

'Dean Jean' scholars display passion for research

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Olivia Evans used previous volunteer experiences in the Dominican Republic as a springboard to a research project. She is a Dean Jean Danielson scholar for 2018, using the scholarship to support her travel and fieldwork in the country this summer. (Photograph provided by Olivia Evans)

Anne Caffery, a senior majoring in cell and molecular biology with a public health minor, hopes to go to medical school one day. In the meantime, her interest in research prompted a project in northern India that was made possible by the [Jean Danielson Memorial Scholarship Fund](#).

"I wanted to do some type of independent study in the medical anthropology field, because that's what I want to go into," said Caffery.

She traveled to a region in the Himalayas to assist two charitable organizations with preventative healthcare assessments and health education programs for individuals living in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and nunneries.

"Tibetan refugees have among the highest incidence rates of tuberculosis of any population," Caffery said. "Once I started doing [the health assessments], I realized how much [the practice of] medicine is ... like a web from everywhere, many more subjects than just hard science."

Olivia Evans, majoring in international development and public health with a Spanish minor, had experienced the philanthropic side of volunteer tourism firsthand in high school — and as a Tulane senior, she wanted to study it. She traveled to the Dominican Republic to work with an organization whose mission is to create globally aware citizens — people who want to do good, and do it well.

She is developing a qualitative case study based on her interviews with volunteers, aid workers, residents and others, exploring how an ethical framework can create best practices for the industry.

“Volunteer tourism is a highly criticized industry,” Evans said. “I was worried that my data would make it too easy to vilify the industry because there are so many inconsistencies when you’re working in international development. But I’ve actually been pleasantly surprised to find that there are several things that organizations do well.”

Evans’ travel was also supported by the “Dean Jean” scholarship, which is named after the late associate professor of political science and director of the Honors Program, and is awarded to Tulane Honors Program students for research experiences or fieldwork.

The other recipients for 2018 are Jenna Bates (neuroscience), Callie Belback (history, political science), Sophia Kalashnikova Horowitz (history), and Kelsey Williams (public health).