

Tulane University is No. 1 on Peace Corps' annual rankings

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Tulane University is the No. 1 graduate school nationwide in producing Peace Corps volunteers, the agency announced today. Tulane also ranks No. 12 among mid-sized undergraduate schools on Peace Corps' 2016 Top Volunteer-Producing Colleges and Universities list.

Currently, 18 graduate students and 19 undergraduate alumni are making a difference around the world as Peace Corps volunteers. All 18 volunteers are students from the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine.

Since the agency was created in 1961, 525 Tulane graduates have served as Peace Corps volunteers.

"The Peace Corps is a unique opportunity for college graduates to put their education into practice and become agents of change in communities around the world," Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet said. "Today's graduates understand the importance of intercultural understanding and are raising their hands in record numbers to take on the challenge of international service."

Peace Corps volunteer [Alexandra Ernst](#) of Indianapolis has been serving in Mozambique as a health volunteer since 2014. Ernst is simultaneously earning her master's degree of public health from SPHTM through the Master's International program, which allows students to combine graduate school and Peace Corps service. The courses Ernst took at Tulane prior to departure helped prepare her for life as a volunteer, she said.

"For me, joining the Peace Corps was a manifestation of my educational experiences and philosophical worldviews," said Ernst, 26. "That is to say, it was about serving a

community where the injustice of health inequalities is not being addressed in the fullest ways possible when we have more means and abilities to do so.”

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Programmatically, the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine is well aligned with the Peace Corps,” said Dr. T.J. Stranova, associate dean for student affairs and admissions. “The skills our students learn in the classroom are well suited to the kinds of roles they encounter in country. It’s a great fit and we’re thrilled so many of our students choose this option, especially the Master’s International program.”

The School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine maintains a Peace Corps/Master’s International office within Student Affairs. The coordinators, both of whom are Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, hold events throughout the school year and also provide support to students while they are in placements overseas. They will host a virtual presentation on Monday, February 29 from 12-1:30pm on the uptown campus in the Race Room in the Lavin Bernick Center. Danielle Uding, a current Tulane Master's International student, will join us via Skype from Zambia where she is serving as a Community Health and Development Volunteer.

New Orleans-based Peace Corps recruiter Julie Crow, a returned volunteer who served in the Philippines, also advises Tulane candidates and can be reached at jcrow@peacecorps.gov. She will be at PJ's Coffee, at Willow Street and McAlister Drive, on Thursday, March 10 from 1-4 p.m. to answer questions about living and working as a Peace Corps volunteer. Visit www.peacecorps.gov/events to learn of other in-person and online opportunities to chat with a recruiter. Interested students can also drop by the Master's International Program office in Tidewater on the 24th floor to speak with Returned Peace Corps Volunteers.

This year’s rankings follow a 40-year high in applications for the Peace Corps in 2015. This record-breaking number comes after the first full year that the agency implemented historic reforms allowing applicants to choose the countries and assignments they’d like to be considered for. Graduating college students are encouraged to [browse open programs](#) and [apply](#) by April 1 for assignments departing fall 2016.