduating with a juris doctor with a certificate in environmental law. Cameron was a Dean Rufus Harris Peer Fellow and received the Dean Rufus Harris Civil Law Award for the best student legal journal article on a civil law topic. He worked with the Tulane Law Review as a junior member and was a student attorney for the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic. In spring 2023, Cameron was elected editor-in-chief for the Tulane Law Review and worked to foster a sense of community and friendship among the members while also continuing his work with the Environmental Law Clinic. In addition, Cameron won the Burton Award, a national award given annually to about 15 students for the highest achievements in legal writing. Following graduation, Cameron will clerk for Judge Eldon Fallon at the Eastern District of Louisiana. After his clerkship, Cameron will stay in New Orleans where he has accepted an associate position at Burns Charest LLP.
Annie Preaux, from Pittsburgh, is graduating with a doctor of philosophy in global community health and behavioral sciences. Under the guidance of her mentor, Dr. Arachu Castro, Annie researched obstetric violence in public maternity hospitals in the Dominican Republic in 2019. When the pandemic delayed her plans to return to the Dominican Republic. Annie worked with Tulane faculty on a UNICEF report and peer-reviewed publication on COVID-19 and child marriage, and she supported research projects on the indirect impacts of COVID-19 on women, infants, children, and adolescents. She returned to the Dominican Republic in 2023 to complete her dissertation research on violence against women. On campus, Annie worked with the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Climate Survey Committee to support the analysis of the school’s first campus-wide EDI Climate Survey. After graduation, Annie will move to Boone, North Carolina with her husband and daughter to start her new position as a tenure-track assistant professor of public health at Appalachian State University.
Maria L. Ramsey, from Cincinnati, is graduating with a juris doctor. Maria worked as a Rule XX student attorney in the Tulane Domestic Violence Clinic. Her service in the clinic, more than 300 hours, reflects her commitment to empowering vulnerable populations and working with them to seek justice. As chief justice of the Tulane Law Moot Court Program, Maria has overseen the addition of three new appellate teams and the expansion of mock trial competitions. She oversaw the first annual Battle in the Bayou Undergraduate Moot Court Competition as well. Maria implemented a service requirement for members of the Moot Court Program and continued partnerships with the New Orleans Juvenile Teen Court and established new partnerships with FamCore and SisterHearts. Maria served as a managing editor for the Tulane Journal of Law and Sexuality and her comment, “Alito Takes All in the Race of His Life — The Race to Overrule Precedent: How Dobbs Is Not the End for LGBTQ+ Rights” will be published in volume 33. Following graduation, Maria will serve as an assistant district attorney in Brooklyn, New York.
Tina K. Reddy, from Corpus Christi, Texas, is graduating with a doctor of medicine and a master of public health. Tina has held a variety of leadership roles at Tulane, rising from secretary to vice president to president of the Medical Student Government. She collaborated on initiatives that established emergency aid funds, secured free parking and more to enhance the overall student experience and foster inclusivity and support. Tina led a National Institutes of Health-funded pilot study demonstrating the benefits of telehealth and social support in improving medication adherence and reducing blood pressure. She has also contributed to more than 10 peer-reviewed publications, including co-authoring two practice statements. As a result of her work, Tina was inducted into both the Alpha Omega Alpha and Gold Humanism honor societies. She volunteered with local programs including the Healthy Heart Community Prevention Project and served as a leader of the student-run clinic at Bridge House. After graduation, Tina will start residency training in internal medicine along with her fiancé (whom she met at Tulane) at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore.
Hartley Reese, from Houston, is graduating with a juris doctor. After serving on Tulane Law School’s Student Bar Association, Hartley was elected executive president during her 3L year. In this role, she fostered community within the law school. Specifically, she streamlined internal funding processes, assisted in creating the SBA’s first philanthropy committee and re-established pre-pandemic traditions such as staff appreciation breakfasts. Hartley assembled student groups to interview finalists for both the dean and assistant dean of students roles. Outside of SBA, Hartley was managing editor for Tulane Journal of Technology and Intellectual Property, volunteered with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Clinic, co-chaired her class’s Graduating Class Gift Committee, was a voting member of the Graduate and Professional Student Association and completed externships with LCMC Health and The Fourth Floor. After graduation, Hartley will practice in PriceWaterhouseCoopers international tax division in New York City.
Grant James Roquemore, from Altadena, California, is graduating with dual bachelor of science in management in finance and legal studies in business. One of Grant’s proudest accomplishments is becoming a diversity fellow in the Office of Admissions and working alongside his colleagues to help support multicultural and underrepresented students. In his work as a resident advisor, Grant has taken on roles as a motivator, mediator and more. Over the past two years, he witnessed notable growth among his residents, some of whom have emerged as influential student leaders with impactful voices. Being a mentor and resource for them is something Grant deeply values. As vice president of the Alliance of Black Business Students, Grant has helped transform the club through increasing membership, providing programming that helps members market themselves for internships and jobs, and creating a community for the small number of Black business students at Tulane. After graduation, Grant will join Sculptor Capital Management as a compliance analyst in New York City.
Akira Shelton, from Los Angeles, is graduating with a bachelor of arts in political science and a minor in Africana Studies. She has dedicated herself to student leadership through her work with Sexual Aggression Peer Hotline and Education, Tulane’s student-run radio station WTUL, Tulane University Performing Arts Society and more. Her interest in theatre is deep — she directed TUPAS’s spring 2024 production of Urinetown and worked at Upstage Theatre Schools where she oversaw the staging of up to five productions per season. Akira was co-chair of the Tulane Undergraduate Assembly and chair of TUA’s Governing Documents Committee as well. She is an inaugural member of the College Scholars Program and a POSSE Foundation Scholar. After graduation, Akira will start her career at United Talent Agency back home in Los Angeles. She plans to return to school in the future to earn a law degree.
Shayne M. Shelton, from New Orleans, is graduating with dual bachelor of science in biomedical engineering and computer science with a minor in mathematics. Shayne, a POSSE Scholar, interned with STEM NOLA where he worked with more than 50 elementary school students in underserved communities to encourage them to pursue science and engineering interests. On campus, Shayne served as secretary of the National Society of Black Engineers, vice president and graphic designer for Club Ace immersive dance fusion club and was cast as Mr. McQueen in Tulane University Performing Arts Society's production of Urinetown, among other activities. His projects include VerteVision, where he developed software for a pediatric orthopedic spine surgeon to help quantify scoliosis in patients and improve outcomes, and CogniSync, where he developed software to assist people with paralysis control mechanical objects using an EEG headset that reads their brain waves. Following graduation, Shayne will move to Dallas to be a software engineer for Amazon Web Services.
Zoë Retrey Silverberg, from Santa Barbara, California, is graduating with a bachelor of arts in Jewish Studies. As the co-president of the Movement to Address Antisemitism at Tulane, Zoë worked with administrators to try to implement the goals of mandatory antisemitism awareness education in the EDI curriculum, creation of a task force, and ensuring that there is proper data collection and code of conduct enforcement regarding acts of hate and discrimination. Her passion for the Jewish community extends to Zoë’s academic life as well. She took 23 courses for her degree in Jewish Studies — more than twice the required amount. Zoë is the inaugural Lindsay Wiener scholar and has used the grant from the Jewish Studies department to plan events to promote intercultural and multicultural awareness and make Tulane a more welcoming place for people of all backgrounds. Her other campus involvements include serving as the director of service and philanthropy for Pi Beta Phi. After graduation, Zoë will work as a project coordinator for the Anti-Defamation League’s Center for Antisemitism Research.
Aliyah Wilcox, from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, is graduating with dual bachelor of arts in Africana Studies and political economy along with minors in Latin American Studies and psychology. Aliyah served on the executive board of the Gender Exploration Society throughout their time at Tulane. They became treasurer at the end of their freshman year and president their sophomore year and devoted their college career to increasing equity within the LGBTQ+ community. Aliyah worked with staff of the Carolyn Barber-Pierre Center for Intercultural Life and the Office of Gender and Sexual Diversity to cultivate spaces for those at the margins by creating programming, building community, and educating toward building a better Tulane. They worked to provide hurricane disaster relief to the Pointe au Chien tribe as part of a service learning experience and that experience, along with others, showed them the many different ways one can be a leader. After graduation, Aliyah will pursue a master’s degree at the Brown School of Social Work and Social Policy at Washington University in St. Louis. They hope to study the intersections of mental health, identity, and place in both domestic and international contexts.
Devin Ariel Williams, from Hattiesburg, Mississippi, is graduating with a doctor of social work. Devin has worked as a student ambassador for the departments of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion as well as Enrollment Management. Devin also was a teaching fellow in fall 2023 and an administrative fellow in spring 2024. She feels her greatest accomplishment is that she has stayed consistent with her research interest of racial concordance and mental health of Black women. After graduation, Devin will continue to build her mental health practice, Resilient Therapy and Solutions. She intends to continue research on patient-provider racial concordance which impacts the clients she serves.
thank you