

Interview room lands the job

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Ashley Alnwick sits at the conference table in the newly established interview room at the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine (Photo: Rebecca Gipson).

Dr. John Nonnamaker, director of Career Services, is excited – not about a new program or partnership, but about a room. The latest resource provided by Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine Career Services is a dedicated

interview room designed to help students present well in online interviews.

"So far, we have had about a dozen students use the interview room with great success," says Nonnamaker.

The space is located on the 18th floor and features a large conference table with comfortable rolling chairs. A graphic on the back wall room prominently displays the school logo and serves as a backdrop for online interviews. Nonnamaker has been beta testing the space before publicizing the resource.

"Research suggests that employers have difficulty differentiating between the quality of a candidate from the quality of their technology," he says.

"We want our students to have a resource that helps them stand out in interviews."

Ashley Alnwick used the interview room last month for a second-round interview. She was interviewing with IP&MA, an infection prevention firm, for the position of infection prevention specialist at Touro Hospital in New Orleans. She was offered the job by the end of the interview.

Alnwick is an MPH student and graduate research assistant in the Department of Social, Behavioral, and Population Sciences. Her first interview was held virtually from her home and was interrupted by some construction noise outside her building. Then Nonnamaker told her about the space and even walked her to the room.

"The space was quiet, the internet was reliable, the logo made for a great background, and there were signs on the doors that said there was an interview in progress, so I didn't have to worry about anyone walking in during the interview," said Alnwick. "Having a distraction-free environment gave me peace of mind."

Alnwick said the room was convenient to use because she works and attends classes in the Tidewater building. She has since recommended the room to several her friends who are students at the School of Public Health.

"Dean Erica Valenzuela's goal for creating the room was to provide our students with a professional setting for virtual interviews," says Nonnamaker. "Virtual interviews have become the norm during the pandemic, and we believe that this modality will

be the dominant form of interviewing moving forward due to cost savings and convenience."

Funding for the room was provided by the Office of Student Experience, which supports the overall mission of the school to cultivate an environment of student success, inclusion, support, engagement, and innovation. Students can email Dr. Nonnamaker at jnonnama@tulane.edu to reserve the space.