

Tulane researcher wins national junior faculty award

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Nicholas Sandoval is one of 36 junior faculty members from across the country to win the Ralph E. Powe Junior Faculty Enhancement Award. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

[Nicholas Sandoval](#), an assistant professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering at Tulane University, is the winner of a [2018 Ralph E. Powe Junior Faculty Enhancement Award](#) from [Oak Ridge Associated Universities \(ORAU\)](#).

ORAU is a consortium of major PhD-granting academic institutions – including Tulane – that provides innovative scientific and technical solutions to advance national priorities in science, education, security and health.

The awards recognize faculty members for their work in any of five science and technology disciplines: engineering or applied science; life sciences; mathematics and computer science; physical sciences; and policy, management or education.

Sandoval is one of 36 junior faculty members from across the country to win the award. The award recognizes the [Sandoval Lab's](#) research on overcoming current barriers to the production of biofuels from waste biomass streams. The Sandoval Lab works toward this goal through the construction of high throughput methods of assessing the link between genes and observable traits, specifically the levels of tolerance to chemicals that slow growth and production of biofuels.

“It was wonderful to have fellow academics see the promise of our research,” Sandoval said. “My goal is to bring that promise to fruition. This award certainly helps us get there.”

Winners receive \$10,000 each – \$5,000 from ORAU and \$5,000 from their institution. Sandoval said he will use his prize money to buy equipment to advance his research.

Since the program’s inception, ORAU has awarded 698 grants totaling more than \$3.4 million. Including the matching funds from member institutions, ORAU has facilitated grants worth more than \$6.9 million.

“The Powe Awards program provides an opportunity for young faculty members to further their research careers and helps them identify potential funding avenues,” said Arlene Garrison, ORAU vice president, University Partnerships Office. “ORAU is proud to recognize the research and professional growth of these emerging leaders as they support the future of science and technology.”