

Profile: Mignon Holton

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Mignon Holton

After graduating from the University of Denver with majors in Sociology and Psychology and a minor in Gender and Women's Studies, Mignon Holton knew she wanted to come back to her hometown of New Orleans.

"Growing up in New Orleans, Tulane has always been part of my life and valued by my family, so I knew I wanted to learn in an environment that held such an important history for me," Holton said. "I chose the on-ground option because I wanted the opportunity to build close connections with my in-person cohort. I have learned an immense amount from them and have developed life-long friendships."

She knew she wanted to get a graduate degree related to sociology or psychology, but there are a lot of different degrees to choose from. She chose a Master of Social Work (MSW) over a nursing program or a Master of Science in Psychology, Sociology, or Counseling.

"I chose to get an MSW because of the variety of careers you can pursue with this degree. I am interested in direct practice, community engagement, and policy work, and the MSW degree allows me to develop my knowledge around all these sectors," Holton said.

What Can You Do with an MSW?

After graduating, Holton hopes to inform reproductive and sexual health policy. With an MSW, graduates can explore roles such as:

- **Clinical Social Worker:** Provides therapy and counseling services to individuals, families, and groups dealing with mental health issues.
- **Medical Social Worker:** Works in hospitals or healthcare settings to support patients and families in coping with illness, injury, or medical crises.
- **School Social Worker:** Provides support and counseling to students dealing with academic, social, or behavioral issues in educational settings.
- **Substance Abuse Counselor:** Helps individuals struggling with addiction to drugs or alcohol, providing counseling, support, and treatment referrals.
- **Community Organizer:** Engages with communities to identify needs, advocate for social change, and develop programs and resources to address those needs.

- **Policy Analyst/Advocate:** Works to influence social policies and legislation that impact vulnerable populations, advocating
- **Forensic Social Worker:** Assists individuals involved in the criminal justice system, providing support, counseling, and rehabilitation services.
- **International Aid/Development Worker:** Works with international organizations to provide humanitarian aid, development assistance, and social services in global contexts.
- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Counselor:** Provides counseling and support services to employees facing personal or work-related challenges.
- **Disability Services Coordinator:** Assists individuals with disabilities in accessing resources, accommodations, and support services to enhance their independence and quality of life.
- **Crisis Intervention Specialist:** Provides immediate support and intervention during crises such as natural disasters, community emergencies, or personal crises.

How Tulane Helps You Grow Your Resume

Holton is interning at the Louisiana Public Health Institute for her field education hours. Because Tulane students stay in the same internship for the full duration of their MSW, Holton has been able to explore different facets of the organization's work, from social work policy to public health program implementation.

"My first semester focused on the family health team where I assisted with a reproductive health project and the relaunch of the Louisiana Adolescent Reproductive Health Coalition," Holton said. "This semester, I am working with the behavioral health team, focusing on the Mental Health First Aid training program."

In addition to her valuable work experience during her internship, Holton works as a Student Ambassador for the School of Social Work. The program allows her to get paid for representing Tulane, engaging with prospective students and visitors, and doing administrative tasks for enrollment and communications. The resume-building programs at Tulane are why 96% of our MSW students are employed within 6 months of graduation.

How New Orleans' Culture Enhances the Graduate Experience

We may be biased, but we think New Orleans is the best place to study social work. The Gulf South is one of the most diverse, historical, and culturally-rich regions of the United States. Holton recalled the protective and restorative efforts she had seen in the wake of hurricanes like Katrina and Ida.

"I have witnessed many different people come together and work to rebuild a beautiful city with passion and determination. The love community members have for New Orleans inspires a commitment to making this city a place where everyone can thrive, creating many great opportunities for social workers," Holton said.

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