



DUKEENGAGE IN NEW ORLEANS, LA

This program is organized by Duke staff in collaboration with DukeEngage.

Program Dates: June 2-July 29

(Dates subject to change up until the point of departure.)

Service Focus

Volunteering with diverse organizations focused on issues related to health/human services, community development/outreach, and human rights/ civil liberties

Program Leader

Ashley Brown Burns, Assistant Professor, Tulane University. Dr. Burns studies social stratification and teaches course on poverty, public policy, and American government.

Overview

The unprecedented devastation of Hurricane Katrina was widespread. The Greater New Orleans Community Data Center estimated \$135 billion in total damages from the storm. The city and Gulf Coast region are still in recovery, and will be for some time. Louisiana faced enormous challenges in its ability to provide quality and accessible social services and public goods its residents long before the onslaught of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. These disasters turned an inadequate system into a demand for full-blown economic recovery. As the 10-year anniversary becomes memory, the state's infrastructure continues to face not only revival, but also transformation. For nearly a decade, DukeEngage New Orleans students have supported community revitalization across the New Orleans metro area. Students will work with various community organizations on a range of issues including disaster preparedness, domestic violence, education, public health, and community research.

New Orleans is truly a city of conundrums. With substantial population decline after the storm, New Orleans is now one of the fastest growing U.S. cities. Yet, it may also be considered a beacon of disparity, as the 2nd worst city for income inequality in the U.S. According to Bloomberg, the bottom 40 percent of the population earns less than 8 percent of the income. This growth in disparity, post-Katrina, outpaces national trends. More concerning, 39 percent of the children in New Orleans live in poverty. In spite of its struggles, the city is directed to thrive while upon shaky infrastructure. There is a diverse need in New Orleans for genuine concern and interest in its challenges related to community development, including health/healthcare services, public policy, education, the environment, and social justice. DukeEngage in New Orleans students will serve with organizations committed to addressing such pertinent issues.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

CRITICAL THINKING

Students will know how to:

- Identify problems in the community
- Uncover the root cause of a problem
- Generate alternative solutions to a problem
- Evaluate information for possible biases

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

By the end of the summer, students will:

- Be concerned about local community issues
- Plan to improve their neighborhoods in the near future
- Believe they can have a positive impact on local social problems

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

By the end of DukeEngage NOLA, students will:

- Understand how the subject matter of this course can be used in everyday life
- See the connection between their academic learning and real-life experiences

Service Opportunities

DukeEngage in New Orleans students will volunteer with a broad collection of organizations, many with a focus on public health. Former participants have volunteered in educational and nutrition programs, health policy research, child abuse advocacy, domestic violence awareness, environmental sustainability, children's health and well-being, youth mentoring, community outreach, HIV/AIDS advocacy, and in a range of other capacities. In addition to the full-time community partner placement, there will be two to three, additional, one-time group service commitments during the summer, such as working in a soup kitchen or doing physical rebuilding through local organizations.

Students are required to volunteer at the community partner site 35-40 hours a week, depending on the needs of their community partner. Students are expected to volunteer Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm, although schedules do vary slightly among placement sites. Some placement sites will consist primarily of office-based volunteering while others will require working hands-on with the population served by the organization. Some placements may occasionally demand evening or weekend commitments. They may also call for off-site community outreach or fieldwork.

Students will learn more about community partner placement opportunities during the interview process for the Duke Engage New Orleans program. Former students have volunteered with organizations such as Children's Hospital, Touro Infirmary, the New Orleans Family Justice Center, Louisiana Bucket Brigade, American Red Cross, Children's Advocacy Center, Magnolia School, Covenant House, Crescent Care and the New Orleans AIDS Task Force, among many available sites. Once selected, students can expect to meet individually with DukeEngage program staff to discuss students' interests and experience. At the program director's discretion, community partners will review student resumes and conduct interviews. This process will shape final matching outcomes.

Program Requirements

Course Requirements: Academic coursework or interest in public policy, health care, economics, sociology, American history or race relations is encouraged.

Other Skills: Previous independent research/project management, employment/volunteer experience, public speaking. Some healthcare-related partners may require TB testing.

Personal Qualities:

- Ability to work productively on a supervised team or independently. (Students have to navigate agency expectations, while being self-guided.)
- Motivation and professionalism. (Students will become fully immersed into organizational culture and community.)

- Empathy and cultural sensitivity. (Students may interact with diverse populations.)

Program Details

Description of Community: Although students will travel throughout the city for program activities, the primary residence will be on the Loyola University campus in the Uptown/Riverbend area of New Orleans. This area has a rich blend of student/college life and a vibrant local community. Therefore, students will access campus facilities like the library, post office, gym, and campus security, as well as local attractions. Access to transit and day-to-day amenities are abundant. Audubon Park spans this area and offers great outdoor space for entertainment and fitness. Students will be within walking distance to the streetcar, bus, local banks, churches, stores, restaurants, and entertainment.

While New Orleans is still experiencing the difficult aftershocks of Katrina, Rita, and Isaac, the city offers students a unique chance to serve in a system with a real need for support. This comes along with the incredible opportunity to immerse in a rich, vibrant community. DukeEngage students in New Orleans will help to rebuild, but they will also find an unforgettable experience. They will listen to street musicians, possibly dance to brass bands in Jackson Square, and stroll in neighborhoods that reflect the city's unique blend of French, Spanish, and Caribbean roots. They will eat beignets in crowded cafes and make new connections. They will consider the ethics and morals of service, community development and quality of life, neighborhood revitalization, and natural disasters. Mostly, though, they will fall in love with a city full of contradictions and special vision.

Housing and Meals: Students will most likely be housed in suite-style apartments in at Loyola University. The units consist of a shared living room (common area), bathroom, and kitchen. The bedrooms are mostly single-bed accommodations. All suites have wireless internet. Students will have access to a laundry room and a TV lounge. There will be access to the campus fitness facilities, and library access can be arranged upon request. Students will be given a stipend to cover the costs of meals. They will be able to purchase groceries on a regular basis. While on campus, students tend to cook most of their own meals or eat in one of the on/off-campus restaurants. Most students bring a self-packed lunch to the community partner site. Program staff will also provide the weekly group meal and occasional snacks for reflection sessions. In general, there will be a broad selection and availability of food options and plenty of opportunities for students enjoy the famous New Orleans cuisine.

If you do not eat certain types of food for cultural, religious or personal reasons, please contact the DukeEngage office, dukeengage@duke.edu, to discuss whether or not your dietary needs can be reasonably accommodated at this program site.

Transportation: Students will generally be expected to use the New Orleans RTA for their travel needs, especially during service hours to and from the service placement sites. DukeEngage will provide an unlimited transit pass to facilitate this need. Some students will be able to walk to their placements sites, while the majority will commute via public transportation. Commuting to placement sites may take from 10 minutes up to an hour, based on the location and mode of transit. Most program events will be accessible by public transit. As needed, DukeEngage will also provide transportation for enrichment/immersion. Staff will coordinate transportation to group service activities and the grocery store. During non-work hours, students have access to the streetcar and bus, a convenient method of travel from Loyola to various points of interest. Students may bring personal vehicles, although this is not encouraged.

Communication: Wireless internet access is available in all academic buildings and residence halls on campus. It is recommended that students bring a laptop and cell phone to New Orleans, and some students may be asked to bring a

laptop to their service placement. Also, program leaders utilize cell phones, email, and text messaging to assist in coordinating the weekly calendar with students.

Opportunities for Reflection: Students are expected to participate in weekly group reflection sessions with the program director and site coordinator on issues such as poverty, social stratification, disaster resiliency, and economic revitalization. Also, students will interact with community partners at required weekly group meals. There will be opportunities to participate in enrichment and service activities celebrating the transformation of this unique city. Students are also required to engage frequently with the program blog.

Other Opportunities: DukeEngage students are required to attend all group programming. Students will have program commitments about two nights per week (reflection and group meal). In addition, there will be service or enrichment scheduled, mostly on Saturdays during the day. Occasionally, students may have evening and weekend commitments with their service placements. The remaining time during the week and weekends will be free for students to relax or explore the city on their own. Students are encouraged to explore the community and to network within the local community. There will be a blend of expected group and community interaction, and private downtime.

More Information

- Brinkley, Douglas. *The Great Deluge*. William Morrow. 2006.
- Eggers, Dave. *Zeitoun*. McSweeney's Books. 2009.
- Hartman, Chester, and Gregory D. Squires. *There is No Such Thing as a Natural Disaster: Race, Class, and Hurricane Katrina*. Routledge, 2006.
- Horne, Jed. *Breach of Faith: Hurricane Katrina and the Near Death of a Great American City*. Random House, 2006.
- "Trouble the Water." Tia Lesson and Carl Deal. Zeitgeist Films, 2008.
- "When the Levee Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts." Spike Lee. HBO Documentary Films, 2006.

Curricular Connections

The New Orleans program is a great fit for students interested in such topics as public policy, health care, social stratification, urban politics, economic disparity, and community development. DukeEngage staff can help direct students to courses, research projects, and faculty members connected to the themes of this program upon students' return.