

## Tulane University shares in \$20 million NIH grant to LA CaTS

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Vivian Fonseca serves as Tulane University's resource co-director for LA CaTS' Clinical Research Resources team. LA CaTS received a \$20 million NIH grant that will support researchers across Louisiana over the next five years. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Since 2012, the [Louisiana Clinical and Translational Science \(LA CaTS\) Center](#) has unified biomedical research institutions across the state, providing them with the critical resources needed to fight chronic diseases and address healthcare disparities. Last year, the National Institutes of Health awarded the center a \$20

million federal grant. The funding will aid researchers in Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Shreveport in their work over the next five years.

The latest NIH award brings the center's total funding to \$40 million over 10 years.

Composed of a synergetic infrastructure, the center helps collaborating institutions share clinical research resources, facilities and services to improve health care for underserved populations.

“LA CaTS works as a big machine with lots of components and parts,” said Vivian Fonseca, MD, Tulane University resource co-director for LA CaTS' Clinical Research Resources team. “The most successful component is the collaborative effort.”

[Tulane Health Sciences Center](#)'s primary collaborators include LSU's [Pennington Biomedical Research Center](#) and the [LSU Health Sciences Center-New Orleans](#).

“The grant is run out of Pennington, since the administrative core is there,” said Fonseca.

Other partners include [Louisiana State University](#), [Xavier University](#), [Children's Hospital of New Orleans](#), [Ochsner Health System](#), [University Medical Center](#), [LSU Health Sciences Center-Shreveport](#), [Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System](#) and [LSU Health Sciences Center School of Dentistry](#).

Fonseca said the new funding will foster the center's goal of training junior faculty to develop a cadre of researchers.

“We provide training in two or three different ways. For example, we run a Tulane Master's of Science in Clinical Research program,” said Fonseca.

Through the grant, LA CaTS can also provide researchers with access to inpatient and outpatient clinical sites, health databases, and services like ethics consultations.

“We also provide biostatisticians as a resource to investigators who are starting up,” said Fonseca. “Previously, you had to scramble to find your own statistician, but if you are in an LA CaTS institution, they are available to you.”

The center also offers financial support for pilot projects. In the previous funding cycle, LA CaTS supported pilot research projects for 21 Tulane investigators.

“We are providing the resources for people to write good grants, and hopefully it'll launch successful research careers,” said Fonseca.

In the last five years, LA CaTS produced 294 publications (including 79 from Tulane), and investigators secured approximately \$44.2 million in research awards.

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— Vivian Fonseca, Tulane University resource co-director for LA CaTS' Clinical Research Resources team