

'Tulane 34' grows by 34 graduates - including seven from Public Health

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Hala Kershah, from Alexandria, Egypt, right, accepts her Tulane 34 Award from Dusty Porter, vice president of student affairs. Kershah, who also holds a DDS degree, earned a master's degree in health administration and was recognized for her work in strengthening student-alumni relationships through a series of professional and career development sessions.

(Photo by Sally Asher)

During the annual Tulane University Unified Commencement Ceremony held in the Mercedes-Benz Superdome, a small group of graduates donned light blue stoles emblazoned with “Tulane 34.” Those 34 graduates have received one of the school’s highest student honors—the Tulane 34 Award.

Named for the year the university was founded, the award is sponsored by the Division of Student Affairs. Dusty Porter, vice president of student affairs, presented their certificates and stoles during the May 18 ceremony as Provost Robin Forman explained why each student was selected.

“The fact that we are honoring you with these coveted Tulane 34 awards is an indication that you have done exactly what we asked you to do when you arrived at Tulane University,” said Tulane President Mike Fitts during the ceremony. “You have displayed academic excellence, service, and leadership. You represent those values in every way and that’s why you’re receiving this honor today.”

In the 2017 cohort, the distinguished graduates include both undergraduate and graduate students who excelled in the classroom and out in the community. A total of seven public health students were honored with this exceptional award: Katharine “Kayla” Bruce (MPH, Epidemiology), Jessica Conrad (BSPH), Nida Farhoud (BSPH), Marguerite “Daisy” Furlong (BSPH), Hala Kershah (MHA), Mahir Khan (MPH, Health Systems Management), and Maggie Zhang (BSPH).

Demonstrating the power of the undergraduate public health program that began just over a decade ago, 34 honoree Kayla Bruce is also an alumna of the BSPH program who went on to complete her master’s as part of the combined degree program.