

Big ideas start here!

TULANE INNOVATE

TULANE
INNOVATION
INSTITUTE
FY26 Impact Report



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FY26

In FY26, we expanded innovation and entrepreneurship education in the classroom, launching 2 new classes for students: Startup Strategy Lab and Innovation and Technology Development | Creating Societal Impact with Research. Later in the year, two additional programs launched: TURE (Tulane Use-Inspired Research and Entrepreneurship Program), an undergraduate research experience supported by the National Science Foundation, and a Pre-College course for teen founders. For faculty, Founder Lab began matching experienced entrepreneurs with promising Tulane-developed technologies, giving researchers a structured pathway to translate discoveries into startups.

FY25

In FY25, innovation sparked across New Orleans as our faculty engagement grew through events, grants, and licensing support. The first investment from Tulane Ventures was announced. New programs, including Open Season, the Startup Clinic, the Young Entrepreneurs Academy, and Startup Sprint Bootcamp, expanded opportunities to the entire community. We celebrated entrepreneurs during the debut of Tulane Innovation Day at New Orleans Entrepreneur Week (NOEW).

FY24

In FY24, the Faculty Innovation Council and the Community Council were established to collaborate with our team in developing a comprehensive strategic plan to build a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship at Tulane and in the New Orleans community. The Green Wave Innovation Network (GWIN) was established, and the year-long Startup Team Mentoring program was launched. At the Tulane Research, Innovation, and Creativity Summit (TRICS), new awards were presented to recognize research with commercial and societal impact. This year also marked the first \$50K Demo Day.

FY23

In the summer of FY23, the Tulane Innovation Institute opened under the Presidential leadership of Michael A. Fitts and a lead gift from **Robert L. Priddy**, with philanthropic support from the Tulane Innovation & Entrepreneurship (TIE) Council. Kimberly Gramm was named the inaugural David and Marion Mussafer Chief Innovation and Entrepreneurship Officer, and our team began to grow. The Provost’s Proof of Concept (PPOC) Fund and Open Medical Innovation Challenge (MIC) Night were the first programs to launch.



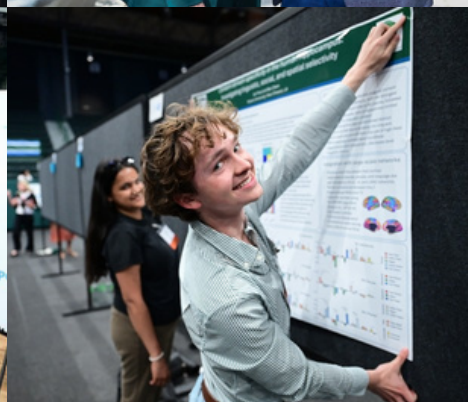
Being in college is the best time to start a company!

You have an incredible opportunity here at Tulane, and you won't find this level of resources and support again after you leave as a student. So much of that support comes through the Tulane Innovation Institute, conversations with your professors, and the investor community here in New Orleans.

New Orleans wants you to succeed. Tulane wants you to succeed. So go for it—try new things, take a chance, and see if you can win a pitch competition. It will feel great."

Madeline "Dylan" Murray
(SSE '26),
Co-Founder, Exactics





Letter from Kimberly Gramm

Entrepreneurship belongs to anyone with the passion to pursue it; it is not the province of the few. That belief drives the Tulane Innovation Institute, and it is why I was honored to be selected this year to serve as Louisiana's ambassador for Right to Start, a national movement built on the principle that entrepreneurial opportunity should be open to everyone. When it is, communities grow stronger, jobs are created close to home, and opportunities expand for everyone.

This year offered many meaningful chances to act on that principle. I was proud to help found the New Orleans Entrepreneurship Council (NEC) and serve as its inaugural chair, bringing together cross-sector leaders to align our city's entrepreneurship ecosystem around common goals. I was also humbled to receive the Scott Gale Memorial Award at New Orleans Entrepreneur Week, which I accepted on behalf of every person building this community alongside us.

The proof of what is possible was boldly demonstrated by one of our Tulane students this year. Madeline "Dylan" Murray, co-founder of Exactics and the first undergraduate founder backed by Tulane Ventures, delivered the student commencement address at the Caesars Superdome this spring. She and her team built an at-home diagnostics company that raised more than \$1.5 million before she crossed the stage in her cap and gown. There is nothing more gratifying than watching a student you believed in stand before thousands of people and tell them what is possible in entrepreneurship.

This year demonstrated what is possible when we build the right infrastructure around innovators, from expanding entrepreneurship education across campus to increasing support for founders, researchers, and early-stage companies. As we move into FY27, we are focused on creating a more structured pathway for ventures to grow. We will implement a stage-gate system that provides founders with clear milestones, targeted resources, and strategic support to systematically move promising startups toward investment readiness. We will also expand our Green Wave Innovation Network mentorship model beyond early-stage companies to support ventures preparing to raise capital, connecting founders with the expertise and guidance they need as they scale.

None of this happens without the people who show up every day: our team, our faculty, our Green Wave Innovation Network mentors, our community partners, our councils, and the supporters who invest in the founders we serve. They make it real and exciting, and we are just getting started! With the announcement of the Charity Innovation Hub, our startups will have a home. Big ideas are starting here—and growing here!



Kimberly Gramm, MBA, PhD

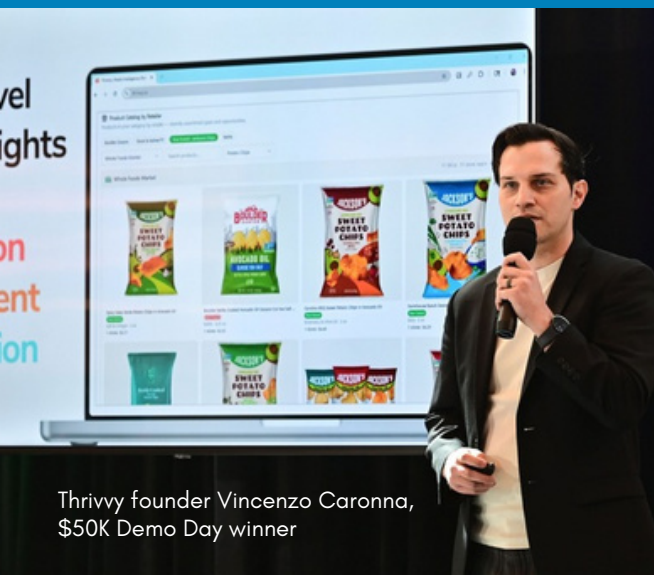
David and Marion Mussafer Chief Innovation and Entrepreneurship Officer



3 **Year Metrics**
TO DATE— INCLUDES
OPEN MIC NIGHT AND PPOC
SPRING FY23

18
SPINOUTS CREATED
FY23-26

154
STARTUPS SUPPORTED
FY23-26



Thrivvy founder Vincenzo Caronna,
\$50K Demo Day winner

34
LICENSE & OPTIONS
EXECUTED
FY23-26

111
PATENTS
GRANTED
FY23-26

\$1.4M
PITCH CONTEST & GRANT
FUNDING AWARDED
FY23-26

3,278
ENTREPRENEUR
PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS
FY23-26

14
PROGRAMS

Faculty Innovation Workshops & Mixers
Founder Lab
Idea Bank
I&E Webinars
OIPM Support
Pitch Competitions
Provost's Proof of Concept Fund
Startup Clinic
Startup Sprint Bootcamp
Startup Team Mentoring
Tulane Innovation Day
Tulane Research Innovation and Creativity
Summit
Tulane Ventures
Young Entrepreneurs Academy

2,970 + TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS
FY23-26 | VALUED AT \$891K

TEAM INNOVATE

Kimberly Gramm

David and Marion Mussafer
Chief Innovation and Entrepreneurship Officer

Casey Candebat

Executive Director of Industry Partnerships

Amie Cannon

Operations Director and Executive Assistant to CIO

Claiborne M. Christian

Executive Director of Commercialization

Jeanne Exnicios

Marketing & Communications Director

Sharon Goldsmith

Executive Director of Innovation & Entrepreneurship Programs

Matt Koenig

Executive Director, Office of Intellectual Property Management

Scott Clark

Business Development Manager

Jillian L. Delos Reyes

Commercialization Program Director

Jay England

Innovation & Entrepreneurship Program Director

Marco Melero

Tulane Ventures Analyst

Joe Wagner

AI Fellow

Rani Brooks

Alan Colowick Innovation Fellow

Vinoi Devpaul Vincely

Innovation Fellow

Office of Intellectual Property Management

Collin Curry

Administrative Secretary

Samuel Jativa

IP Licensing & Portfolio Management Officer

Tara Richard

IP Contract Officer

John Scott

Associate Director

Demond P. Smith

Director of IP Contracts

Nicholas VanDaalen

Intellectual Property Coordinator



FY26 | “The Math”

680

IDEAS PROPOSED
FROM ALL PROGRAMS

1,063

PROGRAM
PARTICIPANTS

\$415K

PITCH CONTEST & GRANT
FUNDING AWARDED

79

STARTUPS
SUPPORTED

PATENTS & LICENSING SUPPORT

93

DISCLOSURES

39% INCREASE YOY

84

TOTAL PATENT
APPLICATIONS FILED

9% INCREASE YOY

15

LICENSE & OPTION
AGREEMENTS

25% INCREASE YOY

7

TULANE SPINOUTS
CREATED

89% MORE THAN THE
NATIONAL AVERAGE*

*COMPARED TO RESEARCH EXPENDITURE PEER GROUP | ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY TECHNOLOGY MANAGERS (AUTM) 2025

— TULANE VENTURES —

AS OF JUNE 2026

10 PORTFOLIO INVESTMENTS

\$2M CAPITAL INVESTED

The Tulane Innovation Institute supports startups and early-stage technologies through programs offering mentorship, education, and funding. We help founders assess market potential, build sustainable businesses, and connect with capital and Tulane’s network. We also guide faculty innovators through the IP process, including securing patents, exploring licensing opportunities, and launching spinout companies.

Making New Orleans stronger

Ecosystem Building

Innovation Ecosystem Meet and Greet

The Tulane Innovation Institute's Innovation Ecosystem Meet and Greet brought together the New Orleans entrepreneurial community on September 23, 2025, at the Nieuw Society to network and gather insights on how city leadership and the entrepreneurial ecosystem can better support innovation. This free, interactive community event drew more than 100 participants, including startup founders, students, faculty, and support organizations, and featured 4 discussion stations: Permits and City Hall, Big Ideas, Talent and Training, and Affordable Spaces to Grow. These themes were selected based on recurring challenges and opportunities identified across the local ecosystem, ensuring the conversation centered on areas where policy, infrastructure, and coordination could have the greatest impact.

New Orleans Entrepreneurship Council

One of the biggest developments in the New Orleans entrepreneurial ecosystem this year was the launch of the New Orleans Entrepreneurship Council (NEC), an initiative of StartupNOLA and GNO Inc. The council brings together regional stakeholders and organizations to align efforts and strengthen support for attracting, retaining, and growing entrepreneurial talent across the region. As the inaugural NEC Chair, Kimberly Gramm joined BIZ Talks, the Biz New Orleans podcast, to share the council's vision and how collaboration can advance New Orleans' entrepreneurial ecosystem.



SCAN TO LISTEN

Washington Mardi Gras 2026

Building strong industry partnerships and relationships across Louisiana is central to the Tulane Innovation Institute's approach to creating impact. This year, Kimberly Gramm and Casey Candebat represented the Innovation Institute at Washington Mardi Gras, an annual gathering that brings together Louisiana's government, business, and civic leaders in the nation's capital. The event marked the Innovation Institute's first participation in this longstanding tradition, creating opportunities to connect with policymakers, industry leaders, Tulane alumni, and members of the Green Wave Innovation Network (GWIN). Through these conversations, the Institute strengthened relationships with partners committed to advancing innovation across Louisiana.



Innovation Ecosystem Meet and Greet
(September 2025)



New Orleans Entrepreneurship Council in Baton Rouge
(March 2026)



Washington Mardi Gras with Tulane leaders
(January 2026)

Welcome, Matt Higgins!

Matt Higgins arrived at Tulane in the fall of 2025 as Earl P. and Ethel B. Koerner Chair of Strategy and Entrepreneurship, professor of management, and the Director of the Levy Rosenblum Institute. He also signed on to co-chair the Faculty Innovation Council. Higgins brings extensive experience in strategy, entrepreneurship, and innovation research to the university.

The Faculty Innovation Council comprises expert faculty members passionate about innovation and entrepreneurship, representing each of Tulane's 9 schools. Members provide unique perspectives that guide innovation and commercialization at the Institute. The council members are champions of innovation and entrepreneurship in their schools and help promote the Institute's mission by developing new strategies for students.

Faculty Innovation Council

Susan Cheng, Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine

Sherif Ebrahim, A. B. Freeman School of Business

Monica Embers, School of Medicine (TNBRC)

Halima Leak Francis, School of Professional Advancement

Donald Gaver, School of Science & Engineering

Kimberly Gramm, Tulane Innovation Institute (Co-Chair)

Stefan Grant, School of Medicine

Matt Higgins, A. B. Freeman School of Business (Co-Chair)

Ilianna H. Kwaske, School of Science & Engineering

Nicholas Mattei, School of Science & Engineering

Vicki Mayer, School of Liberal Arts

Michael Moore, School of Science & Engineering

Kim O'Connor, School of Science & Engineering

Jay Rappaport, School of Medicine (TNBRC)

Chad Roy, School of Medicine

Kenneth Schwartz, School of Architecture and Built Environment

Verse Shom, School of Architecture and Built Environment

Eric Ney Smith, A. B. Freeman School of Business

Juan Terre, School of Medicine

David Thompson, A. B. Freeman School of Business

Elizabeth Townsend Gard, School of Law



Andrea Turner Moffitt, TIE Council Member, with Matt Higgins at Tulane Innovation Day

Tulane Faculty Innovation Ambassadors promote the Institute's mission, exposing students to innovation and entrepreneurship.

Faculty Innovation Ambassadors

Assaf Abdelghani, Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine

Thomas Beller, School of Liberal Arts

Gregory Bix, School of Medicine

Mahir Bilen Can, School of Science & Engineering

Stephanie Cheng, A. B. Freeman School of Business

Charles R. Figley, School of Social Work

Tracy Fischer, School of Medicine (TNBRC)

Loren Gragert, School of Medicine

Cordula Roser Gray, School of Architecture and Built Environment

Vijay T. John, School of Science & Engineering

Jay Kolls, School of Medicine

Rob Lalka, A. B. Freeman School of Business

Noshir Pesika, School of Science & Engineering

Wayne F. Reed, School of Science & Engineering

William Rials, School of Professional Advancement

Harish Sujana, A. B. Freeman School of Business

Adarsh Vijay, School of Medicine

Arthur Wang, School of Medicine

Dawn Wesson, Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine

William Wimley, School of Medicine

Huanbin Xu, School of Medicine

Est. May 2025

Faculty Train In Entrepreneurial Thinking Across All Tulane Schools

Congratulations to the newest graduates of the **Entrepreneur Faculty Development Course (RE)Design Summer Institute**, hosted by the Tulane University Center for Engaged Learning & Teaching (CELT) and the Tulane Innovation Institute.

Over 4+ days in May 2026, faculty from across the university engaged in hands-on sessions exploring entrepreneurship frameworks, pedagogical strategies, and practical tools for direct classroom use. The program emphasized translating entrepreneurial thinking into course design across disciplines.

The institute was led by Eric Liguori, a Jim Moran Professor and associate dean at the Jim Moran College of Entrepreneurship at Florida State University, whose expertise in entrepreneurship education guided participants in reimagining how to integrate entrepreneurial skill sets across fields of study. As part of the program, participants developed actionable plans to create or redesign syllabi for implementation in the upcoming academic year, with continued development and refinement planned as the work moves into classroom practice.

Guest speakers included New Orleans ecosystem experts Tim Williamson (Nieux Society) and Evie Poitevent Sanders (GNO Inc.); startup founders Amanda Martin (Studyville) and Vincenzo Caronna (Thrivvy); and Tulane adjunct faculty member Michelle Jackson, a graduate of the Summer 2025 cohort. The speakers contributed valuable insights and practical perspectives that enriched the weeklong experience.



There are conferences that are snooze fests, and there are ones that leave you energized and thinking at 100+ mph. This is definitely one of the latter."— Faculty participant

Entrepreneur Faculty Development Course (RE)Design Summer Institute Alumni

A. B. Freeman School of Business

Larisa Cioaca
Larry Merington
Christopher Otten
Amin Sabzehzar
Elia Brodsky
Musa Caglar
Stephanie Cheng
Ambika Prasad
Erick Valentine

School of Architecture & the Built Environment

Dwan Adam
Shawna Meyer
Verse Shom
Darryl Glade
Abigail Lukens

Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health & Tropical Medicine

Susan Cheng
Richard Priore
Karis Schoellmann
Sarah Michaels
Jylana Sheats

School of Science & Engineering

Khaled Adjerd
Anika Auni
Mykel Green
Keena Kareem
Mahir Bilen Can
Carolyn Bayer
Scott Grayson
Ahmad Majed
Alireza Shirvani

School of Medicine

Lisa Morici
Nivedita Tiwari
Deepak Tripathi

School of Professional Advancement

Kay McLennan
Brooke Grant
Michelle Jackson
Tihara Richardson Sommers
Marko Salvaggio

School of Social Work

Margaret Mary Downey
Karrie Gaspard-Hogewood

School of Liberal Arts

Faycal Falaky
Antonio Gomez
Michael Gutierrez
Chara Kokkiou
Laura Helen Marks
Ryan McBride
Isa Murdock-Hinrichs
Owen Neace
Alexis Culotta
Allyson Heumann
Amanda Kruger Hill
Lyndrison Lincoln
Charles Mignot
Eloise Petro
Jolene Pinder
Leslie Scott
Ellen Sovkoplas
Lin Zhu

**2025 alumni noted in blue*

32

FY26
Applicants



56

FY25 & 26
Faculty trained to
teach I&E

8

Schools
represented
FY26



Entrepreneur Faculty Development Course (RE)Design Alumni Spotlight



Amanda Kruger Hill

Executive Director of the Cowen Institute
Professor, School of Liberal Arts and
School of Professional Advancement

Amanda Hill immediately translated the faculty workshop's tools into her teaching, integrating design thinking, the Business Model Canvas, and ideation exercises into her courses. These additions strengthened students' ability to identify problems, engage community stakeholders, and prototype real-world solutions.

Beyond Tulane, Hill extended the workshop's impact through her leadership at the Cowen Institute, where she developed the Educational Entrepreneur Summit, which convened educators, nonprofit leaders, principals, and school counselors across New Orleans. The Summit invited participants to bring pressing institutional challenges and apply structured innovation tools to design and pitch actionable solutions.

Together, these efforts expand faculty development into ecosystem-wide capacity building. Hill's approach reflects the view that educators already function as problem-solvers, and that entrepreneurial frameworks help make that work more intentional and systematic. Hill also presented this work at the Tulane Research, Innovation and Creativity Summit in April.



Allyson Joy Heumann

Professor of Practice,
School of Liberal Arts

Allyson Heumann applied lessons from the faculty course to launch the Startup Strategy Lab (SLAM 3915), a new course in the School of Liberal Arts in partnership with the Tulane Innovation Institute. The workshop's emphasis on entrepreneurial pedagogy shaped how she built this new undergraduate course from the ground up.

Heumann designed Startup Strategy Lab as a venture creation environment where students learned by building. She embedded design thinking, customer discovery, minimum viable product development, and feedback cycles into the syllabus, enabling students to move quickly from idea formation to venture concepts. The structure mirrored real startup workflows, requiring students to test assumptions, engage users, and refine business models based on evidence.

She also integrated pitch development and milestone-based progression, with checkpoints guiding students to final investor-ready presentations. This strengthened students' ability to articulate value propositions, assess feasibility, and communicate with stakeholders.

Startup Strategy Lab was designed to be open to undergraduates across all disciplines, advancing an entrepreneurship for all model that mirrors the Faculty Development Course by extending access to everyone at Tulane. The course culminated in a pitch competition and funding for the winning students to launch their companies.



Left to right: Kimberly Gramm, Chad Roy, and Ariel Johnson

Tulane Innovation Institute Launches Founder Lab to Turn Faculty Research Into Investor-Ready Startups

This year, the Tulane Innovation Institute launched Founder Lab, an initiative to accelerate the commercialization of university research by pairing promising Tulane-developed technologies with experienced entrepreneurs who guide early-stage venture formation and move discoveries toward real-world application.

The program positions Tulane among a small group of universities nationwide with structured entrepreneur-in-residence models that speed technology transfer and increase the impact of federally funded research. It integrates faculty expertise, entrepreneurial leadership, seed funding, and commercialization support into a coordinated pathway to help technologies advance toward market readiness.

Founder Lab also provides teams with access to commercialization resources, mentorship, and potential investment pathways. The model strengthens Tulane's ability to translate research into applied solutions by reducing barriers between academia and industry. Over a multi-month development process, teams position their technology, refine regulatory strategy, validate market need, and build scalable business models to inform a go/no-go decision on company formation. Those with a "go" decision have a direct path to a \$25K "concept fund" round to launch.

The 1st cohort included a collaboration among Chad Roy, vice chair for research at the John W. Deming Department of Medicine in the Tulane School of Medicine, who also serves as the associate dean for research, a professor of medicine, microbiology and immunology, and a core scientist at the Tulane National Biomedical Research Center; Joseph Buell, former Tulane Medicine faculty and now a hepatobiliary surgeon in Dallas; and Ariel Johnson, a health care strategist with experience in innovation and commercialization who helped lead Endotronix to a \$675 million acquisition. Together, they are advancing a novel antimicrobial molecule for a surgical irrigation solution that maintains sterility during procedures and reduces the risk of infection. Their startup company is Bio Protectant Technologies (BPT).

By focusing on high-potential technologies and pairing them with experienced entrepreneurial leadership, Founder Lab creates a pathway to accelerate the adoption of innovation. The initiative is expected to expand Tulane's regional innovation capacity and reinforce New Orleans' role as a center for biomedical commercialization and startup formation. **Learn more about Founder Lab by visiting innovation.tulane.edu/founderlab.**

Quincy Brown named National Academy of Inventors Fellow

Biomedical engineering professor J. Quincy Brown, the Mark and Diana Tipton Endowed Professor, was named a 2025 fellow of the National Academy of Inventors (NAI) in recognition of his work developing advanced imaging technologies that improve cancer detection, surgical precision and treatment outcomes.

Brown leads the MAGIC-SCAN project, which received up to \$23 million in funding from the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) and national attention following a presidential visit in 2024. The system is designed to confirm, within minutes after surgery, whether all cancerous tissue has been removed, thereby supporting more complete and accurate tumor excision.

He holds 27 patents in optical imaging, including technologies for spectral tissue analysis, automated biopsy processing, and rapid digital pathology systems.

Brown also co-founded Instapath to commercialize his imaging technologies. His work integrates research, entrepreneurship, and clinical application to improve cancer care and surgical decision-making.

Tulane Innovation Institute honors faculty innovators at the Office of Research, Scholarship, and Artistic Achievement Awards (November 2025)

IP Innovator Award was presented to Monica Embers, professor of microbiology and immunology and director of vector-borne disease research at the Tulane National Biomedical Research Center, for advancing patentable technologies in Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses. Her work includes vaccines, antibody therapies, diagnostics such as LYMESEEK™, and multiple patents. She is supported by the NIH, the Department of Defense, and major foundations. Embers has also mentored undergraduate student Dylan Murray, co-founder of Exactics, a Tulane Ventures investee.

Entrepreneurship Award was presented to Chad Roy. Roy was honored for his ability to translate scientific discovery into entrepreneurial impact. His work has resulted in more than 15 issued patents and the creation of 3 companies, 2 of which originated from Tulane research, including Bio Protectant Technologies (BPT).



Samuel Jativa, IP Licensing & Portfolio Management Officer, with Quincy Brown at the National Academy of Inventors Annual Conference and awards ceremony.



Chad Roy, Kimberly Gramm and Monica Embers at the Office of Research, Scholarship, and Artistic Achievement Awards

Tulane National Academy of Inventors Hall of Fame

Since the Tulane Innovation Institute's founding, faculty recognition by the National Academy of Inventors has grown significantly. From 2023-2025, **4** Tulane faculty members have been inducted as NAI Fellows, and **15** have been named Senior Members. Collectively, this group holds more than **257 U.S. patents**.

NAI Fellow

J. Quincy Brown, 2025
David Coy, 2023
Robert Garry, Jr., 2024
Tony Hu, 2023

NAI Senior Member

Matthew Burow, 2026
John Clements, 2026
Matthew Escarra, 2025
Scott Grayson, 2026
Janarthanan Jayawickramarajah, 2025

Vijay John, 2025
Michael Moore, 2026
Lisa Morici, 2026
Michael Naguib, 2025
Kim O'Connor, 2026

Noshir Pesika, 2026
Jay Rappaport, 2025
Wayne Reed, 2025
William Wimley, 2025
James Zadina, 2026

257
U.S. Patents

Provost’s Proof of Concept Fund Advances 6 New Tulane Innovations Toward Commercial Application

Tulane School of Science & Engineering researchers continued to drive innovations with impact in FY26 through the Provost's Proof of Concept (PPOC) Fund, administered by the Tulane Innovation Institute's **Robert L. Priddy Innovation Lab** in partnership with Provost Robin Forman. 6 teams received funding after a competitive review process that drew applications from across the university.

Together, these awards underscore PPOC's role in supporting early-stage innovation that bridges academic discovery and commercialization. Since its launch, the program has distributed more than \$1.16 million across 7 cycles.

Proposals are reviewed by industry and venture experts, with selected teams receiving up to \$50,000 to advance technical development and market validation. Across disciplines, PPOC-funded researchers are positioning Tulane as a growing hub for translational science, where discoveries are shaped into technologies with the potential to improve health, infrastructure, and advanced industrial systems.

2 past recipient teams, Chandler Monk of Cleaved Diagnostics (Fall 2024) and Kalen Hall and Leo Williams of Informuta (Fall 2023) have now opened labs in the New Orleans BioInnovation Center (NOBIC).

Fall 2025 Recipients

Julie Albert

Coastal resilience and storm protection technologies

Yusuf Sermet, Ibrahim Demir, Gabriel Vald

AI-driven de-identification of clinical health care data (De-IdentiPHI)

Denys Bondar

Drone threat detection via decentralized sensor networks (ForesightOne)

Spring 2026 Recipients

Damir Khismatullin

Contact-free levitated droplet diagnostic platform for bioanalysis

Sina Pourtaheri

Sustained-release vancomycin nanospheres for surgical infection prevention

Jianwei Sun

Computational modeling of electron-phonon interactions in quantum materials

23

of PPOC awards
FY23-FY26 up to \$50K each
(18% acceptance rate)

\$1.16M

Total
FY23-FY26
PPOC funding awarded

Fall 2025 recipients



Left to right: Ibrahim Demir, Yusuf Sermet, Julie Albert, Denys Bondar

7

Spinouts created
by PPOC recipients, FY23-26

\$9M+

Funding raised by
12 PPOC teams, FY23-26

55

Students engaged in PPOC projects, FY23-26

Spring 2026 recipients



Left to right: Georgy Sankin, Damir Khismatullin, Kimberly Gramm, Akilan Ramasamy, Sina Pourtaheri

Tulane Innovation Institute Champions Entrepreneurship in the Community

Michelle Jackson

YEA! and "Entrepreneurship in the Big Easy"
Pre-College Instructor,
Adjunct Professor, School of Professional Advancement

Growing up, Michelle Jackson watched her father run a television repair business, and a neighborhood couple operate a local grocery store. Those early lessons in how small businesses create opportunity never left her — and neither did her mother's example as an early-childhood teacher. Today, Jackson has woven both influences together in her work, helping young people see themselves as founders.

Jackson serves as lead instructor for the Tulane Innovation Institute's Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) and "Entrepreneurship in the Big Easy," a Tulane pre-college course developed in collaboration with the Innovation Institute. She was a teen entrepreneur herself, launching PR Solutions, a public relations firm at 18 that still operates today.

Her career path ran through shopping mall management and then the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, where she led a legislative initiative that generated \$84 million in tax credits for seed and early-stage companies and served as executive director of a statewide international business competition that attracted startups from around the world.

Jackson and her husband went on to found i.Invest, a national youth entrepreneurship pitch competition and web-based educational platform for students ages 13 to 19, along with LifeSkills Foundation, a 501(c)(3) dedicated to youth entrepreneurship. When her husband's career brought the couple to New Orleans in 2016, she relocated both organizations here and joined Tulane as an adjunct professor at the School of Professional Advancement.

In May 2025, Jackson deepened her own teaching practice by participating in the Tulane Innovation Institute's Entrepreneur Faculty Development Course (RE)Design Summer Institute, where she redesigned her graduate-level Economic Development and Urban Transformation course. Students in her class learn how to tackle real problems facing New Orleans, using an entrepreneurial mindset, and explore how their ideas could scale to other cities.

i.Invest has since evolved into a grant-making organization, and Jackson has awarded 6 grants to Young Entrepreneurs Academy graduates. She is also an award-winning author whose i.Invest graphic novel series teaches young readers how to start businesses, including the first title, Poppi Makes Cajun Popcorn Magic, set in New Orleans.

Read more about Michelle Jackson at innovation.tulane.edu/stories.



From left to right: Michelle Jackson, DiNaja Brown, Kimberly Gramm, Jalin Carter, and Sharon Goldsmith



“These students are building businesses rooted in their interests, their communities, and the experiences they want to create for others. Their creativity, discipline, and willingness to take risks reflect exactly why entrepreneurship resonates so strongly with this generation.”

— Kimberly Gramm



Est. August 2024

Young Entrepreneurs Academy Graduates Its Second Cohort

The Tulane Innovation Institute is in its second year of partnering with the Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!), a national 501(c)(3) organization that teaches high school students how to start and run businesses, from developing ideas and writing business plans to launching companies. Norman Barnum, chief financial officer of LSU New Orleans, and Michelle Jackson, founder of PR Solutions and adjunct professor at Tulane, served as instructors, with support from the Tulane Innovation Institute team.

The students took to the stage on Monday, April 20, 2026, at the final pitch competition. The event marked the culmination of a 30-week course covering marketing, accounting, legal considerations, website design, public speaking, and pitching.

Charlie Kehlenbach and Emy Foster (Benjamin Franklin High School) took first place and \$1,500 in seed funding for ParTee, a New Orleans-based business that will bring mobile golf simulators to events. Second place and \$1,250 went to Check Ball, founded by Blake Stanfill Jr. (St. Augustine High School), a platform that helps athletes find and book basketball court reservations with real-time visibility.

Third place and \$1,000 went to SIPS NOLA, a teen-centered mocktail bar, founded by Makeda Butler (Benjamin Franklin High School). The People's Choice Award of \$750 went to Aniyah Moore (Edna Karr High School) for her hair-styling business, Styled by Nu. Every presenting YEA! venture also received \$500 to support continued growth.

Michelle Jackson, who also serves as founder and executive director of the i.Invest National Youth Business Competition, awarded 3 additional \$250 grants through her nonprofit to ParTee, Check Ball, and DiNaja Brown (Sci High), who is developing a financial planning organization for high school students.

The final competition was judged by Davorio Stevenson, Idea Village; Shay Claiborne, Milestone Mate; Lindsey Navarro, El Centro; and Jennifer Jones, Louisiana Blue.

Through YEA!, students gain hands-on experience creating businesses while building skills in leadership, communication, and problem-solving.

34

High School
students enrolled

11

Local High Schools
represented

\$12K

Startup funding
awarded

5 Generous sponsors



The Miller
Family Foundation



LOUISIANA
BLUE

The
RosaMary
Foundation

NewOrleansBioInnovationCenter

189

High School and Tulane students
who have taken a
Tulane Innovation Institute course



25+

Innovation & Entrepreneurship courses
currently offered at Tulane,
with 56+ faculty graduates of the
Entrepreneur Faculty
Development Course to launch more



Tulane Innovation Institute Expands Innovation & Entrepreneurship Education in Partner Courses

Tulane Venture Lab (BUSG-4230); *est. Spring 2024*

A partnership between the Tulane Innovation Institute and the A. B. Freeman School of Business has developed a distinctive pedagogical model that embeds students directly into real-time venture capital decision-making. Tulane Venture Lab, now in its fourth semester and taught by Professor David Thompson with the help of Tulane Ventures, moves students beyond simulation-based learning into active roles supporting due diligence within the Tulane Ventures Fund, a \$10 million capital vehicle that invests in Louisiana-based startups. Unlike traditional venture capital courses that rely on historical case analysis or simulated investment exercises, students evaluate live companies operating under real market conditions, with actual capital at stake.

Innovation and Technology Development | Creating Societal Impact with Research Seminar (SCEN-6660); *est. Fall 2025*

Tulane School of Science & Engineering graduate students explored how to translate their lab research into potential ventures through a new one-credit seminar course led by Claiborne Christian. Covering fields such as biomedical engineering and neuroscience, the course introduced students to commercialization concepts, including defining problem statements, conducting market analysis, and evaluating real-world applications for their research. At the final presentations, students pitched venture concepts based on their dissertation research. Students Hailey Faith and Miller Dickerson, also pitched and won the fall Open Medical Innovation Challenge (MIC) Night. Students are encouraged to apply for up to \$50,000 in funding through the Provost's Proof of Concept (PPOC) Fund to further advance their ideas. In fall 2026, the course will be open to School of Medicine PhD students and junior/senior undergraduates in the School of Science & Engineering with engineering capstone projects or research experience.

Tulane Use-Inspired Research and Entrepreneurship; *est. Summer 2026*

This past summer, the School of Science & Engineering, in partnership with the Tulane Innovation Institute, introduced the Tulane Use-Inspired Research and Entrepreneurship Program (TURE), a new undergraduate research experience supported by the U.S. National Science Foundation. TURE connected students with faculty-led research projects, industry mentors, and innovation education.

The 10-week program provided 8 undergraduate students from across the country with a paid summer experience, including a \$7,000 stipend, housing, and travel support. Participants worked alongside Tulane faculty members on projects addressing challenges in health, energy, and environmental systems while learning how research discoveries can translate into real-world applications. Led by Noshir Pesika and Claiborne Christian, TURE combined scientific training with entrepreneurship education, introducing students to commercialization concepts.

Entrepreneurship in the Big Easy and Beyond; *est. Summer 2026*

Entrepreneurship in the Big Easy and Beyond, a new Tulane Pre-College course, introduced high school students to the fundamentals of entrepreneurship through hands-on learning. Students explored idea generation, business model development, and the entrepreneurial mindset in a one-week session. The class culminated in a live pitch competition, giving students the opportunity to showcase their ideas and practice communication skills.

New Startup Strategy Lab (SLAM 3915) Encourages All Students to Pitch Their Big Ideas!

From a microgiving platform inspired by Tulane's culture of service learning to fashion and lifestyle startups designed around student life, the ventures presented at the inaugural Startup Strategy Lab Pitch Competition shared a common theme: students identifying opportunities through their own lived experiences and their peers' needs.

Tulane students learned to transform ideas into viable ventures through Startup Strategy Lab (SLAM 3915), a new experiential learning course created in partnership with the Tulane Innovation Institute and the School of Liberal Arts' Strategy, Leadership, and Analytics Minor (SLAM).

The course, taught by Allyson Joy Heumann, gave undergraduate students the opportunity to develop business concepts, work alongside mentors, build minimum viable products, compete for a share of \$50,000 in funding, and earn 3 credit hours. Heumann said the course was also designed to give students skills that extend beyond entrepreneurship.

"Startup Strategy Lab challenged students to think creatively, communicate strategically, and solve problems," Heumann said. "Throughout the semester, students developed skills in storytelling, leadership, collaboration, audience engagement, data-driven decision-making, and professional presentation, while learning how to assess opportunities and build ventures with value."

5 finalist teams were selected to compete in the final pitch competition.

The \$15,000 first-place prize was awarded to **Givv** (pictured below center), a social-impact marketplace app designed to connect Tulane students with nonprofits through micro-donations, social sharing, and campus-based competitions.



**When I signed up
for Startup Strategy
Lab, I expected a
unique experience —
what I got far
exceeded it. Through
comprehensive
hands-on learning
and real-world
exposure, this class
delivered something
I didn't know a
classroom could."
— Yoav Alperson**

The AI platform aims to engage the next generation of donors while strengthening support for New Orleans nonprofits.

Givv team members included Yoav Alperson, a finance major in the A. B. Freeman School of Business and a political economy major in the School of Liberal Arts; Avi Gorodetski, a sociology and social policy and practice major in the School of Liberal Arts; Jaret Solomon, a mathematics and computer science major in the School of Science & Engineering; and Catherine MacConnell, a public health major in the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine.

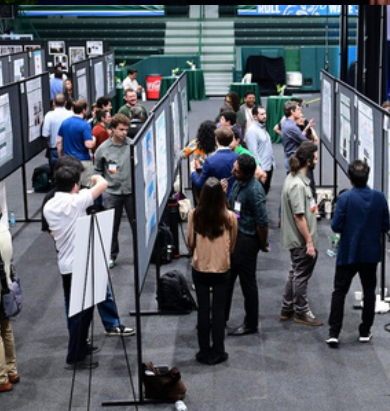
Second place and \$12,000 went to **Closet Collective** (pictured bottom left), a fashion rental and resale platform that allows college students to rent, buy, and discover event-ready clothing from peers, as well as curated pop-up experiences. The idea was pitched on stage by Rachel Hurt, who is a business management major in the A. B. Freeman School of Business, a psychology major in the School of Science & Engineering, and an English major in the School of Liberal Arts; Marjola Demollari, who is a legal studies and business major in the A. B. Freeman School of Business and a political science major in the School of Liberal Arts; and Sienna Luttrell, a design major in the Tulane School of Architecture & Built Environment.

Third place, along with \$10,000, was awarded to **Chark Swimwear**, founded by Charlotte Greer (pictured bottom right), a communications major in the School of Liberal Arts, and pitched with Laura Wild, a psychology major in the School of Science & Engineering, and Reagan Hickey, a political economy major in the School of Liberal Arts and psychology and an early childhood education major in the School of Science & Engineering. The fashion company was recently featured in Vanity Fair UK.



600

+ Registered Attendees



310

+ Abstract and Presentation Submissions



Est. March 2023

Tulane Research, Innovation and Creativity Summit Highlights Research Across Campus for Public and Industry Audiences

The 4th annual Tulane Research, Innovation and Creativity Summit (TRICS) was held on April 15-16, 2026, at the Avron B. Fogelman Arena in the Devlin Fieldhouse, showcasing research, innovation, and creativity across disciplines.

The 2-day event presented by the **Robert L. Priddy Innovation Lab**, in partnership with the Office of Research, brought together students, faculty, industry professionals, and community members for poster sessions and lightning talks spanning fields from artificial intelligence and health care to environmental science, architecture, and the liberal arts.

Poster submissions spanned nearly every academic discipline at Tulane, with researchers available throughout the summit to discuss their work directly with attendees. The format encouraged cross-disciplinary dialogue and the exchange of ideas.

Poster presenters also participated in a juried competition recognizing projects with societal impact and commercial potential. Winners received funding through the Tulane Innovation Institute's annual prize program, now in its third year.

Innovation Prize for Societal Impact (\$1,000)

Julie Cohen, School of Science & Engineering, PhD candidate in neuroscience, Optimized Anti-Epileptic Screening for Pharmacoresistant Epilepsy Using *Drosophila*

Innovation Prize for Technology Development (\$1,000)

Miller Dickerson, School of Science & Engineering, PhD candidate in biomedical engineering, Clinical Translation of Photoacoustic Imaging: Pulsed Laser Diodes for Point-of-Care Deep Tissue Oxygenation Assessment

Industry executives, venture capital leaders, and community partners served as judges, providing feedback and sharing industry perspectives and external opportunities with researchers.

TRICS underscores Tulane's effort to connect academic research with industry pathways, advancing ideas with potential for translation, investment, and real-world impact.

TALK TO INNOVATE

The summit opened with a keynote conversation between **John Landrum**, vice president for business development at Intralox, and **Kimberly Gramm** on how organizations translate new ideas into scalable solutions.

Lightning talks included

Susann Lusnia (SLA) discussed her analysis of a Roman artifact uncovered in New Orleans.

Nicholas Mattei (SSE) examined the societal implications of generative AI.

Amanda Kruger Hill (SLA & SOPA) presented on advancing educational entrepreneurship.

Alexis Culotta (SLA) showcased her work visualizing creative connections through the Artistic Network Toolkit.

Biotech entrepreneurship talks featured ventures created by Tulane students, alumni, and faculty, including **Vinoi Devpaul Vincely**, **LumaWave**; **Kalen Hall** and **Leo Williams**, **Informuta**; **Brian Summa**, **MAGIC-SCAN**; and **Dylan Murray**, **Exactics**.



Brian Summa,
School of
Science
& Engineering



Amanda Kruger Hill,
School of Liberal Arts;
School of Professional
Advancement



Alexis Culotta,
School of Liberal Arts



Susann Lusnia,
School of Liberal Arts



Nicholas Mattei,
School of
Science
& Engineering



Vinoin Devpaul Vincely,
LumaWave

7

Open Medical
Innovation Challenge (MIC) Night
competitions since FY23



3

Year partnership with the
John W. Deming Department of
Medicine, at Tulane School of
Medicine



Center photo from left to right: Yinga Wu,
Ruda Pollard, Nassir F. Marrouche,
Wafaa Elwakil, Kimberly Gramm,
Lindsey Navarro, Annabelle Patterson,
Raahil Rab, Sindhu Pandit, Jeff Myers,
Tania Dall



\$20K+

Invested in early-stage
concepts since FY23

Open MIC Night Highlights Health Innovation at Tulane

In spring 2023, 8 months after the Tulane Innovation Institute was founded, Kimberly Gramm and Nassir F. Marrouche, an internationally recognized electrophysiologist and vice chair of innovation and entrepreneurship in the John W. Deming Department of Medicine, launched Open Medical Innovation Challenge (MIC) Night, a pitch competition to discover new ideas for health and wellness solutions.

Presented by the **Robert L. Priddy Innovation Lab** at the Tulane Innovation Institute, Open MIC Night invites undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, fellows, and recent alumni to pitch early-stage ideas to a cross-sector panel of investors, clinicians, and entrepreneurs. Each presenter is given 3 minutes to pitch and 2 minutes for Q&A.

On October 28, 2025, the 6th cycle was hosted at the New Orleans Culinary and Hospitality Institute, where a standing-room-only crowd gathered against the backdrop of the city skyline. It was the program’s most competitive cycle to date, drawing a record 38 applications from 7 Tulane schools.

5 months later, on April 15, 2026, the 7th cycle opened the Tulane Research, Innovation, and Creativity Summit at the newly renovated Richardson Memorial Hall, a site with a long history of medical innovation and formerly home to Tulane’s School of Medicine in the early 20th century. Co-hosted with StartupNOLA NOW, the event drew more than 200 attendees, including investors, founders, and community members. 36 people applied to present from 7 schools. 10 finalists were selected from each application cycle to pitch at the event.

Now in its 7th cycle, Open MIC Night has received more than 166 ideas from across the university and invested more than \$20,500 in early-stage projects. Several concepts have become startups, including Informuta, Cleaved Diagnostics, LumaWave, and Exactics. Every Open MIC Night applicant is also offered continued support, mentorship, access to entrepreneurial education programming, and resources through the NSF’s Innovation Corps (I-Corps).

Fall 2025 Winners

Susan Cheng, faculty, Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine;
Gamified health app for faster clinical diagnoses

Jordan Williams, undergraduate, School of Liberal Arts;
NORA, AI system for early maternal health risk detection

Hailey Faith, graduate student, School of Science & Engineering;
Predictive system to prevent ventilator-induced lung injury

Miller Dickerson, graduate student, School of Science & Engineering;
Low-cost bedside placental oxygenation monitor

Christian Massad, (People's Choice Award), postdoctoral researcher,
Tulane Research Innovation for Arrhythmia Discovery Center (TRIAD);
Wearable-based continuous cardiovascular monitor

Spring 2026 Winners

Wafaa Elwakil, graduate student, Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine;
Real-time Vibrio vulnificus detection platform for Louisiana waterways

Annabelle Patterson, undergraduate 4+1, A. B. Freeman School of Business;
Car safety systems addressing crash test disparities for women

Yinga Wu, postdoctoral researcher, School of Medicine;
Connor Schiefferle, undergraduate, School of Science & Engineering;
Dual-target molecular therapy for fibrosis

Raahil Rab, (People's Choice Award) undergraduate, School of Science & Engineering;
CarryOn, AI therapy reinforcement partner



Est. November 2024

10

Finalists representing
4 Tulane Schools

Open Season Showcases Early-Stage Ideas



Participating in Tulane Innovation Institute pitch competitions has been one of the most impactful parts of our journey.

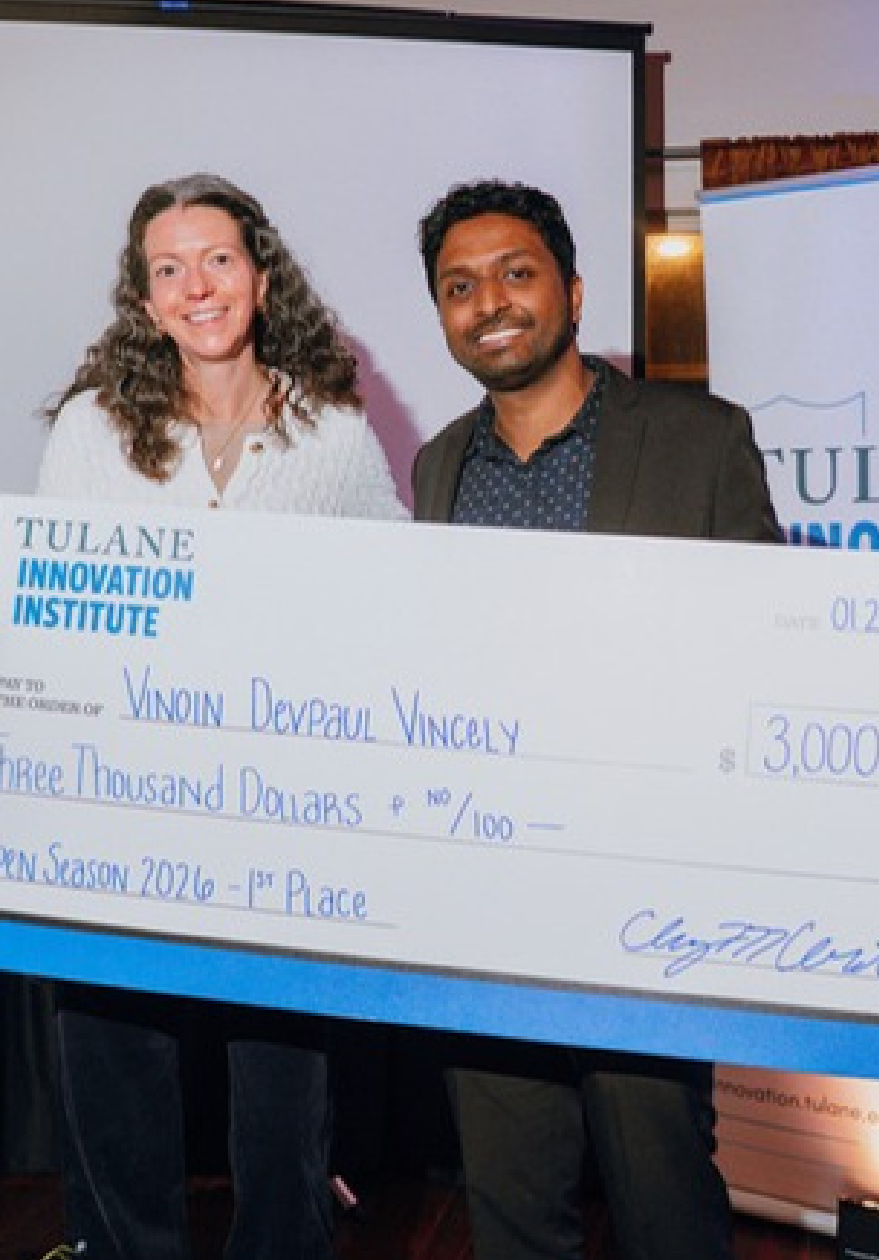
It has helped us connect with mentors and the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem.” — Vinoin Devpaul Vincely

On January 28, 2026, the Tulane Innovation Institute hosted its 2nd Open Season Pitch Competition, bringing together aspiring entrepreneurs, community members, investors, and volunteer judges. Open Season's core purpose is to lower barriers to entrepreneurship and help ideas thrive in a supportive environment.

10 finalists represented 4 schools across Tulane — the School of Science & Engineering, the A. B. Freeman School of Business, the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, and the School of Medicine.

First place went to Vinoin Devpaul Vincely, a recent PhD graduate, Tulane Innovation Fellow in the **Robert L. Priddy Innovation Lab**, and co-founder of LumaWave (pictured top left with co-founder Carolyn Bayer, an associate professor in the School of Science & Engineering), for a wearable fetal oxygenation sensor that fills a critical gap in maternal and fetal care. Second place and the People's Choice award went to Tulane alumni Nicholas Yum and Tristan Sariago of Breeze Shuttles, a free-to-low-cost electric microtransit service now expanding across New Orleans and other college towns. Third place went to Benjamin P. Stager, a CAIDS career advisor and Tulane alumnus, for GradienTek, a platform that streamlines the creation of educational materials for teachers and students.

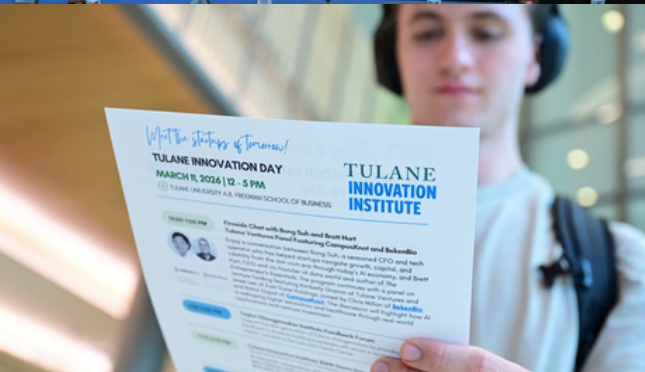
Vincely reflected on LumaWave's participation in pitch competitions, "From our very first pitch to now, the growth has been tremendous. We've learned how to communicate our technology with clarity and purpose, and how to translate complex ideas into real-world value."



From left to right: Claiborne Christian,
Nassir F. Marrouche, Kimberly Gramm

**PRESENTED BY THE
ROBERT L. PRIDDY INNOVATION LAB**





Est. March 2025

Tulane Innovation Day During New Orleans Entrepreneur Week Highlights AI, Venture Capital, and Innovation

Tulane Innovation Day brought together entrepreneurs, investors, innovators, and members of the Tulane community on March 11, 2026, during New Orleans Entrepreneur Week at the Marshall Family Commons in the A. B. Freeman School of Business.

The event featured conversations on entrepreneurship, venture capital, and artificial intelligence, highlighting the people and ideas shaping the future of innovation.

The program opened with a conversation between technology and startup leaders Bong Suh and Brett Hurt, a TIE Council member. Drawing on decades of experience building companies, guiding organizations through growth and capital strategy, and supporting entrepreneurs, Suh and Hurt shared perspectives on leadership, innovation, and navigating change in an evolving technology landscape. Both speakers have a personal connection to Tulane as parents of students and alumni.

The event continued with a venture funding panel featuring Kimberly Gramm, managing partner of Tulane Ventures; Jesse Lee, founding partner of East Dune Holdings and a TIE Council member; and the founders of Tulane Ventures' portfolio companies, Christopher Millan of Beken Bio and Rahul Gopal of CampusKnot. The discussion explored how artificial intelligence is creating new opportunities in health care and higher education, while offering insight into fundraising, venture investment, and scaling early-stage companies.

Following the panel, the Taylor Center Changemaker Institute Showcase featured Tulane students presenting social and environmental impact ideas.

The day continued with the Tulane Innovation Institute \$50K Demo Day, sponsored by the Burton D. Morgan Foundation, Stone Pigman, and 1834 Ventures, in which student and regional entrepreneurs competed for startup funding totaling \$50,000.

The event closed with networking, the announcement of \$50K Demo Day winners, and recognition of the inaugural Green Wave Innovation Mentor Award recipients. Tulane Innovation Day underscored the university's growing role in connecting research, entrepreneurship, and investment across the region.

400

+ Registered Attendees

10

Startup Pitches

\$50K

Awarded to 3 winners

\$50K Demo Day Judges
Spring 2026

Left to right: Rob Tucci, Bong Suh,
Evan Nicoll, Lindsey Navarro





1st

Est. March 2024

New Orleans Area Startup Thrivvy Wins First Place at \$50K Demo Day

Thrivvy founder and CEO Vincenzo “Cenzo” Caronna (pictured top left center) was the first-place winner of \$50K Demo Day and received \$25,000. Caronna has participated in 3 cohorts of the Innovation Institute’s Startup Team Mentoring program and first pitched at the \$50K Demo Day in 2024 with a consumer-facing grocery price-comparison app. He later pivoted after identifying an unmet need in market intelligence among food and beverage brands. In addition to winning first prize, Thrivvy also received a \$25,000 SAFE investment from \$50K Demo Day sponsor 1834 Ventures.

Today, Thrivvy helps emerging and mid-sized brands monitor competitive performance at the store level so they can price more strategically, identify expansion opportunities, and respond quickly to market shifts. The company plans to launch its platform and onboard its first brand partners in the coming months, with a longer-term goal of supporting thousands of growing brands navigating increasingly complex retail environments.

Caronna, who also serves as entrepreneur-in-residence and executive director at StartUP Northshore, said ongoing mentorship has played a key role in refining the company’s positioning and investor readiness.

“Entrepreneurship is a constant learning process, no matter how much experience you have,” he said. “The Tulane Innovation Institute mentor team helped sharpen our go-to-market strategy and prepare us for investor conversations.” Thrivvy’s dedicated mentors included Kevin Bratcher, chief operating officer at Nature Coatings Inc.; Michael Lisse, head of financial services, Unosquare, LLC; Chris Meaux, founder and CEO of QiMana Inc.; Jerome Stewart, SVP, global head of marketing, at Amagi; and Scott Reamer, senior director of enterprise strategy at RSM and co-founder of Jackson’s Honest.



2nd



3rd

LumaWave (pictured middle left), which is developing portable photoacoustic sensing technology for real-time deep-tissue health monitoring, took second place and received \$15,000. **Tahda Baby** (pictured bottom left), a maternal care navigation platform, earned third place and \$10,000. The \$500 People’s Choice Award went to **Meli**, an AI-powered estate-planning tool for financial advisors and their clients. The 2026 competition was funded by the Burton D. Morgan Foundation. Tulane President Michael A. Fitts was also in attendance to hand out the checks to the winners.

The \$50K Demo Day competition is open to startups that have received mentorship from the Green Wave Innovation Network (GWIN), a group of 109 Tulane alumni, parents, and local executives who volunteer their time and expertise to support early-stage ventures.

The 10 competing startups represented sectors including health care, defense technology, fashion commerce, housing, and consumer goods. Prior to the event, all finalists received pitch coaching from Aaron Foss, a serial entrepreneur, investor, and \$50K Demo Day coach.

The 6-member judging panel included Michael Acks of RMC Capital and a TIE Council member; Kwamena Aidoo of Corridor Ventures; Lindsey Navarro of El Centro Inc. and community council member; Evan Nicoll of 1834 Ventures and GWIN mentor; startup advisor Bong Suh; and Rob Tucci of the Texas Halo Fund and Tulane Ventures investment committee member.



President Michael A. Fitts presented checks to the 2026 winners.

PITCH TO INNOVATE

The Top 10 Pitched Big Ideas at \$50K Demo Day



Abodingo simplifies off-campus housing by giving students and landlords one end-to-end platform for tenant acquisition, property management, lease communication, rent payments, and maintenance requests.
(Alec Rovner & Amara Midouhas, Tulane Alumni)



Rudra Health builds ANUVA OS, a neurology care coordination platform linking patients, caregivers, and care teams to deliver continuous support between visits and streamline clinical workflows.
(Vishal Bhimarasetty, Tulane Alumni)



Argus Foresight builds early-warning drone detection systems using networks of low-cost passive RF sensors and edge AI. Developed through DARPA-funded research and field-tested in conflict zones, the technology serves defense and critical infrastructure customers.
(Denys Bondar, Tulane Faculty)



Tahda Baby offers a pregnancy education and care navigation platform delivering evidence-based modules, practitioner connections, and coordinated support to improve maternal outcomes for health plans, employers, and communities.
(Ashley-Nicole Grosse, Community Member)



CORE reduces processing delay in clinical settings by synthesizing vitals, labs, and patient history into a prioritized roadmap that reduces cognitive latency and prevents avoidable deaths.
(Charon Flowers Maple, Tulane Graduate Student)



Thrivvy delivers AI-powered market intelligence for emerging and mid-sized consumer packaged goods (CPG) brands, providing real-time store-level insights into pricing, promotions, availability, and competitive positioning through continuously collected eCommerce data.
(Enzo Caronna, Community Member)



LumaWave provides portable photoacoustic sensing technology that delivers real-time, quantitative insights into deep tissue health in clinics, and remote settings.
(Carolyn Bayer, Tulane Faculty & Vinoin Devpaul Vincely, Tulane Alumni and staff member)



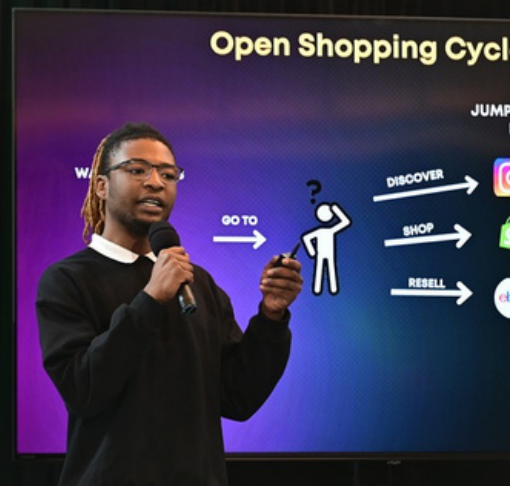
Voice of the Youth (VÔTY) designed an AI-powered fashion platform for Gen Z that connects social inspiration with seamless purchasing through a creator-driven commerce experience.
(David Jimson, Community Member)



Meli created a B2B2C estate-planning software enabling financial advisors to collaboratively document personal property with their clients using AI-powered tools to create structured inventories, preserve legacy, and reduce conflict.
(Amanda Fetter, Tulane Alumni & Artemis Antipapas)



XRMedix is developing an augmented reality and AI needle navigation system that enables physicians to perform precise needle-based procedures by projecting 3D anatomical maps onto patients, with integrated real-time needle tracking.
(Prabhakar Vemavarapu, Community Member)



Tulane Innovation Fellow Vinoin Devpaul Vincely and Professor Carolyn Bayer Awarded a \$1.5 Million ARPA-H Grant

Tulane researchers from the School of Science & Engineering received a \$1.5 million award from the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) to advance a next-generation fetal monitoring technology through their LumaWave spinout.

The award, through ARPA-H's Making Obstetric Care Smart (MOCS) program, supports the continued development of a sensing platform created by biomedical engineering researchers Carolyn Bayer, associate professor, and Vinoin Devpaul Vincely, a recent PhD graduate and **Tulane Innovation Fellow in the Robert L. Priddy Innovation Lab**. Bayer and Vincely are co-founders of LumaWave. After completing his doctorate in Bayer's lab in 2025, Vincely became chief executive officer of LumaWave, where he leads efforts to translate academic research into the commercial medical device platform.

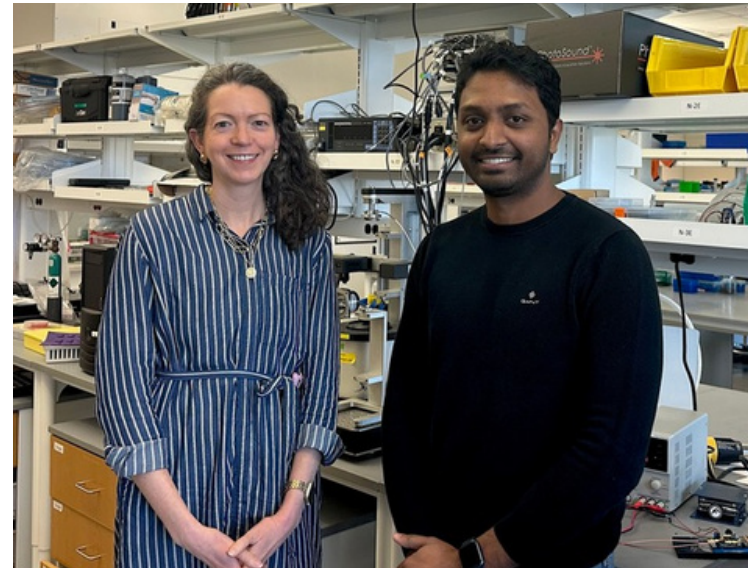
MOCS is a national initiative designed to modernize labor and delivery care by enabling real-time, data-driven insight into fetal health.

At the core of the LumaWave platform is spectral photoacoustic imaging, a technique that combines pulsed light to generate ultrasound signals that can be measured with traditional clinical ultrasound. This enables direct assessment of tissue oxygenation and hypoxia mapping, a critical physiological marker that conventional ultrasound systems cannot capture.

LumaWave addresses a longstanding limitation in obstetric care: current monitoring tools cannot directly measure oxygenation in fetal tissue during pregnancy and labor, leaving clinicians dependent on indirect indicators of fetal distress.

Bayer has spent years advancing photoacoustic imaging methods for women's health applications. The underlying technology was developed in Bayer's laboratory and supported in part by the Innovation Institute through the **Provost's Proof of Concept Fund** in the fall of 2023. A non-provisional patent application has been filed for the technology, and an exclusive license from Tulane has been executed.

Through Tulane Innovation Institute programs, the team has won additional funding, including first place in two **Open MIC Nights** and an **Open Season** competition, and second place in the **\$50K Demo Day** competition during New Orleans Entrepreneur Week 2026. The team also completed the **National Science Foundation's Innovation Corps (I-Corps)** program, which helped refine clinical use cases and identify market opportunities. Vincely also recently finished an **Innovation Fellowship** at the Institute, which pairs mentorship and innovation strategy with startup execution to help fellows turn ideas into scalable ventures. Together, these opportunities supported LumaWave's early company development, fundraising, and validation efforts.



\$1.57M

Total funding raised

109

GWIN mentors



1017

GWIN volunteer
hours in FY26

1370

Total volunteer
hours in FY26



\$411K

Value of total
volunteer hours FY26



Est. October 2023

Green Wave Innovation Network Mentors Show What Is Possible When a Community Rallies Around Founders

James Allen	Larry England	Debra Kissen	David Pruner	Richard Vaughn
Ray Areaux	Eric Ensor	David Kronlage	Steven Ralff	Kelly Venable Carroll
Ken Arnold	Roberto Facundus	Thomas Lee	Megan Reamer	James Vitrano
Salmeron Barnes	Erin Firreno	Michael Lisse	Scott Reamer	Mei Wang
Stacey Berger	Kevin Francis	Jameson MacDonnell	Jeremy Reimann	Giffen Weinmann
Blake Bertuccelli	Grant David Gillham	Allyson Mackay Dombey	Blake Restel	Andrew Wetzler
Sergio Blanco	Darryl Glade	Liz Martin-Malikian	Jonathan Rich	Dave White
Tad Bogdan	Jeffrey Goldman	Jesse McClure	Anthony Robins	Grace Lord Williams
Ali Boolani	Monique Goodwin	Charles McFadden Ellison	Mike Rosenthal	Jura Zibas
Andrew Brain	Allen Graber	Camilla Medeiros	J.R. Ross	Green Wave Innovation Network (GWIN) members generously provide essential resources and mentorship to our entrepreneurial community, helping turn ideas into successful ventures. We are grateful to the Tulane alumni, parents, and community members who volunteer their time to support aspiring entrepreneurs.
Kevin Bratcher	David Hehman	Christopher Millan	Alan Rottman	
Doug Brien	Terrance Henderson	Margaret Molloy	Andrew Schneider	
Zachary Brooks	Elisabeth Hirschbichler	Tara Monistere	Michael Schornstein	
Matt Candler	Peter Hitt	Guillermo Morales	Soumitra Sengupta	
Lee Chedister	Malliron Hodge	Neal Muni	Viqar Shariff	
Kelly Culbertson Cahn	Harris Howard	Evan Nicoll	Joshua Sock	
Paul Daitz	Lin Hymel	Ken Odom	Jerome Stewart	
Jacqueline Daspit	Scott Intagliata	Sam Olmsted	Felicia Stoler	
Lara Decaro	Jennifer Jeansonne	Gary Owens	James Stonecipher	
Alan DeCorte	Daphne Johnson	Bill Palumbo	Dean Teffer	
Dain DeGross	Harris Jones III	Sindhu Pandit	Rodrigo Troni Pena	
Justin Dragna	Shyam Kakar	John Paolini	Kim Tuleu	
Jeff Eckerling	Joel Kanter	Nicki Parr	David Tulman	
Jeff Emery	Liam Kelly	Charles Perrilliat	Maartje van Krieken	
Dan Engel	Sarah Kerin	Michael Pollack	Anu Varadharajan	



Mentorship is one of the most important ingredients in venture creation, and GWIN mentors are truly our secret sauce.” — Kimberly Gramm

Startup Team Mentoring

Startups from Tulane and the greater New Orleans community apply to join a year-long program that pairs them with 3-5 dedicated Green Wave Innovation Network (GWIN) mentors to help them navigate early-stage development and become investment-ready. Now in its 3rd cohort, the program supports ventures with strong potential to benefit New Orleans and beyond by building a solid foundation for growth and scalability.



With intuitive UX, built-in AI safeguards, and affordable pricing, **Bisque** makes survey design effortless and accessible, ensuring organizations never base decisions on bad data again. *(Kirsten Lee Hill)*



Breeze Shuttles provides free-to-low-cost electric rides in college towns and urban districts, funded by a comprehensive advertising ecosystem that includes vehicle wraps, LED screens, in-app ads, flyers, product sampling, school/city partnerships, and rider fares. *(Tristan Sariego, Nicholas Yum)*



Build-A-Way is a software company helping small home service businesses reduce administrative work using voice technology. The company developed a "Zero Typing CRM" built specifically for contractors in plumbing, HVAC, electrical, and landscaping. *(Joshua Bartholomew, Ashton Hilliard)*



DITW is an app that helps consumers discover, rate, and review infused beverages. As the infused beverage market continues to expand, consumers face an overwhelming number of options and limited tools to find products that match their preferences. *(Allison Orth, Brandy Fairburn, Elizabeth Barilleaux)*



NeuraSynced is building an AI-powered recovery monitoring platform for patients discharged after neurological surgery, traumatic brain injury, or stroke. The platform uses EEG and fNIRS biosignals to deliver personalized at-home rehabilitation sessions, track cognitive and motor progress in real-time, and give clinicians continuous visibility into how their patients are recovering. *(Marzonet Palmer)*



QSPARC Labs is a deep-tech venture advancing the frontiers of cryptography and coding theory. The company engineers Post-Quantum Cryptography (PQC) systems designed to secure digital infrastructure against emerging quantum threats. *(Mahir Can, Eli Naig)*



SafePush is a medical device company that is developing a syringe attachment and specially designed syringe that prevent intravenous (IV) pushes of critical care medications from being given too fast, thereby avoiding serious injuries and death. *(Tonia Aiken, Jim Aiken, Tina Mayes)*



Skyline Recon Systems is a property intelligence and aerial documentation platform that helps property owners, independent adjusters, contractors, and recovery professionals make faster, better-informed decisions before and after property loss events. *(Jared Pena)*



loratone helps young readers, including those with learning differences, build essential literacy skills through immersive, multi-sensory story experiences. By pairing classic literature with adaptive soundscapes, they bring every page to life. *(Shivang Thakor, Akin Pounds)*



The Menopause Clinic is a menopause and perimenopause care practice serving women 35 and up. They deliver affordable, clinician-led specialty care using a hybrid model that combines scheduled visits with frequent asynchronous touchpoints, longitudinal symptom tracking, and standardized treatment pathways. *(Crystal Burke)*



Thrivvy is a retail data platform built for emerging consumer packaged goods brands. They help CPG founders and sales leaders track pricing, promotions, and product availability across retailers—at the store level and in real-time. *(Cenzo Caronna, George Walker)*

Startup Team Mentoring participants in other Tulane Innovation Institute programs, including Startup Clinic (The Menopause Clinic) and Open Season (Breeze Shuttles)

11

Startup
Mentor Teams



46

GWIN Mentors matched with the
2026 Startup Mentor Teams





The 1st Green Wave Innovation Network Mentor Awards Take Place at Tulane Innovation Day

The Tulane Innovation Institute launched the inaugural Green Wave Innovation Network (GWIN) Mentor Awards at Tulane Innovation Day, honoring 3 mentors whose volunteer contributions have meaningfully shaped the New Orleans startup ecosystem.

Peer-Nominated Mentor Award

GUILLERMO MORALES of Innoventyx, an international pharmaceutical and biotech consulting firm, brings 30 years of experience in drug discovery, development, and software innovation. He has co-founded multiple companies, raised millions in venture and government funding, and holds 9 granted patents. Morales also served 11 years as editor-in-chief of Molecular Diversity and has reviewed NIH SBIR/STTR grant applications. Peers recognized him for his generosity, deep expertise, and consistent willingness to go above and beyond for mentees and colleagues alike.

Mentee-Nominated GWIN Award

PAUL DAITZ, founder and CEO of Northern Edge Advisors, spent over 3 decades in investment banking, including as managing director at Goldman Sachs and senior managing director at Macquarie Capital. He has advised hundreds of private companies and has taught classes on entrepreneurship. Founders Amanda Fetter and Artemis Antippas of startup Meli and a \$50K Demo Day finalist called him "the most impactful mentor we have ever worked with," citing his hands-on support and willingness to mobilize resources on their behalf.

GWIN Dedication Award

JEREMY REIMANN, a Tulane alumnus and clinical project manager at New World Medical, has been part of GWIN since its earliest days, reviewing grant applications, judging competitions, and mentoring multiple startup teams through the Institute's programs.



BECOME A MENTOR

GWIN offers a variety of engagement opportunities tailored to its members, all designed to support aspiring entrepreneurs on their startup journey. These opportunities are carefully developed to give members a wide range of options, each requiring a different level of time commitment.

Green Wave Innovation Network Speed Mentoring During Wave Weekend

To kick off Wave Weekend '25, the Tulane Innovation Institute brought together our GWIN mentor network and some of the early-stage founders we support. Mentors were stationed at tables throughout the New Orleans BioInnovation Center to welcome aspiring entrepreneurs for 15-minute feedback sessions, giving each founder a chance to sharpen their idea and hear directly from industry experts.

Thank you to the 14 mentors who gave their time and expertise to this next generation of innovators:

Lin Hymel, Michael Lisse, Evan Nicoll, Patrick Hernandez, J.R. Ross, Viqar Shariff, Felicia Stoler, Maartje van Krieken, Jennifer Jeansonne, Andrew Wetzler, Sergio Blanco, Rodrigo Troni Pena, Daphne Johnson, and Grace Lord Williams.



MEET A GWIN MENTOR

Our mentors are ready to support entrepreneurs and early-stage startups. Schedule a meeting with the Tulane Innovation Institute team, and we will set you up with an expert who matches your industry and needs.



Tulane Ventures Portfolio Grows and Includes 1st Investment in a Tulane Undergraduate Startup

Tulane Ventures had an active investment year, backing **5 companies** developing solutions across biotechnology, artificial intelligence, education technology, and civic innovation.

In October, Tulane Ventures invested \$250K in **Exactics**, a biotech startup co-founded by Tulane senior Madeline "Dylan" Murray. The company is developing a rapid at-home diagnostic test that allows users to determine within 15 minutes whether a tick carries the pathogen responsible for Lyme disease. Built on Exactics' patented Proteus+ platform, the modular system can be adapted to detect hundreds of other infectious diseases by swapping out biomarkers.

Tulane Ventures also invested \$100K in **Civilized AI**, a New Orleans-based company that helps nonprofits and cities coordinate their content, systems, and workflows using AI. Founded by Matt Wisdom, who previously built 3D marketplace TurboSquid before its acquisition by Shutterstock, Civilized AI's platform works across chat, SMS, and email to streamline service requests, reduce response errors, and help organizations manage complex workflows more efficiently.

In November, Tulane Ventures invested \$250K in **CampusKnot**, an AI-powered teaching-assistant platform for higher education, founded by Rahul Gopal. The platform helps instructors automate grading and feedback, track participation, and identify students who may be falling behind, giving faculty more time for meaningful classroom engagement.

Tulane Ventures invested \$125K in **Beken Bio**, a biotechnology company developing early-detection blood tests for ovarian, pancreatic, lung, and colorectal cancers. Led by New Orleans native and 2009 Tulane graduate Christopher Millan, the company uses a patented platform that recreates a tumor-like environment and applies artificial intelligence to analyze the biological signals cancer cells release into the bloodstream.

The fifth investment was in a company currently operating in stealth mode, with an announcement expected in fall 2026. Together, these 5 investments reflect Tulane Ventures' strategy of backing founders, including students, alumni, and Louisiana entrepreneurs, who are building scalable companies that address real-world challenges.

Tulane Ventures is a \$10 million seed fund supporting early-stage companies in Louisiana. The fund targets high-growth ventures in health and medicine, climate and energy, and artificial intelligence and technology. Selected companies benefit from tailored consulting, mentorship, and access to the Innovation Institute's resources, designed to help them grow and scale within the state.

TULANE VENTURES FY26 INVESTMENTS



TULANE VENTURES FY25 INVESTMENTS



tulaneventures.com



\$182M

Total portfolio valuation of 10 companies at time of investment



\$92M

Total fund follow-on capital raised by 10 portfolio companies

155 FTE

Current portfolio jobs retained and created



GIVE TO INNOVATE

49

Give Green Donors

Thank you to everyone who participated in our 2026 Give Green campaign!

A gift to the Tulane Innovation Institute could launch the next big tech startup in New Orleans — or bring a life-saving medical innovation to market.

The Tulane Innovation Institute is building a culture of entrepreneurship in our community, helping researchers, students, and local innovators turn discoveries into companies.

And that work is about to get a transformational new home.

Tulane is redeveloping the **iconic Charity building** into a national hub for bioscience, research, and innovation — and the Tulane Innovation Institute will be at its front door. It's the largest, most consequential project in Tulane's history, and private philanthropy is part of making it happen.

Your gift will expand access to funding, mentorship, and commercialization expertise for the entrepreneurs who will define New Orleans' next chapter. **This is your chance to be part of it.**

impact.tulane.edu



The concentration of scientists, students, and entrepreneurs in this revitalized space will lead to cures and new treatments for diseases, as well as vast economic opportunities for our city, state, and region. This project goes far beyond new laboratories and classrooms — it is about accelerating New Orleans' shift toward an economy powered by advanced research, startups, and high-growth industries, and creating a vibrant neighborhood with housing, jobs, and community spaces where New Orleanians can live, work, play, and prosper."

— President Michael A. Fitts

To learn how your gift can make a lasting impact, contact Ginny Wise, Senior Vice President of Advancement, gwise@tulane.edu | giving.tulane.edu/Innovation-Institute.

Our Community Council

The Community Council provides strategic input to elevate our ecosystem and business expertise to support community-building entrepreneurship, including all businesses and people in the greater New Orleans area.

- Sienna Abdulahad**, Taylor Center
- Kornelius Bankston**, Techplug
- Aaron Bloch**, Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans
- Elton Bradley**, Allied Universal Security Services
- Jonathan Everett**, Rock of Ages Baptist Church
- Lyle Leblanc**, Scale New Orleans
- Agnieszka Nance**, Tulane Center for Public Service
- Lindsey Navarro**, El Centro Inc.
- Nyree Ramsey**, Ujamaa Economic Development Corporation

Our Partners

Tulane Innovation Institute’s local and national partners collectively make an impact. We believe strategically aligned partners build an ecosystem to help our innovators & entrepreneurs thrive!



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ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT



LA IO



GREATER NEW ORLEANS
INC
REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



RIGHT TO
START



NSF



FUEL



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CORPS
NSF Innovation Corps



STARTUPNOLA



intralox



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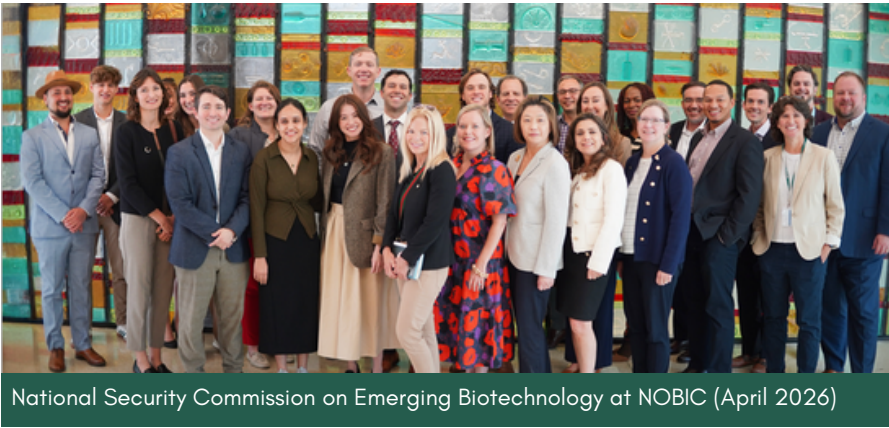


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FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION AND DESIGN THINKING



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OFFICE of INTELLECTUAL
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

THANK YOU



LET'S INNOVATE

Tulane Innovation & Entrepreneurship (TIE) Council

The TIE Council is a group of inspiring, generous leaders who support the Tulane Innovation Institute through significant financial contributions and by sharing their entrepreneurial insight. Their leadership brings BIG ideas to life!



**A very special
thanks to the
Priddy Family
for your
generous lead
gift to the
Tulane
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Institute!” —
Kimberly
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Robert Priddy,
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Our Engaged TIE Council Supports the Future of Innovation & Entrepreneurship



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