

New labs fuel Tulane's continued downtown expansion

January 23, 2026 9:00 AM Barri Bronston
bbronst@tulane.edu



Tulane University leaders came together to celebrate the debut of the newly renovated fifth floor in Hutchinson Memorial Building. (Photo by Cheryl Gerber)

Tulane University is entering a pivotal moment in its presence in downtown New Orleans. Not only is the university planning the multi-million-dollar redevelopment of the former Charity Hospital building, but it is also nearing completion of its most significant renovation in nearly a century at the Hutchinson Memorial Building, home to the School of Medicine since 1930.

“The transformed space is almost as large as the Steven and Jann Paul Hall for Science and Engineering on the uptown campus,” Tulane President Michael A. Fitts

said. “This project is the equivalent of adding a new building to our downtown campus. Its scale and scope strengthen Tulane’s commitment to bringing researchers from a wide array of fields and specialties together to discover the cures and treatments of tomorrow.”

As a critical component of the university’s growing biomedical research footprint, the new space on Hutchinson’s seventh and fifth floors represents major growth in the research corridor located in the heart of the city. University leaders held a ribbon cutting on the fifth floor Jan. 14.

“We’ve been growing our research substantially for the last several years, but this will allow us to accelerate this growth with state-of-the-art lab space,” said Dr. Lee Hamm, senior vice president and dean of the School of Medicine.

The signature component of the \$35 million Hutchinson project is the sweeping modernization of approximately 40,000 to 50,000 square feet on the two floors, with the majority of work occurring on the seventh floor.



Two researchers tour the fifth-floor Hutchinson labs, which will increase research opportunities in Tulane’s John W. Deming Department of Medicine. (Photo by Kenny Lass)

The spaces on both floors have been completely gutted and rebuilt as state-of-the-art, contemporary labs. Together, the two floors will provide laboratory space for more than two dozen principal investigators and their research teams and dramatically expand the School of Medicine's research capacity.

"This marks a new chapter for our team, and we're deeply grateful to everyone who made this possible," said Kathleen S. Hering-Smith, associate professor in Tulane's John W. Deming Department of Medicine. "We can't wait to enjoy this modern-meets-historic, collaborative space together."

The project aligns with Fitts' vision of positioning Tulane as a major driver of discovery, biotech innovation and economic revitalization in downtown New Orleans. Hutchinson will join the J. Bennett Johnston Building and the former Charity Hospital building redevelopments in anchoring a growing academic and research district.