New Orleans is possibly the most culturally rich city in the United States. This perspective may spark heated debate among those who live in some of America’s other great cities like New York, San Francisco, and Chicago, yet New Orleans has a certain distinctiveness to it that cannot be found anywhere else in the country. It is no question that this city has been through quite a bit since it was first claimed as a French settlement in 1718.

It is impossible to recognize the culture of New Orleans without observing the Black culture woven deeply into the foundations of this city. This goes beyond the Creole food and Jazz music of New Orleans which is celebrated by tourists and locals alike. During Black History Month and always, the history of New Orleans that spans over 300 years must be recognized. If there is one thing that I’ve realized in my short time as a student here, it is that all too often we step into a culture and a place without enough appreciation for what exactly that means. After reading this piece, I encourage you to read more about the Black history of New Orleans.

(continued on page 4)
The COVID-19 pandemic has deeply impacted each of our lives to a great extent. This month, we are approaching the one year anniversary of national lockdowns. Let’s take a look back at how far we’ve come in this absolutely unprecedented year.

### A Timeline of the Pandemic in Louisiana and Beyond

By: Peter Miller & Kaylee Giacomini

The COVID-19 pandemic has deeply impacted each of our lives to a great extent. This month, we are approaching the one year anniversary of national lockdowns. Let’s take a look back at how far we’ve come in this absolutely unprecedented year.

**1ST INTERNATIONAL Case**

*1/13/2020*

Case appears in Thailand (43 days after patient zero in China)

**1ST Case in Louisiana**

*3/9/2020*

Man in Jefferson Parish officially diagnosed with first case of COVID-19 in the state

**Louisiana Lockdown**

*3/22/2020*

Louisiana goes under lockdown after orders by Governor John Bel Edwards

**Patient Zero**

Man in Wuhan, China experiences the first symptoms attributable to COVID-19

**1ST USA Case**

*1/21/2020*

Man in Snohomish County, WA diagnosed with COVID-19 (51 days after first case in China)

**"Pandemic"**

*3/14/2020*

The Director of the CDC officially declares COVID-19 a pandemic

Continued on next page
**1 Million cases Worldwide**

The WHO announced that 1 million cases of COVID-19 worldwide had been recorded.

**LA Stay at Home order lifted**

The governor allowed businesses to reopen, even though the COVID death rate in NOLA was twice that of NYC at the time.

**Pfizer to the rescue**

Pfizer-BioNTech EUA vaccine granted permission for emergency use in USA.

**SPHTM Vaccines**

Tulane became a vaccination site and began administering vaccines to students, faculty, and staff at the downtown campus.

**A New Variant**

B.1.1.7 variant with E484K mutation like in S. Africa and Brazil announced from UK, sparking fear over converging evolution and vaccine resistant strains.

**1 Million cases in USA**

The CDC announced that 1 million Americans were diagnosed with COVID-19.

**100,000 USA deaths**

The CDC reported that 100,000 Americans had died from COVID-19. 5,000 in LA had passed at this time.

**Vaccines in LA**

Vaccine rollout in Louisiana commenced with those over 70 years of age and healthcare workers.

**100 million cases**

The WHO announced that the worldwide case count of COVID had officially surpassed 100 million.

**When will it end?**

When will it end?
The Zulu Social Club and Mardi Gras Indians

Carnival is celebrated across the globe, but no one does it quite like New Orleans due to the city’s African American influence dating back over 100 years. The Zulu Social Club originated at the turn of the 20th century. Back then, a social club was a society that would help provide insurance for funerals and illness among its members. These social clubs would hold street parades (second lines) to advertise their club. The Zulu Club of today now has over 1,500 "riders". The Mardi Gras Indians also boast a rich black history. In the 1800s, Native Americans used to help shield runaway slaves on their way to freedom. The Mardi Gras Indian Krewes of today are strongly influenced by the friendship forged between enslaved African and Indigenous peoples over 200 years ago.

HBCUs and their Trailblazing Leaders

New Orleans is home to three different HBCUs, including the only black Roman Catholic institution; Xavier University. Xavier was founded in 1915, and today produces more African American medical school graduates than any other US institution. The work of Xavier grads was so acknowledged, that in 1980 Pope John Paul II gave their convocation speech. Founded in 1930, Dillard was the second HBCU to pop up in New Orleans. One of their most notable alums was Coretta Scott King; a prominent civil rights leader, author, and wife to Martin Luther King Jr. Southern University at New Orleans was the last HBCU to arrive in the city in 1956. Each HBCU has produced notable scientists, civil-rights leaders, authors, actors, and politicians.

Tremé: Oldest Black Neighborhood in the US

In 1810 Tremé was bought by the City of New Orleans and became the first free black neighborhood in America. Many view Tremé as the birthplace of New Orleans Culture, and it has housed many famous artists, musicians, and other cultural powerhouses over its 200 years of existence. The foundations of Tremé includes classic Creole style cottages that date back to the 1830s and the oldest African American Catholic church in the country. Today, museums celebrating Black culture can be found here like the Backstreet Cultural Museum.

Ruby Bridges and Southern Desegregation

In November of 1960, 6 year old Ruby Bridges became the first Black student to integrate a Southern Elementary school. This school was the William Frantz Elementary School, which still serves as such to this day as the Akili Academy of New Orleans in Bywater. To put into perspective how recent desegregation was, today, Bridges is only 67 years old.

The Birthplace of Jazz

Without the unique culture of New Orleans during the 19th century that intermingled White settlers and freed African people, Jazz may never have come into fruition. The first Jazz musician is believed to be Buddy Bolden, although there is some debate among Jazz historians. Bolden first played Jazz on his cornet in 1895 and the music form quickly gained popularity from there. Congo Square in Tremé was originally a place for traditional African music to be performed and celebrated, yet when Jazz rose in popularity this music style became a constant in the square too. Preservation Hall in the French Quarter is a historically significant music hall to listen to classical Jazz stylings performed as well.
Tulane’s School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine is on the path to becoming more diverse, but I often wonder why it is taking so long to get there. As a new Master’s student, I didn’t think about it too much, but before long I was faced with an in-class discussion that had me questioning the impact of such a homogeneous academic environment. I recall a professor posing a question to the class; “Why do Black women have higher adverse birth outcomes, even when they do everything right?” The professor’s explanation was based on numerical data, and while the data was good, it does not tell the whole story. This question and subsequent discussion caught me off guard. When discussing race-based health disparities there is a bigger picture to consider; there is a story behind the numbers. If the professor would sit down and speak with Black women, or if the professor was a black woman, they would be able to share more than just what the “data” states; they could truly communicate the intricacies of the situation to their class full of future public health professionals, who may one day work with this community.

I have to ask myself, why do we see so little diversity among professors and students in our department? As years go by and I now pursue my Ph.D., I can still say that I have never had a Black professor at Tulane. How can we claim we are a top School of Public Health in a city celebrated for its diversity yet surrounded by health disparities, when none of the people here suggesting policy changes and interventions, are members of that community? I know and feel the history of racism, oppression, and discrimination that Black people face every day, and it needs to be discussed in academia when addressing health disparities, but hearing it from a department lacking any minority voices is concerning and unsettling. That’s not to say that the professors here have no insight at all, but it would be nice to see a person who represents our community, who looks like me, teach about systemic racism and its impact on birth outcomes.

In academia, and Tulane specifically, the lack of diversity among students and faculty has a powerful impact on the next generation of public health professionals and the future of our underrepresented communities. I challenge the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, and especially HPM, to ask ourselves why we are so severely lacking diversity and what more could we be doing to change that. Future health professionals deserve the opportunity to be surrounded by diversity, to learn from each other and by example, to bring complexity and nuance to discussions of equity and disparity, and to be prepared for a work environment that is so much richer than we’ve represented thus far.

*Read more about Melody in our student spotlight section on page 10.
To me, Black History Month is intended for acknowledging those who came before us and their hard work and the sacrifices they made to improve American society. Note, Black History did not begin with slavery, however, the role of slavery, Jim Crow, the Civil Rights Movement, and so forth has been impactful for where we are as a nation. The legacies of those prominent, influential leaders and the unknown average joes paved a way for the current and future generations to succeed and continue to strive for greatness. Being from Louisiana, I love to reflect on Black History from within the state. NOLA is more than just jazz, great food, and Mardi Gras. New Orleans is saturated with Black History. From Tremé being the oldest African-American neighborhood in America. To the work of A.P Tureaud Sr. desegregating New Orleans' schools and LSU. To the close relationships and history of Blacks and Native Americans. Learning about the localized Black History and its impact on Louisiana should be a focal point for anyone who calls the Crescent City home.

BHM to me means a time where I can fully engage in history that is not always taught to me. It is a month that I can see myself and people who have made an impact on our everyday lives. BHM also gives me the chance to explore what blackness means to me, and how blackness is not a monolith.

Black History Month is a time to celebrate Black culture and achievements. Often times the contributions that Black people have made to the creation of the world as we know it are overlooked. It means everything to me as a Black-identifying student to have a month where I can be unapologetically Black and feel affirmed in my identity. If people before me were able to accomplish great things during times of great adversity, then anything is possible.

Compiled By: Kaiya Braham
Supporting local businesses is an excellent way to help our favorite shops and restaurants stay open during the pandemic. During Black History Month (and always), here are a handful of some of our favorite black owned businesses in the city to support. This list certainly is not exhaustive and is in no particular order.

For a Sweet Treat:  
**Voodoo Sweets**  
Location: Web-based  
Instagram: @voodoosweets

For excellent coffee:  
**Backatown Coffee Parlour**  
Location: 301 Basin St. Suite 1  
Instagram: @backatownnola

For Fabulous Soul Food:  
**Dooky Chase’s Restaurant**  
Location: 2301 Orleans Ave  
Instagram: @dookychaserestaurant

For Classic Creole Dishes:  
**Li’l Dizzy’s Cafe**  
Location: 1500 Esplanade Ave  
Instagram: @lildizzys

For Jamaican Cuisine:  
**Boswell’s Jamaican Grill**  
Location: 3521 Tulane Ave  
Instagram: @boswelljamaicangrill

For Funky New Orleans Souvenirs and Gifts:  
**Red Lantern**  
Location: 824 Royal St.  
Instagram: @red_lantern_new_orleans

For a bookstore with coffee:  
**Baldwin & Co.**  
Location: 1030 Elysian Fields Ave  
Instagram: @baldwinandcompany

Looking for more Black-owned businesses in New Orleans? Check out this similar article published by the Tulane Hullabaloo!  
https://tulanehullabaloo.com
KOBE WALKER, MPH

Kobe is a first year in our health policy MPH program originally from Kansas City, Missouri. Before coming to Tulane, she obtained her Bachelors of Science in Public Health from the University of Arkansas. Although Kobe is still exploring the world of post-graduate careers, she has a deep interest in policy evaluation work and is hopeful to get a job in this field someday. Over quarantine, Kobe picked up some creative hobbies outside the realms of public health like photography and painting. Since moving to New Orleans last summer, her favorite part about the city has been exploring all of the parks around town and trying out some of the amazing cuisine at local restaurants.

Kirsten Hughes, MD/MPH

As a two-time Tulanian, Kirsten Hughes has spent nearly a decade in New Orleans. Hughes completed her undergraduate degree in Public Health in 2016 and is currently a second year MD/MPH student in our department. Kirsten’s interest in public health preceded her interest in clinical medicine, but her time working as an ER technician and home health aid after undergrad convinced her to pursue the dual degree. Kirsten is involved in multiple organizations focused on healthcare systems innovation. Last year, she hosted a “fire-side chat” for the Care Collaboratory, a national organization dedicated to innovations that embed humanism and joy in healthcare. Her talk focused on “organizational aesthetics,” or in laymen’s terms, how users interact with a system and the emotions this interaction evokes. Additionally, she currently works with Health by Design where she facilitates design sprints and is a co-leader of the Physicians for Human Rights student group at TUSOM. In her downtime, Kirsten enjoys spending time with her dog and begrudgingly admits picking up sourdough baking as a “COVID hobby.” Kirsten is looking forward to the post-Pandemic return of New Orleans music and social culture and a career that includes hospital leadership and innovative healthcare redesign.

MELODY BENTON, PHD

Melody Benton is one of the shining stars of our PhD program with an inspiring story. Graduating from Eleanor Laura McMain Magnet Secondary School in New Orleans, Melody traveled to the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor for undergrad where she started her clinical research career in internal medicine and graduated with a BS in Biological Anthropology. After working for several years in clinical research, she got her MS in Biology from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, then moved to Philadelphia, where she worked at the University of Pennsylvania in cardiothoracic surgery research and loved it. After a few years at Penn, Melody moved to Los Angeles to focus more on her career. She continued her research at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, eventually finding her niche at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles Pediatric Hematology-Oncology. When it came time to push her career forward, Melody moved back home to New Orleans to work in the Department of Pediatrics/Medicine, Section of Hematology-Oncology, at Tulane University School of Medicine. She is currently the Administrative Director of Clinical Research Operations and Regulatory Protections. While at Tulane, Melody got her second Master’s degree in Public Health and followed it through to the Ph.D. program, where her research under Dr. Shi focuses on hemophilia and sickle cell disease.

INGEBORG HYDE, MHA

As an MHA student and New Orleans Native, Ingeborg Hyde enjoys yoga and pilates and during this pandemic, she has made it her personal mission to walk around Audubon Park every day as her pandemic hobby. Post-pandemic Ingeborg is really looking forward to reconnecting with friends and family near and far. She loves traveling; especially driving or hopping on a plane to explore the world with her loved ones. Ingeborg chose to pursue her MHA degree to indulge in her eagerness to learn how to develop health programs, policies, projects, and campaigns that will impact our healthcare system. Choosing Tulane was a no brainer for Ingeborg! There is no better place to learn at with amazing professors, students, resources, and a beautiful and culturally rich city.
The History of Black History Month

By Kaiya Braham

The beginnings of what we know today as Black History Month came from the fiftieth-anniversary celebration of emancipation, or the abolishment of slavery in the United States. Harvard Graduate Dr. Carter G. Woodson had gathered with thousands of other African-Americans in the country with a black history display. After this celebration, Woodson decided to form an organization to promote the scientific study of black life and history by forming the "Association for the Study of Negro Life and History", with A.L. Jackson and three others. They later would publish The Journal of Negro History later in 1916. After wanting to promote the work of this organization and others contributing to the History of Black lives, they created "Negro History and Literature Week" which then turned into "Negro Achievement Week". As the work continued, "Negro History Week" was announced in February 1926. Through his work, Woodson continued the progression of telling the history of Black people and their contributions to this world. He did this through his writing, research, and most importantly his community outreach. By the late 1960s well after Woodson’s death, the transformation of Black History Month came to be. February was chosen for its significance in the progression of black history – Abraham Lincoln (12th) and Fredrick Douglas (14th) birthday’s. For a more indepth history of Black History Month, check out this article from the Association of the Study of African American Life and History: https://asalh.org/about-us/origins-of-black-history-month/
Tell us a bit about your roles as an associate dean and professor. What new developments can we look forward to this year at SPHTM?

I am fortunate that I get to wear many hats at the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, which means that each day is different than the last! As a faculty member, I teach in both the undergraduate and master’s programs. My favorite part of this job, hands down, is interacting with students! I feel so grateful to get to meet, learn from, and then watch the successes of so many smart and cool individuals.

As Associate Dean for Strategic Initiatives, I work on projects, programs, partnerships, and pipelines that advance the mission of the School and propel us to new heights! There are lots of these in the works, and I’m excited to share more about them soon.

What was one of your most memorable moments as a JD/MHA student at Tulane?

Ha, there are too many to count! I started law school in 2003 and the MHA program in 2004. Then, of course, in 2005 Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, and everything changed. The most impactful course I took was Dr. Long’s Payment Systems class. And the most unique and memorable class was Professor Oliver Houck’s Saving New Orleans course. Each week, we explored a new topic area – health, education, infrastructure, living spaces – and it almost functioned like a Social Determinants of Post-Katrina New Orleans class. It was incredibly eye-opening, and as someone who has lived in New Orleans for almost two decades now, it changed the way I view our community.

If you could argue one health policy case or issue before the Supreme Court, what would it be and why?

Well, full disclosure…I am not, nor have I ever been, a litigator. But if we put that small detail aside (ha!), I’d like to go back and argue the constitutionality of the individual mandate. I believe strongly that health care is a right, and I’d like to take a stab at convincing the Supreme Court that buying health care is not the same as buying broccoli.

Who makes the best king cake?

This is an impossible question to answer. But I’ll go old school – Randazzo’s.

What sorts of COVID-safe Mardi Gras festivities will you be taking part in this year?

Krewe of House Floats! Every morning, my daughters insist that we pass the Dino Gras and the Krewe of Unicorns houses. Seeing these has really taken the sting out of missing parades and reminded me of the tremendous resilience of the people who live in New Orleans.
PODCAST OF THE MONTH

By: Kaylee Giacomini & Shelby Olin

THE OATH WITH CHUCK ROSENBERG

"Listen in on revealing and thoughtful conversations with fascinating men and women who took an oath to support and defend our Constitution and our nation – leaders in law enforcement, the military, the intelligence community, and many more. What inspired these people? What drew them to this work? How did they overcome adversity and failure? And what are the lessons for our country and our democracy as we move forward? These captivating stories exemplify what is best about our nation: integrity, civility, service, humility, and collective responsibility."

FAVORITE RECENT EPISODES

Carla Hayden: Palace to the Knowledge
Carrie Hessler-Radelet: Choose Optimism

A PROMISE LAND BY BARACK OBAMA

"Barack Obama takes readers on a compelling journey from his earliest political aspirations to the pivotal Iowa caucus victory that demonstrated the power of grassroots activism to the watershed night of November 4, 2008, when he was elected 44th president of the United States, becoming the first African American to hold the nation’s highest office. Reflecting on the presidency, he offers a unique and thoughtful exploration of both the awesome reach and the limits of presidential power, as well as singular insights into the dynamics of U.S. partisan politics and international diplomacy. Obama brings readers inside the Oval Office and the White House Situation Room, and to Moscow, Cairo, Beijing, and points beyond. We are privy to his thoughts as he assembles his cabinet, wrestles with a global financial crisis, takes the measure of Vladimir Putin, overcomes seemingly insurmountable odds to secure passage of the Affordable Care Act, clashes with generals about U.S. strategy in Afghanistan, tackles Wall Street reform, responds to the devastating Deepwater Horizon blowout, and authorizes Operation Neptune's Spear, which leads to the death of Osama bin Laden."

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD BY COLSON WHITEHEAD

"In this #1 New York Times bestseller, Cora is a young slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia. An outcast even among her fellow Africans, she is on the cusp of womanhood—where greater pain awaits. And so when Caesar, a slave who has recently arrived from Virginia, urges her to join him on the Underground Railroad, she seizes the opportunity and escapes with him. In Colson Whitehead’s Pulitzer Prize–winning ingenious conception, the Underground Railroad is no mere metaphor: engineers and conductors operate a secret network of actual tracks and tunnels beneath the Southern soil. Cora embarks on a harrowing flight from one state to the next, encountering, like Gulliver, strange yet familiar iterations of her own world at each stop. As Whitehead brilliantly re-creates the terrors of the antebellum era, he weaves in the saga of our nation, from the brutal abduction of Africans to the unfulfilled promises of the present day. The Underground Railroad is both the gripping tale of one woman’s will to escape the horrors of bondage—and a powerful meditation on the history we all share."
Where are you currently working? When did you graduate? What is your Degree?

I graduated in Summer 2020 with my MPH in Health Policy. I am currently working in healthcare consulting at Prometheus Federal Services, which is part of a joint venture with Atlas Research, called Titan Alpha.

What was one of your favorite or most memorable Tulane moments?

I started out in GCHB, so when I switched to the HPM Department, I was pleasantly surprised at how small and intimate the department was. I think some of my favorite moments were working with my peers before and after class on our group projects in that little room in the middle of the HPM floor.

What has been something you've done during quarantine to pass time or handle all the chaos?

Pretty early on in the pandemic, I started walking and exercising more from home. Now that I'm working remotely full-time, I've kept up with walking and am taking a pilates class 5x a week (masks on and socially distant). I needed something that would get me out of my apartment other than the grocery store. Exercising and getting time outside have been essential for my mental health, and it's been extra rewarding because getting into a regular exercise routine was something I always struggled to do before the pandemic.

What is one of your favorite parts about living in New Orleans?

One of my favorite things about living in New Orleans has been the joyful, resilient spirit of the people here. I love that (at least during non-covid times) there's always a festival or a parade happening. I'm also a huge foodie, so the fact that there's a festival for almost every food is awesome. I joined a dance krewe and we performed in two parades last Mardi Gras and several other parades throughout 2019. Even though there aren't any parades this Mardi Gras, there's still king cake, crawfish, house floats, and the Mardi Gras spirit in the air!

How do feel the world has changed in the midst of the pandemic?

I think that issues predating the pandemic like health disparities, inequitable access to healthcare, poverty, and systemic racism have become much more visible to people who may not have otherwise seen or cared about them. Not only are the problems more visible, but so is the vision of what solving those problems would look like. The way the world shifted when the pandemic happened caused many people to realize that the way things were before the pandemic was not the way things HAD to be. Almost every government, corporation, and individual shifted the way they operated practically overnight. If we can do that, it demonstrates that we can solve the problems we had before the pandemic, if we have the will.

What advice (professional or personal) do you have for students currently pursuing their master's during this time?

My advice would be to take every opportunity offered to you because every experience is a learning experience, and don't be afraid to try something new. Also, use Career Services! They are such an excellent resource, have great connections with alumni to help with your job or internship search, and hold lots of events for you to practice networking and find opportunities.
Your Student Editors

Kaylee
She, her, hers

Kaiya
She, her, hers

Emma
She, her, hers

Eli
They, them, theirs

Peter
He, him, his

Shelby
She, her, hers

YOUR CREATIVE OUTLET
Want to write an opinion piece?
Need a space to share your poetry, art, writing, or photography?
Contact us, we want you to feature it here!
hpm@tulane.edu

JOIN OUR WRITING TEAM
If you’d like to join us, we can make that happen. Fill out this google form to note your interest or email us at hpm@tulane.edu.
No editorial experience required!
https://forms.gle/VW2kxPV3RZeAVNbCA

HPM Events

- 2/19 (7pm): SPHTM Trivia Night
- 2/23-25: Rising Tide Leadership Summit
- 3/4: People in Policy: Noor Qaragli from the Policy Research Group
- 3/8: Leadership Lunch with LaTina Schaffer
- 3/10: Lagniappe Day
- 3/11 (12 pm): Hunches No Lunches: Gender Inequality Regimes in Global Health Organization
- 3/22: Lagniappe Day