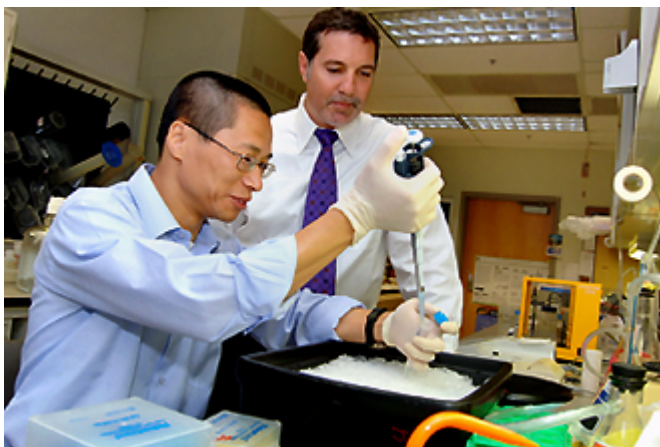


As funding booms, research labs expand

October 11, 2011 11:45 AM Keith Brannon

kbrannon@tulane.edu

About 150 research studies are under way at Tulane University School of Medicine. The school surpassed \$60 million in research funding after a record fiscal year, a 45 percent increase from the year before and more than double the research dollars from a decade ago. It includes a record \$40 million in grant funding from the National Institutes of Health.



Dr. Bin Shan, left, research assistant professor of medicine, and Dr. Joseph Lasky, professor of medicine and chief of the pulmonary diseases section, study pulmonary fibrosis (lung scarring) at Tulane. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Tulane is beginning a \$13.5 million renovation of laboratory spaces in the J. Bennett Johnston Health and Environmental Research Building at 1324 Tulane Ave. in downtown New Orleans. The plan will transform traditionally designed lab spaces into large, open and flexible laboratories capable of being immediately reconfigured.

“They refer to the design as a ballroom laboratory,” says Laura Levy, vice president for [research](#) at Tulane. “It’s a great big, open laboratory without walls.”

With researchers from different schools and disciplines working close to each other, ideas can cross-pollinate, sparking innovations. “A strategic direction for us is

interdisciplinary research,” Levy says.

Early next year, most of the university's cancer research resources will move into new labs in the [Louisiana Cancer Research Consortium](#) building, a move that will help Tulane attract funding and top talent, says Prescott Deininger, [Tulane Cancer Center](#) director. Tulane will occupy two floors ? about 50,000 square feet ? of the 10-story building.

At least four startups based on School of Medicine research are poised to move into the recently opened [New Orleans BioInnovation Center](#), says John Christie, executive director of the Tulane Office of Technology Transfer and Intellectual Property Development. Christie's office helps investigators patent their advances and license those innovations.

“Our primary mission is to get research and innovation out of the labs and classrooms at Tulane, where it can have some sort of public benefit and impact,” Christie says. “For Tulane, we've got an unprecedented wave of startup activity.”

The original story by Keith Brannon from which this was extracted was published in the summer issue of [Tulane Medicine magazine](#).