

Fulbright scholar looks to give back in Brazil

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While many students are basking in the off time afforded by summer break, MD/MPH student Brady Page, is traveling to far-flung locales for a year-long trip to research and help treat patients in developing nations. The native of Mountain View, California received a Fulbright-Fogarty research grant that will take him to the Brazilian state of Bahia to study leishmaniasis — a disease caused by a parasite transmitted by sandfly bites.

Before arriving in Brazil in July, Page is spending time in Papua New Guinea where he is working with the medical team and looking at barriers to the hepatitis B vaccination. Page says his public health and medical studies play important roles in the way he will view diseases and interact with patients.

“Public health gives us the opportunity to affect whole populations of people at once versus medicine which is very one-on-one,” Page says. “Both strategies serve their purposes, but it's important that they dovetail. The first public health guys were doctors.”

Page says the Fulbright allows him an opportunity often not afforded to students and he recognizes how important that will be to his career.

“As a student, any opportunity to get experience writing, executing, and analyzing a research project is pretty huge, especially without the need to juggle school or employment commitments at the same time,” Page says. “The nice thing about Fulbright is that fellows have the opportunity to work with vetted researchers that have mentored other students in the past.”

Page visited Brazil in 2008 and says he's been drawn back there ever since. He says he sees his grant as an opportunity to pay it forward to a place that has played an important role in his personal growth.

"Doing this project in Brazil might be my way of repaying a place that has been good for me over the years," Page says. "Working on this project will exercise my science muscles, but it also reminds me why I got into medicine and public health in the first place: to help people who need it most."

In addition to Page, 11 other Tulanians were awarded Fulbright grants:

- Jennie Barker, English Teaching Assistant Program — Germany
- Nathan Benjamin, Binational Internship — Mexico
- Samuel Fishman, English Teaching Assistant Program — Venezuela
- Leah Fox, English Teaching Assistant Program — Spain
- Taylor Geiger, English Teaching Assistant Program — Slovak Republic
- Abigail Goodman, English Teaching Assistant Program — Taiwan
- Louise Gretschel, English Teaching Assistant Program — Turkey
- Allison Koh, English Teaching Assistant Program — Malaysia
- Kelsey Lacourrege, Community-based grant — Austria
- Peyton Smith, English Teaching Assistant Program — Turkey
- Bria Trosclair, English Teaching Assistant Program — Bulgaria