MBA alum shifts from TV news to economic development

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Louis David (MBA ’11) was named interim president and CEO of the New Orleans Business Alliance in May 2023.

When Louis David (MBA ’11) stepped away from a career in journalism in 2009 to pursue an MBA at the Freeman School, he was looking for work that would be equally exciting and engaging. As a TV reporter in his hometown of Lafayette, he

had learned to see the world through a variety of perspectives, to do research and to honehis communication skills, skills he believed apply to the business world as well.

David found what he was looking for at the New Orleans Business Alliance, the public-private partnership that serves as the City of New Orleans' official economic development organization. For the last eight years, he has worked to foster and support a wide array of companies and economic opportunities for New Orleans. In May, he was named interim president and CEO of NOLABA.

He said it has been especially exciting to see homegrown startups such as Lucid, TurboSquid and iSeatz take off in recent years. David previously worked at iSeatz as strategic account manager, where he gained experience in software development.

After three years at iSeatz, he joined NOLABA to work with state and local partners to increase the number of jobs in the tech sector and recruit more software companies to New Orleans.

"New Orleans is a unique place that attracts creative people who are thinking about how they can use technology to transform the business world," he said.

Part of that effort has involved working with academic partners such as Tulane to help recruit and retain talent in New Orleans.

"We have worked hard to make connections with higher education partners and programs such as [nonprofit software training center] Operation Spark to train people and help build this industry," he said.

One of David's favorite experiences at NOLABA was working with Microsoft to create a New Orleans-based video game software development bootcamp. The Xbox Game Studios Game Camp launched in 2020 as a virtual program due to COVID-19 restrictions and returned in a hybrid format last year, serving over 150 future video game developers in Louisiana.

The program was open to everyone from college students to professionals far along in their careers.

"It was an opportunity for students to get a variety of training in video game software development, from coding to figuring out story boards and soundtracks," David said.

In his current expanded role as interim president and CEO, David said he is looking at the organization in a more holistic way, seeking out opportunities to build relationships with stakeholders and local businesses and help foster economic development opportunities for New Orleans.

He said that New Orleans is unique in the ways that people love and support their local stores and restaurants.

“People are very invested in this place,” he said.

At the same time, David said the organization is keeping in mind some of the lessons learned during the pandemic.

“During COVID it became very apparent of the importance of the small businesses and BIPOC-owned businesses that make New Orleans unique” he said. “They are the fabric of our neighborhoods, and we have developed a lot of resources to support them and the next generation of BIPOC business owners.”

David is also supporting the New Orleans’ business community through his work as this year’s president of the Tulane Association of Business Alumni. TABA will host the annual Tulane Business Forum on Sept. 15, which David said will be an opportunity “for both worlds to collide.”

“The New Orleans business community will get a chance to see Tulane’s contributions, and Tulane will be able to engage with the business environment in the city,” he said. “There is a lot to celebrate and to be optimistic about.”

--*Maria Clark*