New scholarship program hopes to attract more Peace Corps volunteers to business

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Edward Crawford, far left, worked with farmers in the Dominican Republic to start a coffee co-op during his time in the Peace Corps. After his service, he enrolled in the Freeman School's MBA program to gain a greater understanding of business.

As a Peace Corps volunteer in the Dominican Republic, Edward Crawford started a cooperative to help coffee farmers earn more money from their annual harvests, but he soon found himself taking on unfamiliar responsibilities.

“I was putting together the co-op’s board, leading board meetings and doing the legal work to form a business in another country, but I had no formal business training,” Crawford says. “I wanted learn how real businesses operated.”

When Crawford completed his service, he enrolled in the MBA program at Tulane University's A. B. Freeman School of Business.

"I saw business school as a way to formalize my knowledge in business — accounting, finance, marketing — and learn how all the different pieces work," Crawford says. "Peace Corps volunteers tend to be very entrepreneurial, and the Freeman School has a great entrepreneurship program. Plus, Tulane's reputation for service really appealed to me. It was a way for me to continue my service through business school."

While business school might not be the first thing most Peace Corps alumni think of following their service, a new scholarship program makes pursuing a business degree more accessible to Peace Corps volunteers than ever before.

As part of a special initiative recently announced by Tulane University, the Freeman School is offering significant scholarships targeted specifically at Peace Corp volunteers (PCVs) called back from international placements because of concerns over the spread of COVID-19.

"One hundred percent of Peace Corp volunteers admitted to our programs this year will receive a scholarship," says John Clarke, the Freeman School's associate dean for graduate programs. "We've set aside significant fellowship dollars to help Peace Corp volunteers offset the cost of tuition to all of our programs."

Scholarships are available for the full-time and part-time Master of Business Administration program as well as the Master of Finance, Master of Accounting, Master of Management in Energy, Master of Management and Master of Business Analytics programs. These scholarships may be combined with other scholarships resulting in greater financial support, including full tuition, and they are also available for volunteers wishing to pursue two Tulane degrees, such as a master's degree in Latin American Studies and an MBA.



Today, Crawford serves as co-founder and president of Coltala Holdings, a purpose-driven private equity holding company.

“Business is about solving problems, and that’s exactly what Peace Corps volunteers do every day all over the world,” says Clarke. “Our programs teach the technical and managerial skills necessary to accomplish complex tasks and lead large organizations, skills applicable to Peace Corps veterans whether they wish to continue their service in government or the nonprofit sector or transition to a new career.”

“I think a lot of Peace Corps volunteers are interested in nonprofits or in starting a social entrepreneurship type of business,” adds Crawford, who today serves as co-founder and president of Coltala Holdings, a purpose-driven private equity holding company. "Those are two areas that the Freeman School specializes in.”

This scholarship initiative is being offered for fall 2020 or spring 2021 admissions. This initiative also features an expedited admission process, including a promise that applications for summer and fall will be reviewed and decisions rendered within 10 business days of submission of all requested application materials.

To learn more about the program, please visit http://business.tulane.edu/peace-corps/.