

## **Two Tulane teams win big in international competition**

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Tulane University students and graduates have done it again. For the second year in a row, two teams led by current Tulane students or graduates are among the winners of the [Neuro Startup Challenge](#), an international competition designed to bring National Institutes of Health medical inventions to market.

“It is completely amazing that two years in a row two teams from Tulane have won; statistically the odds of this are very low,” said Rosemarie Truman, founder and CEO of the [Center for Advancing Innovation](#). “Obviously, you have some very bright and talented people there.”

This year's winning Tulane teams were Estia Pharmaceuticals and Vascular Therapeutics. They were among only 13 teams selected as winners of the challenge, which attracted more than 70 teams.

Estia Pharmaceuticals will seek to develop a new, commercially successful formulation of the drug Modafinil, which has shown promising results in treating ADHD. Estia Pharmaceuticals is a start-up founded by Lowry Curley, a graduate of the Tulane School of Science and Engineering, along with Nick Fears, a Tulane psychology graduate student; David Bode, a graduate of the Tulane MBA program; and Mitchell Fullerton, a Tulane bioinnovation doctoral student.

Vascular Therapeutics, which includes Tulane engineering and medical students Kevin Chiu, Kim Lee, Michelle McCarthy, Jason Ryans and Ashwin Sivakumar, will work to commercialize a therapeutic that seeks to increase the treatment window for stroke patients.

The A .B. Freeman School of Business, School of Science and Engineering, School of Medicine, School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and the Office of Technology Transfer at Tulane, along with the New Orleans Bioinnovation Center, played critical

roles in the success of the two winning teams.

“This was truly an interdisciplinary effort among faculty, students and graduates that leverages our university's collective strengths and contributes on a national level,” said [Sherif Ebrahim](#), director of entrepreneurship and innovation education and a lecturer in strategy and innovation at Tulane.

Challenge collaborators include the Center for Advancing Innovation, the [Heritage Provider Network](#) and the [National Institutes of Health](#). Heritage sponsored the challenge.



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