

## **AOL Co-Founder Steve Case, Gov. Edwards and Tulane leaders talk innovation at New Orleans Entrepreneur Week Biotech Mini-Summit**

April 03, 2023 4:00 PM Marianna Barry  
mbarry1@tulane.edu



On the Leadership Stage at Gallier Hall during New Orleans Entrepreneur Week, Tulane professor Walter Isaacson, Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards and tech pioneer Steve Case discuss the "third wave" of the internet. The panel discussion preceded a biotech mini-summit sponsored by the Tulane Innovation Institute and LCMC Health. (Photo by Tracie Morris Schaefer)

The Tulane University Innovation Institute supported this year's New Orleans Entrepreneur Week by co-sponsoring the inaugural Biotech Mini-Summit, which took place Thursday, March 30, on the Leadership Stage at historic Gallier Hall. The Mini-Summit was co-sponsored in partnership with LCMC Health.

The Mini-Summit kicked off with a conversation between AOL co-founder Steve Case and Walter Isaacson, a bestselling biographer and the Leonard Lauder Professor of American History and Values at the School of Liberal Arts. The conversation between Case and Isaacson, who were later joined by Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards, was sponsored by the New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University.

President Michael A. Fitts welcomed the standing room-only crowd.

"This attendance is a confirmation of all the entrepreneurs here and across this city and state, and what we need to do is empower them moving forward," Fitts said.

Kimberly Gramm, Tulane Innovation Institute's David and Marion Mussafer Chief Innovation and Entrepreneur Officer, reflected on the event and its importance to the New Orleans entrepreneurial ecosystem and Tulane's own efforts around innovation and entrepreneurship.

"To have luminaries like Steve Case and Walter Isaacson, joined by the governor, kick off this showcase of New Orleans and Tulane biotechnology talent, was really spectacular and reinforced the growth of the ecosystem. The time is right for initiatives like the Innovation Institute as New Orleans leans into innovation and entrepreneurship," she said.

To set the stage for the later biotech-focused panels, Case and Isaacson discussed Case's book *The Third Wave: An Entrepreneur's Vision of the Future*, which focuses on how humanity is entering the "third wave" of the internet, requiring a different mindset of entrepreneurs.

Case characterized this third wave as "the internet meets the real world," adding that "the real value creation will come from the partnerships you form around the technology."

With Tulane in mind, Isaacson asked Case's opinion on the roles of academic institutions in this third wave.

“It is critical,” Case responded. “It is a magnet for talent. Young people come with ideas and questions. You’re always going to be a lab that’s creating new ideas. [Institutions] are an anchor of the community.”

“There is momentum in New Orleans that is striking,” Case said, adding that there needs to be a sense of urgency to leverage that momentum. “And really capitalize on this opportunity, building on the sectors that are unique advantages to this region.”

Gov. John Bel Edwards joined Isaacson and Case on stage, as a surprise guest, to discuss third wave industries and climate leadership in Louisiana. Edwards touched on the need for agreement among state and business leaders especially regarding taxpayer incentives for businesses.

“We are doing so much in Louisiana to try to make sure that every time there’s an investment, whether it’s public sector investment or private sector investment, it is to the benefit of people like you, of entrepreneurs who are willing to put your own capital out there. I do hope and believe that it will pay dividends for you all and our state for many, many years to come,” Edwards said.

Following these conversations, the Mini-Summit proceeded with three panels exploring the life cycle of biotechnology development and startup formation.

These panels featured researchers, entrepreneurs and investors from Tulane, LCMC Health and the Greater New Orleans area discussing topics surrounding translational biotech research, startup spotlights and investor information. The discussions echoed points made in the opening session regarding the importance of universities in innovation ecosystems and how they serve as a source of technology and talent. Topics also included opportunities in the New Orleans region and Louisiana around economic growth based on biotech and other startups.

For more information about Tulane’s Innovation Institute and upcoming events, visit [innovation.tulane.edu](https://innovation.tulane.edu).



Case addresses a standing room only audience. His book 'The Third Wave: An Entrepreneur's Vision of the Future' served as a launching point to discuss how internet entrepreneurs will help society. (Photo by Tracie Morris Schaefer)