

Letter from the President



SPRING 2023

Dear Tulane Community:

Spending time with our amazing students is one of the highlights of my job as president. Our students inspire me every day, and they will write the future of this university. I wish each of you could get to know some of these incredible young people, so I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce you to one extraordinary example: Tulane junior Jasmine Xie Kiley.

I first met Jasmine in her sophomore year when she was one of a cohort of high-achieving students I mentored through the College Scholars Program. It's hard to summarize Jasmine in just a few words: an accomplished violinist, a die-hard Buffalo Bills and Green Wave football fan, and a pre-med biochemistry major minoring in public health who loves listening to Fleetwood Mac. I was asked to teach our College Scholars about leadership, but I learned just as much talking to students like Jasmine, who spoke passionately about the connections between the arts and the sciences: a dance between a molecule and its electrons; a narrative arc about the life of a cell.

Since I met Jasmine last year, she has gone on to win a prestigious Goldwater Scholarship and conduct summer research at the National University of Singapore through the Amgen Scholars Program, where she studied a novel technology for cancer treatment delivery. The intellectual creativity that spurred these accomplishments may eventually help her contribute not just to a cancer treatment, but to a cure. Jasmine exemplifies the Tulane student of today: inquisitive, driven, and determined to make a difference in



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Only the Pioneering

Tulane immunologists **LISA MORICI, PhD**, and **JAMES MCLACHLAN, PhD**, recently received \$1.3 million from the National Institutes of Health to study whether a successful canine vaccine for Lyme disease can be modified for humans.

“We’re truly excited about the potential of this vaccine to stimulate a robust and lasting immune response,” said collaborator Monica Embers, PhD, associate professor of microbiology and immunology, who has long been at the forefront of new Lyme diagnostics, preventatives, and treatments.

Tulane University researchers have also published a pre-clinical study for a new Chagas disease vaccine that prevents lasting heart damage, a long-term complication from the tropical disease, which affects 6 million people in 21 countries. The study’s lead author is Eric Dumonteil, PhD, associate professor of tropical medicine at the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine.

Vaccine development efforts for Chagas and Lyme diseases are only two of many examples of Tulane researchers making a difference locally and across the globe — and that research is only continuing to grow. External research funding at Tulane has exploded, increasing by more than 50 percent over the last five years. Similar growth is expected over the next five years.



ONLY THE TRANSFORMATIVE

Tulane has merged with New Orleans-based LCMC Health, in a move that will bring wide-ranging benefits to New Orleans and southeast Louisiana by expanding access to comprehensive and specialty care, advancing academic medicine, boosting innovation and training in the region, and providing investment and other benefits to the community.

Through this partnership, which became official in January, three Tulane hospitals — Tulane Medical Center, Lakeview Regional Medical Center and Tulane Lakeside Hospital — will join LCMC Health.

“Combining the best community health care with the latest advances in academic medicine will provide the best care for our families, friends and neighbors while helping to drive our region’s economy,” said Tulane University President Michael A. Fitts.

her community and world through collaboration and innovation across fields of knowledge.

Tulane students know that bringing the best minds together from a wide range of fields is the best path to solving complex problems and seizing extraordinary opportunities. They prove this every day. A few standout examples include a group of engineering students designing a lunar communication, energy and storage cube, which was a finalist in NASA's annual RASC-AL competition; a student team – that included Jasmine – winning the Novel Tech Challenge for their home endometriosis test; and a team of Earth and Environmental Sciences students being named semifinalists in the U.S. Department of Energy's EnergyTech University Prize competition.

As we cope with the unprecedented challenges we face at Tulane and beyond, it can sometimes be difficult to ponder the future. But I look forward with confidence when I think of our high-achieving, innovative and entrepreneurial-minded students. In literally every field of human knowledge, Tulane students are lighting the way toward a better tomorrow. Their ambition and drive to make a difference mirror Tulane's own momentum as we make historic strides toward modernizing our campuses, growing our research enterprise, diversifying New Orleans' economy and transforming the landscape of health care in our region.

Of course, the Tulane student experience isn't only about scholarship, service and addressing worldwide problems. Throughout their Tulane story, students embrace and celebrate the one-of-a-kind joy that is New Orleans and experience a cultural immersion like none other – from Carnival to Crawfest. New Orleans embraces them right back, too, especially this year, when the epicenter for much Crescent City celebration was the student section of Yulman Stadium. When Jasmine and her fellow students stormed the field after the Green Wave clinched the AAC championship, the helluva hullabaloo echoed from the Mississippi River to Lake Pontchartrain. It was a moment I will never forget.

One of Fleetwood Mac's enduring hits encourages the listener to go your own way. Students like Jasmine are doing just that: charting their own course, folding all of their passions into a unique path that will change the world for the better. By investing in this generation of students as they engage with their communities, think outside of the box, and apply their creativity to critical questions, we will pave the way for Tulane to make a positive impact for generations to come.

Mike Fitts



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Learn more about the *Only the Audacious* campaign and how you can be involved at audacious.tulane.edu.



Only the Bold

Award-winning neuroscientist **MATTHEW DALVA, PhD**, whose research focuses on how the connections of the brain form and are changed by experience, joined Tulane as director of the Tulane Brain Institute and the university's newest Presidential Chair.

Dalva, a professor in the Department of Neuroscience at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia and vice chair of research in the Department of Neuroscience at the Vicki & Jack Farber Institute of Neuroscience, joined Tulane in late February and succeeded Professor Jill Daniel, PhD, who had served as founding director of the Brain Institute since its inception in 2016.

Recruiting Presidential Chairs is a top priority for President Michael Fitts, who seeks to attract renowned faculty whose pursuit of teaching and research crosses multiple disciplines and helps transform the world.

Dalva's work focuses on how neurons form the connections that let them communicate. "I believe that the best science is done at the intersection of new ideas, technology, people and challenges. The Tulane Brain Institute seeks to generate such an intersection, and I look forward to fostering its success in the Crescent City."

Tulane University

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

6823 ST. CHARLES AVENUE · NEW ORLEANS, LA 70118-5698

504.865.5201 · MIKE@TULANE.EDU



ONLY THE INNOVATIVE

The Tulane University Innovation Institute was awarded \$5 million from the state of Louisiana to support entrepreneurs and small business owners throughout the region.

Tulane will match the award with another \$5 million, enabling the Innovation Institute to launch a new \$10 million startup fund dedicated to creating opportunities for women- and minority-led ventures in Louisiana — entrepreneurs who have traditionally faced barriers accessing capital, markets and networks essential to growing their businesses.

“By nurturing these ventures in the Tulane ecosystem and providing comprehensive support, we’ll be able to foster the entrepreneurial success of underrepresented founders,” said Kimberly Gramm, David and Marion Mussafer Chief Innovation and Entrepreneurship Officer. **“These funds create new opportunities for the broader community.”**