

Student leadership in the Graduate Student Network

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Students enrolled in Tulane's Master of Social Work (MSW), Master of Science in Disaster Resilience Leadership (MS-DRL), and Doctor of Social Work (DSW) programs are all encouraged to be active participants in the Graduate Student Network (GSN).

We spoke with Justin Guy, a DSW graduate who was a GSN officer in 2025. He walks through what student leadership looked like for him, the power of student leadership, and the value of being connected with students outside of his academic program.

Question: Can you tell us a bit about yourself and what inspired you to get involved with the GSN?

Answer: I am a licensed clinical social worker, clinical supervisor, author, public speaker, and owner of Redeeming Solutions, LLC. Currently, I am in my final semester as a doctoral student at TSSW. I joined GSN to find community and collaborate with others who share my passion for helping others. I aimed to use my voice to advocate for my colleagues and ensure our needs were addressed.

Q: How has participating in GSN influenced your experience at TSSW?

A: Participation in GSN has contributed to fulfilling my purpose by enabling me to leverage my gifts and talents in servant leadership, process enhancement, and project management. It has reinforced my sense of belonging to the school, aligning with its mission and core values. I feel a sense of connection and part of an entity greater than myself.

Q: How does GSN collaborate to ensure that both DSW and MSW student communities feel connected and represented?

A: GSN encourages students from all programs to participate in meetings and consider taking on officer roles. Every voice matters, opinions are valued, and all members are seen as equal partners in enhancing our school's activities.

Q: What are some of the challenges and/or benefits of student leadership across different learning formats/programs?

A: A challenge I've observed is the difficulty in engaging with faculty, staff, and students in person due to distance. I think we can achieve more by increasing face-to-face meetings and collaborating on projects and problems in the same space.

Nonetheless, student leadership offers the advantage of working with fellow students across Tulane and partnering with faculty and their initiatives to foster a better learning environment for everyone.

Q: How does your leadership, or that of others you've observed, within GSN reflect the core social work values?

A: The fundamental principles of social work inform my decision-making and leadership approach. I regard myself as a servant leader, consistently striving to uphold ethical standards, moral integrity, and benevolence. My exemplification of leadership involves serving others while simultaneously guiding them. I am committed to leading by example. My aspiration is to become the leader and mentor I once lacked.

Q: What advice would you give to students who want to get more involved in leadership and community engagement while at TSSW?

A: I recommend carefully considering the costs involved. Ensure that you possess the time, emotional resilience, and mental capacity to dedicate yourself to activities beyond work, internship, school, and daily life. Such pursuits are indeed a rewarding responsibility and privilege. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that one cannot effectively give if one is depleted. Collaborating with fellow student leaders and participating in community service are valuable experiences and honors.