N.O. Entrepreneur Week highlights Tulane's role in startup scene

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The fifth annual New Orleans Entrepreneur Week shined a spotlight on the city's fast-growing startup scene this week, but the head of the Levy-Rosenblum Institute for Entrepreneurship at Tulane University told attendees that the event is also a testament to the important role Tulane plays in the city's entrepreneurial ecosystem.



Ralph Maurer, executive director of the Levy-Rosenblum Institute for Entrepreneurship, moderated a panel highlighting' entrepreneurship programs across the university at the fifth annual New Orleans Entrepreneur Week. (Photo by Ryan Rivet)

"If you look at all entrepreneurial ventures that are active this week in various competitions, over a third are founded by Tulane graduates and many more have Tulane alums and students as employees or interns or faculty as advisors," said Ralph Maurer, a professor of practice who specializes in strategy, innovation and entrepreneurship. "That is no accident. We work very hard at building better entrepreneurs."

On Tuesday (March 19), Maurer moderated a panel highlighting entrepreneurship programs across the university as part of Entrepreneur Week's second annual Tulane Day.

Joining Maurer on the panel were Rick Aubry, assistant provost for social entrepreneurship and community engagement; Don Gaver, department chair of biomedical engineering; John M. Christie, executive director of technology transfer, Dr. Mark J. Kahn, professor of hematology/medical oncology at Tulane School of Medicine; and alumna Sarah Mack, founder of Tierra Resources, an environmental consulting firm that's working to establish a cap-and-trade system to support coastal wetlands restoration.

Gaver described Tulane's new interdisciplinary Bioinnovation PhD Program, which is designed to fast-track students for careers as biotech entrepreneurs.

"This is one of the only universities in the nation that has a school of science and engineering and also medicine, public health and a primate center all under one university, and the boundaries are very low for us to collaborate with one another," said Gaver. "This is a great place for development of these kinds of technologies."

In addition to the panel, NOEW's Tulane Day also featured a discussion on entrepreneurial opportunities in New Orleans moderated by John Elstrott, professor of practice and emeritus executive director of the Levy-Rosenblum Institute, and a keynote talk from Avram Glazer, Tulane parent and co-chairman of Manchester United football club.