



October 2020

Mental health in 2020 has proven to be one of the biggest challenges we face, individually and as a community. We don't need to recount all the ways in which our health and resilience have been impacted and challenged; suffice it to say that the hits seem to have come from every angle.

The recent mid-semester survey conducted by the Provost's Office made this point clear. Regardless of school affiliation, students cited mental health and access to support as one of their top concerns. Many of the other issues raised were school specific, and we will be talking with your school's leadership to address these concerns appropriately. Interestingly, the remaining survey results were often contradictory, as the experience of COVID-19 has been universal only in its disruption of our normal patterns.

Pandemic aside, even under "normal" circumstances, mental health is a major concern for graduate students. In response, Tulane ensures that all students, undergraduate, graduate, and professional, part-time or full-time, in-person or remote, can book an initial visit with a therapist at [Tulane's Counseling Center](#). Students who pay the health center fee (most full-time students who are not in dissertation, some part-time and dissertating students) are eligible for up to 12 sessions per academic year with Tulane counselors. Students who do not pay that fee, or who need more than 12 sessions, can work with the Tulane Care Coordinator to find community-based resources for their mental health.

The Tulane Counseling Center also organizes multiple confidential groups which may be of interest to you. These groups work to form safe spaces for people of all backgrounds, identities, and different stages of their academic career to support each other and themselves. Groups start at different points throughout the semester, so it is not too late to sign up! The Counseling Center is also responsive to student requests and needs. Recently, students expressed interest in dissertation support groups, so The Counseling Center created these groups for students on both the Uptown and Downtown campuses. If you have suggestions for a new group, please contact [Jennifer Keyte](#) at the Counseling Center.

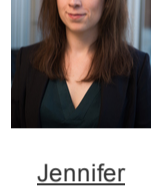
In addition to these services, OGPS is working on several initiatives to address concerns voiced by graduate students, particularly around mental health and isolation. We are working on pages that will be housed within [Module 7 of our Canvas course](#) which will be updated regularly with resources for physical and mental wellness. We will also include suggestions from your peers with ideas that they have found useful. Your voice is important; so, if you have anything you would like to contribute to that page, we are always happy to get your input! Finally, we are working with your schools and departments on ways that they can engage and support you this semester and beyond.

The transition to remote learning in the Spring, the challenges over the summer, and the beginning of this academic year have been hard. There have been many situations that we have faced without solutions that serve everyone. We appreciate the feedback that we have gotten from you, and hope that you will continue to be in communication with us. As always, we have virtual and in person office hours for you to meet with us, and email or Canvas mail is a reliable way to reach everyone in OGPS.

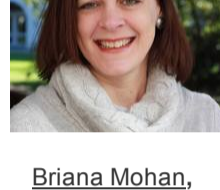
Sincerely,
OGPS



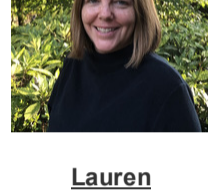
[Michael Cunningham](#),
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[Jennifer O'Brien](#),
Program
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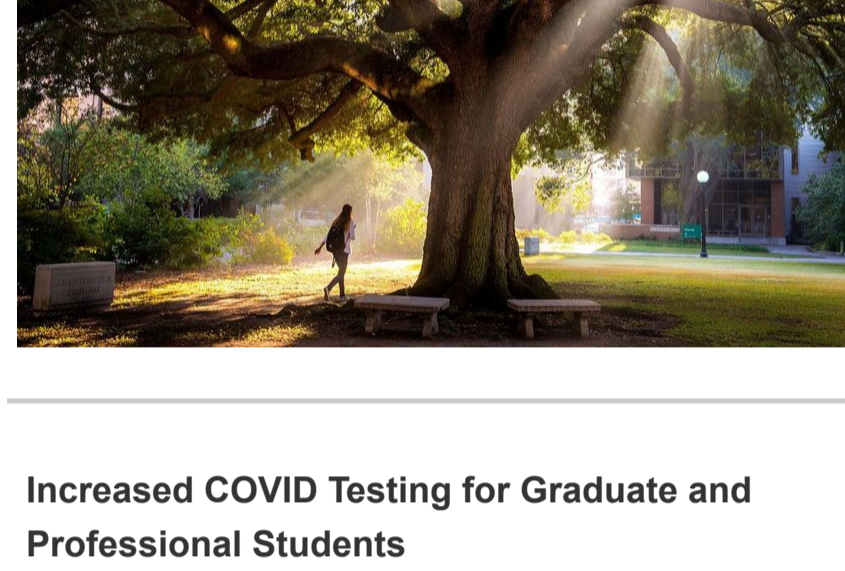


[Briana Mohan](#),
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[Lauren Lukkarila](#),
Academic
Development &
Resource
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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



Increased COVID Testing for Graduate and Professional Students

Anyone who has not registered as a remote learner is part of Tulane's COVID-19 testing and surveillance system. A rigorous, thorough program ensures that anyone who has access to campus is tested as broad inclusion is imperative to public health.

Because there has been some confusion, we would like to clarify that there are two types of Covid-19 testing happening at Tulane. The first, surveillance testing, is intended for students who are not presenting with COVID-19 symptoms. Advertisements for Tulane testing centers are only meant for surveillance testing. If you are presenting with COVID-19 symptoms, or if you think you have been in close contact with a COVID-19 positive person, you will instead qualify for the second type of testing: symptomatic testing. If you are symptomatic, please contact the Student Health Center to schedule an appointment. Finally, please remember that if you are tested in the community, you must report that test to Student Health via the [COVID-19 Reporting Form](#); if you do not submit your results, they will not be included in Tulane's COVID-19 database.

Initially, graduate students were only required to get tested once a month. However, through the Provost's survey, many of you raised the concern that graduate student teaching assistants and graduate student instructors should be tested more frequently. This will occur! In fact, you should have already received information from Campus Health announcing that the frequency of testing graduate students will increase to twice per month.

Tulane's Annual 3 Minute Thesis Competition - Wednesday, November 11 at 1:00 PM



[2019 Tulane 3MT Winners](#) - Steve Fromel, People's Choice Award; Rachel Wise, Grand Prize Award

Meet the 2020 Contestants:

- Nina Baumgartner - Neuroscience
- Vanessa Cataneda - Latin American Studies
- Daniel Delsaux - French
- Daniel Delsaux - Philosophy
- Austin Jones - Epidemiology
- Aibolat Koishybay - Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering
- Ron Koshida - Physics
- Jessica Littell - City, Culture, and Community
- Igor Kevin Mkam Tsangem - Chemical Engineering
- Patricia Snarski - Biomedical Sciences
- Lauren Swientoniewski - Biomedical Sciences

Keep an eye out for the Zoom link to join us virtually and support your fellow students!

Student and Postdoc Highlights

This month, we're highlighting [Padi Fuster](#), a PhD candidate in the Department of Mathematics. Padi's research focuses on partial differential equations to find the energy of a system. She is also passionate about breaking down stereotypes in mathematics and has worked on a number of initiatives to help make the field more inclusive. For more of Padi's work, check out our [student and postdocs highlights page](#).

If you are interested in submitting a story for this section (about yourself or a colleague), please use [this form](#).

Career Resources

- The [Carpe Careers](#) column in *Inside Higher Ed* is a weekly career advice column for PhDs and postdocs. A recent article by Joseph Aldinger and Chris Smith, ["Maximizing Professional Development in the Zoomiverse"](#) is especially timely.
- I recommend this recent podcast episode on [PapaPhD](#) with Vera Bin San Chan. She discusses ["Navigating Uncertainty as a PhD"](#), with particular focus on career uncertainty.
- The Dept. of Spanish and Portuguese is hosting a Workshop on Professional Alternatives with Ihsa Sadek, Academic Practice Collaborator. Dr. Sadek works as a copyeditor, translator, and writing coach with scholars active in Latin American Studies. Friday, Oct. 23, 4 PM. <https://tulane.zoom.us/j/6694893856>.

OISS Advocacy Toolkit

On September 25, the Department of Homeland Security proposed a new rule eliminating "Duration of Status" status for international students. The regulation would create a fixed end date for student visas of either 2 or 4 years, as opposed to the current rules which allow students to stay for the duration of their program.

The Office of Students and Scholars has put together an [advocacy toolkit](#) with more information about the proposed changes and how you can make a comment on the proposal. We highly encourage you to learn about this rule. The comment period is open through Monday, October 26.

Tulane Shuttle for Early Voting

The Diboll Green Line has added a stop to transport Tulane community members (with Tulane ID) from campus to City Hall for early voting! This shuttle has stops on both the Uptown and Downtown campuses and will include a stop at City Hall weekdays through Tuesday, October 27 for students and postdocs who would like to vote early.

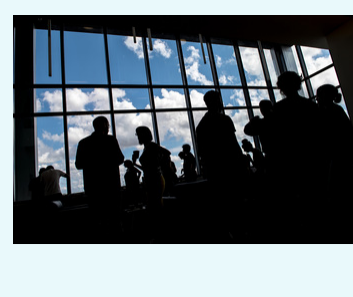
Please check out the [Green Line Shuttle Schedule](#) for more information.

OPPORTUNITIES

Webpage for Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Fellow Opportunities

OGPS is notified periodically of opportunities for Tulane graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. These can range from part time work-study jobs to assistantships, to full time employment opportunities after graduation. This month we have received information about the Tulane Changemaker Institute, which is now accepting applications. Please check our [new webpage](#) frequently as we will try to update this page when we learn of new openings.

[Learn More](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS

3 Minute Thesis Competition - Wed., Nov. 11, 1 PM

This annual competition, hosted by OGPS, cultivates students' academic, presentation, and research communication skills. One of over 900 similar competitions held in 85 different countries, Tulane's PhD students effectively explain their research in three minutes, in a language appropriate to a non-specialist audience. This year's competition will be conducted virtually via Zoom. All members of the university and general community are invited to attend, so please mark your calendars!

OGPS Career and Academic Support Events

Registration, details, and Zoom information for the following events are all available through the [OGPS, OGPS Career Support](#) or [OGPS Academic Support](#) Canvas courses.

Thurs, 10/29, 4 PM - Workshop: Teaching Statements (new)

Fri, 10/30, 2 PM - Part 1 of a two part workshop on writing personal statements/ statements of purpose

Wed, 11/4, 4 PM - How can I improve the coherence and cohesion of my paragraphs?

Fri, 11/6, 2 PM - Part 2 of a two part series on writing personal statements/ statements of purpose

Library Workshops

All Howard-Tilton Memorial Library workshops and events can be viewed on their [Events Page](#). These are a couple of workshops that may be particularly useful to graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.

Tues, 10/27, 11 AM

- Systematic Review Part 1: First of a four part series to find known literature. Please register [here](#).

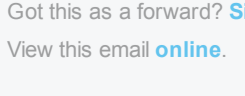
Thurs, 11/5, 10 AM

- Introduction to Cleaning Data. Standalone workshop to practice exporting, reformatting, cleaning, and organizing data. Please register [here](#).

Free the PhD Career Design Summit, Oct 25 - Nov 1

[This event](#) is dedicated to helping PhDs effectively explore diverse job opportunities, practice networking and informational interviewing with guidance, get inspiration from seasoned PhD professionals, and take practical action for their futures in actionable workshops.

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