

Tulane faculty honored at the 2024 Research, Scholarship and Artistic Achievement Awards ceremony

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mmccrory@tulane.edu



Jeffrey Tasker, the Catherine and Hunter Pierson Chair in Neuroscience in the School of Science and Engineering, was one of the faculty members awarded the Hall of Fame Award by President Michael A. Fitts. (Photo by Cheryl Gerber)

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As faculty from every school at Tulane University gathered for the annual Research, Scholarship and Artistic Achievement Awards, it was clear that it has been a

landmark year for Tulane exploration, discovery and creativity. The ceremony, which took place Friday, Nov. 1, in downtown New Orleans, honored the groundbreaking accomplishments of faculty across the university.

President Michael A. Fitts welcomed attendees and recognized the tremendous work of the night's award winners.

"All of tonight's honorees have had a hand in elevating Tulane to a new level of prominence as a research institution internationally," Fitts said.

Fitts also pointed out the contribution of all faculty members — honorees and beyond — to Tulane's rise as a premier research institution.

"Everyone in this room should take great pride in being part of this pivotal moment as we continue to catapult our research enterprise to the next level," he said.

Emcee and medical reporter Meg Farris celebrated the incredible work of these faculty members. "Fueled by the urgent and pressing needs of society, Tulanians craft solutions with lasting impact, leading to real changes that make a difference in the lives of others," she said, before welcoming Vice President for Research Dr. Giovanni Piedimonte to the stage.

Piedimonte praised Tulane's extraordinary growth in funding for research, scholarship and artistic activities over the past few years. "Our sustained growth is the best guarantee that Tulane will remain among the top academic institutions participating in the prestigious Association of American Universities," he said.

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Robin Forman congratulated the honorees and described the importance and beauty of research. "There is something magical about the kind of research that happens at a university like Tulane," he said.

Fitts recognized two recipients of the university's Hall of Fame Award, a signature award of the evening. The honorees were:

- Dr. Pierre Buekens, the W.H. Watkins Professor and director of the Center for Emerging Reproductive and Perinatal Epidemiology in the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine
- Jeffrey Tasker, the Catherine and Hunter Pierson Chair in Neuroscience in the School of Science and Engineering

The evening also shone a spotlight on the dedicated researchers embodying collaboration, mentorship and Tulane's motto — *Non sibi sed suis*, "Not for oneself, but for one's own" — in their work.

Below are the 2024 recipients of the Research, Scholarship and Artistic Achievement Awards:

2024 Hall of Fame Award

This prestigious lifetime achievement award recognizes a national and internationally renowned scholar/investigator who has made substantial contributions to advancing knowledge over their academic career.

Dr. Pierre Buekens, W.H. Watkins Professor, and Director of the Center for Emerging Reproductive and Perinatal Epidemiology, Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine

Jeffrey Tasker, Catherine and Hunter Pierson Chair in Neuroscience, School of Science and Engineering

2024 Spirit of Tulane Research Award

This award recognizes outstanding achievement during the prior calendar year of a scholar/investigator whose work embodies Tulane's motto while enhancing the research mission through education, creative expression, mentorship and collaborative effort to advance knowledge.

Kailash Pandey, Professor, School of Medicine

Karissa Haugeberg, Associate Professor and Eva-Lou Joffrion Edwards Newcomb Professorship in History, School of Liberal Arts

2024 Innovation Award

This award recognizes a scholar/investigator who develops novel ideas, approaches and insights through their interdisciplinary scholarship to address clinical, public health or societal challenges.

Kyle Straub, Professor and Chair of the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, School of Science and Engineering

Eric Dumonteil, Associate Professor, Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine

2024 Entrepreneurship Award

This award is given to the individual faculty member whose contribution to entrepreneurship is reflected in a record of sustained entrepreneurship and new venture creation.

Tony Hu, Weatherhead Presidential Chair in Biotechnology Innovation, Director of the Center for Cellular and Molecular Diagnostics, School of Medicine

2024 IP Innovator Award

This award recognizes faculty members who develops new patentable intellectual property that leads to or is expected to lead to a licensable technology or commercialization event.

Lisa Morici, Professor, School of Medicine

James McLachlan, Associate Professor, School of Medicine

2024 Galaxy Award

This award recognizes substantial achievement of a scholar/investigator who has a strong five-year history of funding and enhancing Tulane's research mission through scholarship, education, mentorship and collaborative efforts.

Dr. Ronald Veazey, professor, School of Medicine and Chair of the Division of Comparative Pathology, Tulane National Primate Research Center

2024 Provost's Award

This award recognizes a scholar for excellence in research that addresses societal inequalities and promotes social change. Some indicators of excellence include extramural support of related research and dissemination of findings through high-quality peer-reviewed publications and national or international presentations that address societal inequities and promote social change.

Carla Laroche, Felder-Fayard Associate Professor of Law, School of Law

2024 Funding Awards

These awards recognize a) the scholar/investigator in the STEM fields who has been awarded the largest combined dollar amount of funding for direct costs during the prior calendar year; and b) the artist/scholar/investigator in the non-STEM fields who has been awarded the largest combined dollar amount of funding for direct costs during the prior calendar year.

(STEM) **Emily Harville**, Professor, Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine

(Non-STEM) **Hazel Woods**, Professor of Practice and Associate Director of Education Programs, School of Professional Advancement

2024 Convergence Award

This award recognizes a Tulane scholar or team of scholars who successfully collaborate(s) across schools, units and departments to surpass traditional academic disciplines and further the research mission.

Byron Mouton, Director of URBANbuild and Lacey Senior Professor of Practice, School of Architecture

Frédéric Sourgens, James McCulloch Chair in Energy Law and Director of the Tulane Energy Law Center, School of Law

2024 Student/Trainee Research Mentoring Award

This award recognizes an exceptional research mentor.

Sarah Lindsey, Associate Professor and Dr. Barbara S. Beckman Professorship in Pharmacology, School of Medicine

2024 Rising Star Award

This award recognizes the works of an assistant professor, within five years of appointment to Tulane, who demonstrates exceptional growth and impact in one or more research areas.

Sönke Dangendorf, David and Jane Flowerree Assistant Professor, School of Science and Engineering

2024 Citation Award

This award recognizes the Tulane author of the peer-reviewed article with the highest number of citations during the prior calendar year. The recipient must be the corresponding author, and Tulane must be the corresponding institution.

Dr. Lu Qi, HCA Regents Distinguished Chair and Professor and Interim Chair of the Department of Epidemiology, Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and Director of the Tulane University Obesity Research Center, for “Association of Cardiovascular Health With Life Expectancy Free of Cardiovascular Disease, Diabetes, Cancer, and Dementia in UK Adults,” *JAMA Internal Medicine*, April 1, 2023

2024 Publication Awards

This award is designed to honor scholars and investigators at Tulane University for their exceptional contributions to academic literature by acknowledging the best journal article published in the preceding calendar year and the best book published within 24 months of the award selection date, which occurs annually in August. These awards recognize significant contributions to the scholarly record at the intersection of impact, merit and relevance.

(Journal article) **Sönke Dangendorf**, David and Jane Flowerree Assistant Professor, School of Science and Engineering, for “Acceleration of U.S. Southeast and Gulf coast sea-level rise amplified by internal climate variability,” *Nature*

Communications, April 10, 2023

(Book) **Jesmyn Ward**, Professor of English and Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities, School of Liberal Arts, for “Let Us Descend,” Scribner, October 2023



As Dr. Pierre Buekens, the W.H. Watkins Professor in the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, was unable to attend the ceremony, President Michael A. Fitts and Dean Thomas LaVeist recognized him with his medal for the Hall of Fame Award in January 2025. (Photo by Kenny Lass)