4+1 students make the most of an extra year at Freeman

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In December 2024, the Freeman School announced the new 4+1 program, which enables students to fast-track their education by earning both a bachelor's degree and a master’s degree in just five years. Through the program, students can add a master’s degree in finance, energy management or business analytics and AI with just one additional year of study.

Jill Tse (BSM ’25, MFIN ’26) and Raphael Degwerth (BSM ’26, MANA ’26) were two of the first students to take advantage of the 4+1 programs. Now that they’re halfway through their master’s degrees, we checked in with them to discuss why they chose the program, the difference between a Freeman bachelor’s and master’s degree, and what’s on their fifth-year bucket list.

Could you both tell us a little about yourself and why you were drawn to Freeman's 4+1 programs?

Jill Tse: I'm from Los Angeles, California, and I'm doing a master's degree in finance through the 4+1 program.

I picked Tulane and the Freeman School because of its culture and reputation and great business academic rigor. In terms of the 4+1 program, I wanted to bring my undergraduate experience and transfer it to my master's program so I could complete both degrees at once.

Raphael Degwerth: Hi, I'm from York, Pennsylvania, and I'm pursuing a master's degree in business analytics. I decided that I wanted to pursue a 4+1 degree at Freeman because the program seemed really tailored to what you need to know for success in data analytics. Plus, I just really love the city of New Orleans, so I wanted to stay here for another year.



Jill Tse, who is pursuing a Master of Finance, says the 4+1 program made the transition into a master's program easier than it would have been in a traditional graduate program.

What are some of the advantages of Freeman’s 4+1 programs?

Tse: Well, the biggest advantage is that I’m able to get my master’s degree in one year instead of two. Also, because I went to Tulane for undergrad, the transition to a master’s program was so much easier for me. I was already really familiar with the faculty going into the 4+1 program, and I’ve found that my undergraduate degree has helped me build a really great foundation to go into my master's coursework here at Freeman. I get to continue working with some of my favorite professors like Mara Force, Musa Caglar, David Thompson, Myke Yest, David Lesmond and Vinh Tran.

What’s the biggest difference between your undergraduate classes and your graduate classes?

Degwerth: The main difference between my graduate classes and undergraduate classes is that my grad classes have been a lot more hands-on. They involve working with different software and with different data from several industries, whereas my undergrad classes were more theoretical.

As part of my 4+1 program, I got the opportunity to network with industry professionals like those at Globalstar, a telecommunications company. We took a field trip there and got to see what they were all about and how they use data analytics in their everyday jobs.



Raphael Degwerth, who is earning a bachelor's degree in management and a master's degree in data analytics, says his graduate-level classes are more hands-on than his undergraduate classes.

What advice would you give to undergraduate students interested in Freeman's 4+1 programs?

Tse: Definitely reach out to your professors! They're very knowledgeable, have great career experience and want to help you.

Degwerth: It's also helpful to reach out to industry professionals who are working the jobs that you might want to have one day. Talk to them about what they do day-to-day and figure out if that's actually something you want to do before you decide whether to do the program.

What's on your bucket list for your fifth year?

Tse: Now that I have another year here, I can finally go to Jazz Fest! I'm really glad that having another year lets me take advantage of the New Orleans culture, people and festivals.

Degwerth: There's so many exciting things to do in New Orleans. I think one of the things that I'm ashamed of is that I haven't gone to a Pelicans game yet, so that's

definitely on my bucket list for my fifth year.