

Tulane receives \$1 million from Jeffrey and Tina Miller to support Innovation Institute

March 10, 2025 9:30 AM Patrick J. Davis
pdavis14@tulane.edu



The \$1 million gift will support entrepreneurial and educational programming, investment funding, pitch competitions, proof-of-concept awards and more. Kimberly Gramm (left), the David and Marion Mussafer Chief Innovation and Entrepreneurship Officer at the Innovation Institute, joined Jeffrey Miller (center) and Tina Beltran-Miller (right) at the Young Entrepreneurship Academy pitch competition, where Jeffrey served on a panel of judges who heard business ideas from local high school students. (Photo by Kenny Lass)

Tulane has received a \$1 million gift from Jeffrey Miller and Tina Beltran-Miller, the parents of a fourth-year student, to support its award-winning [Innovation Institute](#). The institute was launched in 2022 to lead the university's entrepreneurial startup

and research and technology commercialization efforts.

The couple's gift has created the Miller Family Endowed Fund, which will finance the Innovation Institute's activities and expenses at the discretion of Kimberly Gramm, the David and Marion Mussafer Chief Innovation and Entrepreneurship Officer. The unrestricted endowment will support entrepreneurial and educational programming, investment funding, pitch competitions, proof-of-concept awards and more.

"We are profoundly grateful to Jeffrey and Tina for their extraordinary generosity," Gramm said. "Their endowment will allow us to build on our early successes, accelerate the transformation of Tulane research into groundbreaking technologies, and expand our efforts to create and support local startups. From proof-of-concept development to investment funding and community programming, the Millers' gift strengthens every facet of our work."

"Tulane is an institution bursting with creativity and entrepreneurial spirit," said Jeffrey Miller, managing partner of Krillion Ventures, a venture capital firm in Miami specializing in early-stage companies in health care, financial services and real estate. "We're thrilled to invest in the future of the university and the unique city that it calls home and excited to see how our gift will help the institute nurture the ideas of its students, faculty, alumni, and local entrepreneurs into inventions that can change the world."

Beyond advancing entrepreneurial initiatives within the university, the institute strives to catalyze economic growth throughout the city and across the Gulf South, generating lasting wealth for Louisiana residents.

One of the programs the Miller Family Endowed Fund will help facilitate is the Innovation Institute's [Young Entrepreneurship Academy](#) (YEA!). This after-school program equips New Orleans high school students with skills and resources to be the next generation of business leaders and innovators. Launched in August 2024, this initiative affirms the institute's commitment to entrepreneurship in the region at the community level. In February, a panel of judges that included Jeffrey Miller heard pitches from the students who competed for and received startup funding to support the continuing development of their business ideas.

"As parents of a Tulane undergraduate, we've seen firsthand how this university transforms lives," said Tina Beltran-Miller, a civic leader and professional golfer. "We're honored to support the institute's entrepreneurial initiatives and also play a

part in extending those opportunities to young people across New Orleans.”

The Millers’ son, Lenny, is a senior majoring in management at the A. B. Freeman School of Business and will graduate in May.

The Millers’ gift will sustain the institute’s [remarkable momentum](#) since it opened in June 2022 on Tulane’s downtown campus as an initiative of President Michael A. Fitts that champions innovators and entrepreneurs across all Tulane University campuses and the greater New Orleans area. [Early philanthropic backers](#) of the institute include the Priddy Family Foundation, which sponsored the Robert L. Priddy Innovation Lab, and [Board of Tulane Chair David Mussafer \(B ’85\)](#) and his wife, Marion.

In recognition of its substantial achievements so far, the institute received the prestigious [2024 Outstanding Emerging Entrepreneurship Center Award](#) at the Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers Conference in November.

The Miller family’s philanthropic commitment reflects their belief in the power of education and entrepreneurship to drive meaningful change. They are Tulane’s [Family Leadership Council](#) members and repeat sponsors of the Tipping Point, the university’s annual scholarship fundraising concert held during Wave Weekend. Jeffrey Miller also serves as chair of the board of Breakthrough Miami and is the founding board chair of Beacon College Prep, among other community leadership and service roles.