



Lawrence E. Lerner Presidential Endowed Chair in Neuroscience
Tulane University
New Orleans, Louisiana

THE SEARCH

Tulane University (Tulane), a leading private research institution located in the heart of New Orleans, Louisiana, invites exceptional scholars and visionary leaders to apply for the Lawrence E. Lerner Presidential Endowed Chair. This prestigious appointment offers the opportunity to drive groundbreaking research and catalyze interdisciplinary collaboration across neuroscience, medicine, and public health, and to help shape the future of brain health on a global scale. The Lerner Presidential Chair will not only advance Tulane's already growing research enterprise but also mentor the next generation of innovators, positioning Tulane at the forefront of transformative neuroscience discovery.

The presidential chairs at Tulane represent the most prestigious positions on the university's campus, uniting the eminence of a named chair with the vision of a multidisciplinary approach. They were created as part of the university's *Only the Audacious* campaign and are expected to transcend traditional field boundaries and convene experts from across the university. The Lerner Presidential Chair offers an unparalleled platform to drive breakthroughs in neurodegenerative disease and aging research—among the most urgent challenges in modern medicine.

The Lerner Presidential Chair will be a nationally and internationally recognized investigator and mentor whose achievements have shaped the field of neuroscience. As a dynamic mentor and institutional leader, the Lerner Presidential Chair will inspire and develop the next generation of neuroscientists, while elevating Tulane's position as a global leader in neuroscience and neurodegenerative disease research. Beyond advancing science, the Lerner Presidential Chair will generate profound societal and economic benefits for Louisiana—a state with a rapidly aging population—by attracting federal research funding, driving innovation, and drawing world-class scholars and clinicians to the region.

The Lerner Presidential Chair will join Tulane during an exciting period of strategic investment and growth in neuroscience research at the university. In the last three years, Tulane has recruited seven new faculty members across the fundamental, translational, and clinical domains of neuroscience, accelerating discovery and collaboration. With this appointment, the university will strengthen its leadership in neurodegenerative disease and aging research in the State of Louisiana and the Gulf South Region.

Tulane provides a superb foundation for the Lerner Presidential Chair's future success. The university is a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities (AAU) and is nationally recognized for its dynamic research enterprise and commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration. Faculty across Tulane lead pioneering investigations in biomedical sciences, public health, and translational medicine, driving discoveries that shape global health. The university offers an unparalleled environment for neuroscience innovation, anchored by the Tulane Brain Institute and a constellation of health-related research and clinical resources including the Tulane School of Medicine, the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, the Tulane National Biomedical Research Center, the Tulane Center for Aging, the Tulane Cancer Center, and an NIH T32-supported PhD program in Bioinnovation. This ecosystem will provide the Lerner Presidential Chair with extraordinary opportunities to advance critical research areas, including neurodegenerative disease and aging, foster transformative collaborations, and mentor the next generation of scientific leaders.

Tulane has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence as noted at the end of this document.

THE ROLE OF THE LAWRENCE E. LERNER PRESIDENTIAL CHAIR

Established through a \$5 million gift from Tulane alumnus Richard M. Lerner (A&S'81, B'83), the Lerner Presidential Chair will bring a distinguished record of research in neuroscience. As one of Tulane's seven Presidential Chairs, the successful candidate will hold Tulane's most prestigious faculty appointment, created to unite disciplines and accelerate discovery and interdisciplinary research across fields of critical importance to Tulane's future.

The Lerner Presidential Chair will bring deep expertise in aging and AD to one of Tulane's core domains of focus: neuroscience. The successful candidate will have the opportunity to foster interdisciplinary connections across emerging fields, including computational biology, artificial intelligence, biomedical engineering, and data science. Beyond advancing an independent, nationally recognized research program, the Lerner Chair will serve as a member of the Tulane Brain Institute—helping to ensure that the Institute continues to push the boundaries of neuroscience and leverage the university's diverse scientific strengths. By linking the Brain Institute's mission with the translational focus of the Tulane Center for Aging, the Lerner Chair will act as a catalyst for collaboration across disciplines.

This integration of neuroscience and aging builds upon the foundation established by the Tulane Brain Institute, led by Matthew B. Dalva, Ph.D., the Phyllis M. Taylor Presidential Chair in Neuroscience. The Brain Institute functions as a university-wide hub for neuroscience research, education, and outreach, working in close partnership with the [Tulane Clinical Neuroscience Research Center](#) and other neuroscience-focused programs. Faculty from more than sixteen departments and centers in the Schools of Medicine, Science and Engineering, Liberal Arts, and Public Health and Tropical Medicine participate in initiatives that span the Uptown and Downtown campuses and the Tulane National Biomedical Research Center, creating synergy between basic and translational neuroscience. Although Tulane's early

distinction lay in neuroendocrine research, the Brain Institute now encompasses major programs in synapse biology, memory and cognition, neurodegenerative disease and repair, hormone–brain interactions, and brain–body health.

The Brain Institute’s mission is supported by a comprehensive array of shared resources and core facilities that enable research from the molecular to the behavioral level. These include advanced platforms for flow cytometry and cell sorting, tissue culture, electrophysiology, microscopy, and DNA cloning, as well as dedicated cores for cell and tissue imaging, human brain imaging, and multichannel electrophysiology. A transgenic mouse facility and a rodent metabolic core support behavioral and systems-level studies, while access to the Tulane National Biomedical Research Center—one of only seven NIH-funded National Primate Research Centers in the nation—provides unique opportunities for translational studies bridging animal models and human neuroscience. Collectively, these resources form a robust research ecosystem that underpins the Brain Institute’s mission and will empower the Lerner Presidential Chair to lead pioneering investigations into the mechanisms of brain function, aging, and repair. With plans for a major expansion of the Health Sciences Campus already underway, the physical and intellectual environment will enable the Lerner Presidential Chair to lead new interdisciplinary advances in neuroscience and aging.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Tulane University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist the search committee in its identification and review of candidates. Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, CVs, cover letters, a teaching statement, and a research vision statement should be sent electronically and in confidence via the Isaacson, Miller website:

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/tulane-university-brain-institute/lawrence-e-lerner-presidential-chair-neuroscience>

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Tulane University is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action institution committed to excellence through diversity. Tulane University will not discriminate based upon race, ethnicity, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, marital status, military or veteran status, or any other status or classification protected by federal, state, or local law. All eligible candidates are encouraged to apply.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Tulane University. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by Tulane University would supersede any conflicting information in this document.

APPENDIX A: TULANE UNIVERSITY

Tulane University traces its origins back to 1834 and today is recognized as one of the most respected educational and research institutions in the country. It is a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities and is classified by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education as a Research 1 Institution (R1). Tulane is known for its deeply collaborative culture and for its innovative, interdisciplinary research and educational programs that bridge disciplines across the university. It attracts exceptional students who are both intellectually curious and driven by community engagement, taking part in research at all levels of the university and providing thousands of hours of public service to the greater New Orleans community.

The university has an operating budget of just over \$1 billion and an endowment of \$2.3 billion. Tulane enrolls approximately 8,600 undergraduate and 5,200 graduate and professional students from every state in the U.S. and more than 85 nations worldwide. The Tulane faculty totals over 1,200 full-time members with a staff of approximately 3,00. The university is organized into ten academic divisions: [Newcomb-Tulane College](#), [A.B. Freeman School of Business](#), [School of Architecture](#), [School of Professional Advancement](#), [School of Law](#), [School of Liberal Arts](#), [School of Medicine](#), [Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine](#), [School of Science and Engineering](#), and the [School of Social Work](#).

For more information about Tulane University, please visit the [Tulane website](#).

APPENDIX B: RESEARCH AND INNOVATION AT TULANE

Over the past decade, Tulane has experienced historic growth, investing heavily in research, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Nearly half of the \$1.5 billion raised through the *Only the Audacious* campaign (2017–2022) supported research—funding infrastructure improvements, endowed faculty positions, and Presidential Chairs. Building on this success, the next campaign, *Always the Audacious*, will drive advances in climate science, infectious diseases, brain health, healthy aging, and health equity, while expanding lab space and translational research capacity.

The university continues to make major investments in infrastructure to keep up with the extraordinary growth in research activity and the ambitions of Tulane’s faculty. This includes efforts like the [Tulane University Translational Science Institute \(TUTSI\)](#), which brings together researchers from Tulane School of Medicine, School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, School of Science and Engineering, and School of Social Work to find better ways to diagnose, treat, and prevent disease and translate scientific discoveries into medical practices that improve patient care and public health. In 2023, longtime Tulane supporters Libby and Robert Alexander [donated more than \\$12 million to advance a university-wide data science initiative](#) with the goal of transforming teaching and research across all disciplines at Tulane and positioning the university as a leader in data pedagogy. Tulane’s [Connolly Alexander Institute for Data Science](#), founded in 2021, fosters data literacy and science through education, research, and service to the community.

Tulane also supports a robust network of core facilities that enable cutting-edge investigation across disciplines. These include the [Tulane Center for Translational Research in Infection & Inflammation](#), [NextGen Sequencing Core](#), [Brain Institute Cell and Tissue Imaging Core](#), and [Tulane Transgenic Core Facility](#), among others. Additionally, the Tulane School of Medicine recently installed a new MRI machine research facility, the [Tulane Advanced Imaging Center \(TAIC\)](#), expanding the university's capabilities in neuroimaging and translational research.

Steadfast in its commitment to innovation, Tulane's downtown campus is home to the [Tulane Innovation Institute \(TUII\)](#), which acts as a combined technology and startup accelerator for faculty, researchers, staff, students, and community members. Furthering Tulane's entrepreneurial spirit is the University's dedicated investment and startup platform, [Tulane Ventures](#), which provides early-stage capital and strategic support to help translate Tulane research innovations into scalable commercial ventures that drive economic growth across New Orleans and beyond.

APPENDIX C: TULANE BRAIN INSTITUTE

Founded in 2016, the Tulane Brain Institute is dedicated to advancing the understanding of the intricate processes underlying brain health and dysfunction. It enables strategic planning and coordination across a diverse, institution-wide landscape and supports excellence in neuroscience education and discovery. The Brain Institute was designed to be university-wide, and since its conception, it has leveraged Tulane's expertise in fundamental neuroscience as well as clinical and translational medicine. Faculty from more than 16 departments and centers in the School of Medicine, the School of Science & Engineering, the School of Liberal Arts, and the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine have come together to participate in collaborative research initiatives through the Institute.

Physically, the Brain Institute spans the Main Campus, the Health Sciences Campus, and the [Tulane National Biomedical Research Center](#) – converging basic and translational biomedical neuroscience research. The Tulane National Biomedical Research Center is one of only seven Primate Centers in the U.S. Though Tulane is traditionally recognized for its rich and prestigious history in neuroendocrine research, it has since expanded to include other exciting areas in basic neuroscience. Today, research at the Tulane Brain Institute is organized into four thematic areas: memory and cognition; neurodegenerative disease, neural injury & repair; hormone-brain interactions; and brain-body health. These research areas are supported by the Brain Institute through strategic investment in programmatic initiatives and physical infrastructure. The Tulane Brain Institute is directed by Dr. Matthew Dalva, holder of the Phyllis M. Taylor Presidential Chair in Brain Science.

APPENDIX D: UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

Michael Fitts, Tulane’s 15th president, has led the institution since July 2014 with a bold vision to expand cross-disciplinary education and research. Central to this vision are Presidential Chairs, which attract world-class faculty and fuel transformative, interdisciplinary scholarship. Before Tulane, Fitts served 14 years as Dean of the University of Pennsylvania Law School, where he was recognized for advancing interdisciplinary education. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Harvard University and a Juris Doctor from Yale Law School.

Dr. Robin Forman was appointed Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost in September 2016. He previously served as Dean of the Emory College of Arts and Sciences and as the Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Mathematics at Emory University. Earlier in his career, he held faculty and administrative appointments at Rice University and served as an instructor at MIT and a visiting professor at the University of Burgundy, Harvard University, and the Mathematical Research Institute. Dr. Forman earned both his Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees in mathematics from the University of Pennsylvania and a Ph.D. in mathematics from Harvard University. His research—funded by the National Science Foundation, the National Security Agency, and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency—focuses on combinatorial methods in topology and geometry.

APPENDIX E: NEW ORLEANS, LA

Famed for its history, music, and cuisine, New Orleans is one of the world’s most extraordinary cities. Iconic events such as Mardi Gras and Jazz Fest draw thousands of visitors each year, while the city’s distinctive neighborhoods reflect its French, Spanish, African, and Caribbean influences. The Tulane experience is deeply interwoven with this rich cultural tapestry, and many students choose to remain in New Orleans after graduation.

Tulane has long been deeply engaged with its home city. Students, faculty, and staff contribute thousands of hours of service annually, strengthening the fabric of the New Orleans community. This shared commitment to the region attracts students and faculty across disciplines who are eager to connect scholarship with impact. Tulane also maintains a strong and enduring partnership with the State of Louisiana. The university is recognized annually during Tulane Day at the Capitol and through legislative resolutions commending its research and educational contributions. The Louisiana Legislature has consistently affirmed Tulane’s role as an economic engine and innovation hub, citing its \$5.2 billion annual impact (2024), leadership in the health sciences, and commitment to advancing lifesaving research—including breakthroughs in neurodegenerative diseases—through state-supported initiatives and scholarships.