

# Doctoral candidates find success presenting their ideas in three minutes or less

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*Hans Desale presenting at 3MT (photo courtesy of Jennifer O'Brien-Brown).*

The School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine was well represented at Tulane's Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition held last November, and [Hans Desale](#), doctoral candidate in tropical medicine, walked away with the Grand Prize.

Desale presented on "Uncovering the Major Players in Chagas Disease Damage." He will represent Tulane at the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools regional 3MT competition in Tampa, Fla., on Friday, March 3.

“The event was a lot of fun,” Desale said. “It was awesome getting to learn about the research that goes on in the other schools at Tulane.”

Three Minute Thesis celebrates the impressive research conducted by PhD students while simultaneously cultivating students’ presentation skills. The competition demands that participants effectively explain their research in three minutes, in a language appropriate to a non-specialist audience.

As the event crosses many different disciplines and programs, participants are challenged to quickly explain their research in easy-to-understand, accessible language.

Fellow SPHTM participant [Aneeka Ratnayake](#), a PhD student in epidemiology, echoed that sentiment, noting that the value of the event extended beyond the competition aspects and was highly beneficial as a learning tool.

“Given that my interest lies in how people make decisions about receiving vaccines, I think learning to convey public health information in a manner that is clear and relevant to a non-specialist audience is key to moving the field forward,” Ratnayake said. “I thought this event was the perfect forum through which to encourage future academics to practice sharing their findings to a variety of audiences, including those outside of academia.”



*Aneeka Ratnayake presenting at 3MT (photo courtesy of Jennifer O'Brien-Brown).*

Ratnayake's presentation was focused on vaccine mandates, and she wants to continue to reach out to people in a way that benefits public health at large. The 3MT allowed each participant to practice sharpening those skills.

"I liked the story telling aspect of the event," she added. "Even when reading very data-heavy scientific articles, I think we inherently search for a narrative. I liked having to explicitly create and share this narrative, as I think it gives a lot of life to the science."

[The Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies has been hosting the Tulane competition since 2015](#) and will work with Desale to help him prepare for the Southern competition. The effort will also give him good practice, since he is scheduled to defend his thesis in two months.

The first 3MT was held at The University of Queensland (Brisbane, Australia) in 2008 with 160 students competing. Since then, the popularity of the competition has increased dramatically and 3MT competitions are now held at over 900 universities in 85 countries.