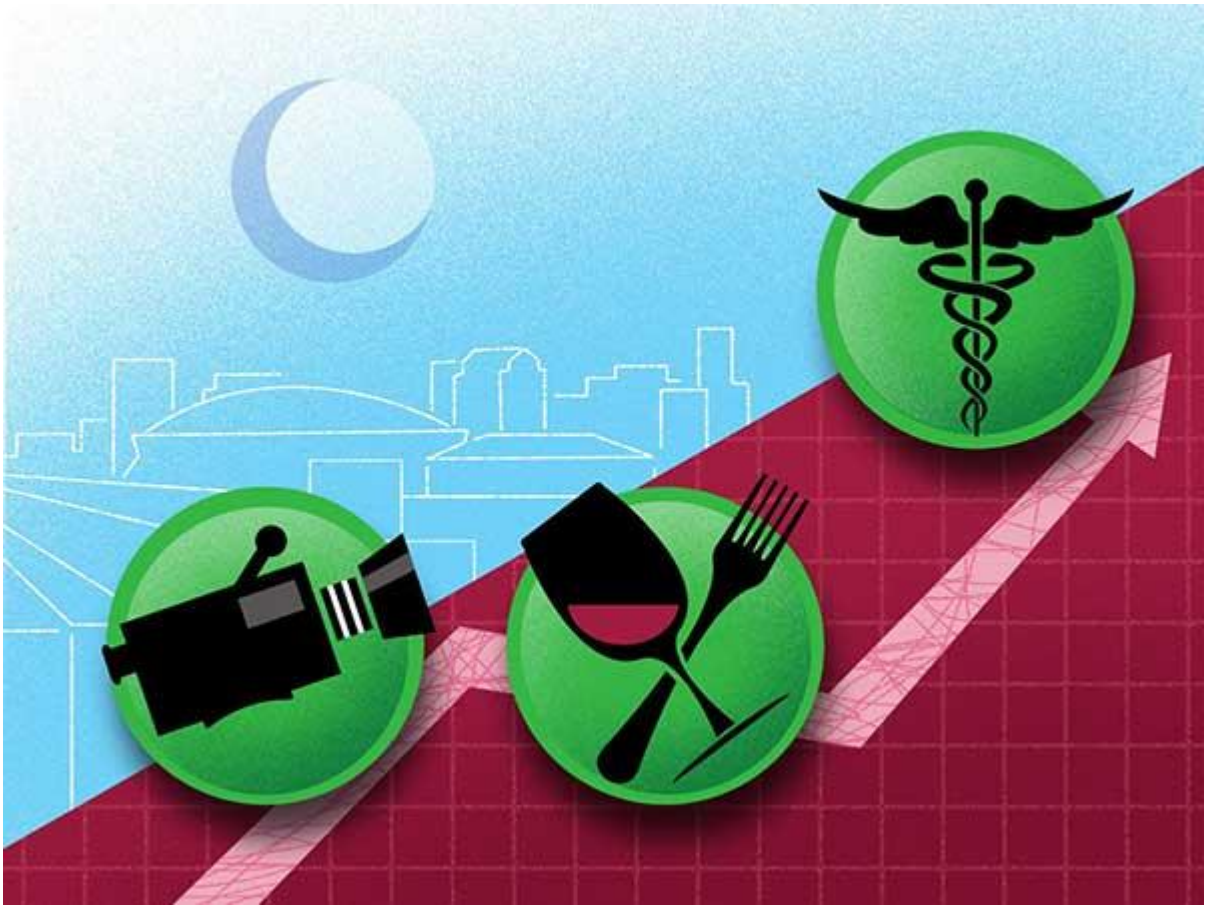
AACSB highlights Freeman for GNO Startup Report

April 21, 2020



AACSB International (AACSB), the world's largest business education network, has recognized Tulane University's A. B. Freeman School of Business as one of 25 institutions that are elevating entrepreneurial thinking and new business creation around the world.

The recognition is part of AACSB's "Innovations That Inspire" challenge, which highlights champions of change in the business education landscape. The Freeman School was recognized for the 2019 Greater New Orleans Startup Report, the first comprehensive overview of the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

“The demand for innovation that engages experts across disciplines and addresses the needs of both local and global communities has never been more apparent than in these unprecedented times,” said Thomas R. Robinson, president and CEO of AACSB. "We are honored to feature the A. B. Freeman School of Business for its valuable role in elevating entrepreneurship through research, teaching, and community engagement.”

Working with 22 economic development groups and community organizations, the Freeman School’s Albert Lepage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation surveyed more than 200 local startup-stage companies for the 60-page report, which aims to become the benchmark for tracking entrepreneurial activity in New Orleans.

“The Greater New Orleans Startup Report represents a new annual effort to leverage Tulane resources to provide a comprehensive overview of startup activity in the 10-parish region, with the ultimate goal of informing public policy and attracting additional investment to the areas,” said Ira Solomon, dean of the Freeman School. “Supporting the region’s business community is one of our top strategic priorities, so it’s especially gratifying to have this effort recognized by AACSB.”

For years, the surge in entrepreneurship in New Orleans has been a widely repeated narrative of the city’s post-Katrina rebirth. Yet, aside from anecdotal information about individual successes, there have been scant data behind the trend.

“This report will help us understand the health and well-being of our startup ecosystem in a rigorous, data-driven way,” said Rob Lalka, executive director of the Lepage Center. “For the very first time, we now have ecosystem-wide data that should offer new insights on revenue and hiring needs and provide clues as to what it will take to help our companies grow.”

Lalka hopes the Greater New Orleans Startup Report will help officials track trends in the startup economy and determine whether new companies are growing or if they face common challenges.

“Over the next several years, we will be able to track whether we’re getting healthier or whether we’re getting sicker,” Lalka said. “And we can do that with this data over multiple industries and multiple geographies. We can track even granular information about whether companies are raising venture capital, self financing or getting bank loans and other measures of financial well-being. That’s very exciting

as someone who cares about the ecosystem, and also as someone who wants us to be honest about where we stand — and where we need to go."

To read the report in its entirety, visit the 2019 Greater New Orleans Startup Report.

Now in its fifth year, the Innovations That Inspire challenge has highlighted more than 120 business school efforts that exemplify forward-looking approaches to education, research, community engagement or outreach, and leadership. To date, members of AACSB's Business Education Alliance have shared nearly 1,000 innovations, creating a robust repository in AACSB's DataDirect system to inform and inspire fellow members and the industry.