

Researching a Movement

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(Photo of Carly Megan Shaffer, 2022)

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Working as a research assistant to Dr. Mahoney for the last three and a half years has been one of the highlights of my Tulane experience. It has given me the chance to combine my passions for politics and gender equity and collaborate with other

students and professors who share those interests. It also led me to understand that transformative political and social change often happens at the state level.

During my sophomore and junior years, I worked with Dr. Mahoney and another research assistant (Meghan Kearney) on a project about the *Me Too* movement in state legislatures. We analyzed the sexual harassment policies of forty state legislatures and wrote about the leading role those political institutions can play in eradicating workplace sexual violence. We were thrilled to see our work published in an anthology about women in politics, as well as in the [Tulane School of Liberal Arts Magazine](#), where we also underscored the importance of sexual violence prevention on college campuses like ours.

This year, Dr. Mahoney and I have been working on another project about the promise and challenge of state legislative caucus data. We compiled a list of all caucuses we know to exist in each of the 50 states, categorized them by type, wrote about their significance, and created a variety of data visualizations that we presented at the State Politics & Policy Conference at Florida State University last month. I loved getting to travel with Dr. Mahoney and share our work with others who care about state politics as much as we do. It was the perfect way to close out my senior year. I am incredibly grateful to everyone at the Newcomb Institute for giving me the opportunity to learn from such a compassionate and inspiring mentor, who has become one of my greatest role models.

[Carly Megan Shaffer](#) is a graduating senior at Tulane University completing a BA in Political Science and a BA in Communication. She is the Newcomb Alumnae Association's named Newcomb Scholar and works as a Research Assistant for the Institute.