

Professionals offer career advice to summer program students

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Panelists from a variety of STEM fields talk to participants of the Tulane Science Scholars Program Thursday, July 26, during the program's weekly Lunch and Learn Series. (Photo by Jackson Hill)

Why would a bank hire a chemical engineer? What do you do with a computer science degree when you're burned out on coding? How do you land that amazing internship at NASA?

The answers to these questions and more were part of the Tulane Science Scholars Program's (TSSP) "Lunch and Learn" speaker series held Thursday in the Boggs Center for Energy and Biotechnology.

Forty-five [TSSP](#) participants attended a panel where professionals discussed the merits of earning a degree in a science, technology, engineering or math (STEM) field. The speakers shared how they forged a career path beyond the laboratory, explained the role of STEM at their jobs and offered tips on obtaining internships.

The panel featured Tulane alumna Leigh Cosolito of Ochsner Medical Center; Karen S. DeBlieux of Capital One; Tulane alumnus Gerardo Galdamez of Entergy Corporation; Allison Luzader of GE Digital; and Jeff Serpas of GE Corporate.

One common theme was how a STEM degree can prepare individuals to tackle complex problems by suggesting a hypothesis, testing a solution and trying again when confronted with failure—all traits that any employer in any field looks for in a candidate.

The program welcomes high school students from all over the United States and from around the world to take their first steps toward pursuing STEM careers. Michelle Sanchez, a Tulane alumna, senior professor of practice and director of the [Center for K-12 STEM Education](#) in the [School of Science and Engineering](#), leads the program, in which participants enroll in two-week STEM undergraduate courses taught by Tulane faculty for college credit.

“Landing a job or an internship is about more than just GPA,” Sanchez said. “These esteemed panelists show how soft skills like teamwork and networking are just as important as your ability to solve equations.”