

30 Under 30: Hannah Novak, 27

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Photo of Hannah Novak

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Public Health Analyst, United States Food and Drug Administration

PHTM '18

They/She

The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) centers public health by regulating the products Americans use each day, from food to cosmetics. As a Public Health Analyst for the FDA, Hannah Novak helps the agency with its regulation of medical devices by transforming complex scientific and medical documents into accessible information for the public.

“I really love being part of a process of continuous growth in incorporating health equity principles into the way we communicate and finding new ways to make sure that key information, such as recalls or safety information, is shared in appropriate and understandable ways,” explained Novak.

Novak’s motivation behind their current work is their deep commitment to achieving health equity, and this is a cause they have been tackling through many roles throughout their life.

“After having worked in more direct-service public health roles, I’m glad to have the chance to explore regulation and policy as another aspect of a multifaceted field,” said Novak.

As an undergraduate student, Novak was instrumental in planning the first Louisiana Sexual Assault Student Activist Conference and was heavily involved in [Tulane’s Sexual Aggression Peer Hotline and Education \(SAPHE\)](#) student organization. Both endeavors were kickstarted through Newcomb funding.

“Newcomb provided funding, but also guidance and structure to learn skills that are challenging to develop on your own,” recounted Novak. “Planning the Louisiana Sexual Assault Student Activist Conference helped me gain the ability to coordinate and communicate across groups about shared concerns; writing SAPHE workshops and presentations helped me learn how to tailor tools and resources to individual groups; the Public Health program gave me the entire foundation to understand my work and continue to strive toward equity.”

Through their work, Novak has learned the importance of balance, checking in with themselves, and best positioning themselves to serve others.

“One thing I learned early is that burnout happens faster than anticipated and is hard to bounce back from,” said Novak. “I could see myself in a role that combines more direct service public health work with policy development, but overall, I see myself in a supportive community and balancing work with enjoyment and personal growth.”

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