

Tulane receives \$8 million gift from Carol Lavin Bernick for downtown campus improvements and faculty support

|
Patrick J. Davis today@tulane.edu

[View PDF](#)



A new multi-million-dollar fund established by longtime Tulane donor and Board Chair Carol Lavin Bernick will drive a major landscaping and streetscaping effort on Tulane's expanding downtown campus, encouraging collaboration, socializing and community in the heart of New Orleans' BioDistrict and commercial corridor.

The project is part of an historic investment by Tulane that seeks to revitalize the downtown area by spurring economic growth through discoveries, advancement and

high-tech startups. This once-in-a-generation undertaking is designed to place New Orleans among the ranks of cities throughout the country that have been transformed by the presence of a major research university in the core of their central business district. This new gift will enliven and unify the downtown campus with trees, plants, benches, pathways, lighting, signage and other improvements.

Tulane will be the anchor tenant of the redeveloped Charity Hospital building, which will be the new home of the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, the Innovation Institute and the School of Professional Advancement. It will also house new research labs and classrooms for the School of Medicine, community gathering spaces, retail outlets and more.

In addition to creating the \$5 million Carol Lavin Bernick Downtown Investment Fund for campus enhancements, the gift also includes \$3 million to continue the Carol Lavin Bernick Faculty Investment Fund, which provides annual grants of up to \$10,000 to full-time faculty for research, recruitment, development, continuing education, conference travel, faculty work groups, and student engagement. Since Bernick instituted the Faculty Investment Fund in 2016 with a \$5 million gift, more than 600 awards have been distributed to faculty in all nine of Tulane's schools and its undergraduate college.

"Whether they're uptown, downtown, or conducting research across the globe, Tulane's professors are advancing human knowledge and inspiring students to build on their groundbreaking discoveries," said Bernick, a Tulane graduate, chief executive officer of Polished Nickel Capital Management and the former head of the Alberto Culver Company. "So many people at Tulane have expressed to me how important the Bernick Faculty Investment Fund has been to their work, so I'm delighted to keep it flourishing with another gift."

Bernick said she was also inspired by the promise of Tulane's downtown investment.

"I'm excited about Tulane's future in downtown New Orleans and want to do my part to make the area as inviting and cohesive as the uptown campus," Bernick said. "The new landscaping and other improvements will strengthen connections among students, faculty and staff, as well as reaffirm Tulane's identity as both an integral part of New Orleans and an indispensable asset to the city. The great environment that Tulane is building downtown will be the launching pad for even greater discoveries to come."

Tulane President Michael A. Fitts thanked Bernick for her generous and visionary support, noting that her continued commitment to the Bernick Faculty Investment Fund will pay “incalculable intellectual dividends for years to come.”

“Her support has nurtured academic scholarship across numerous disciplines and helped fortify Tulane’s place among the nation’s most impactful research universities,” Fitts said.

“By enhancing Tulane’s physical spaces and linking our buildings with unifying features, the Carol Lavin Bernick Downtown Investment Fund will do more than beautify our downtown area. It will help break down academic silos and spark new collaborative relationships and innovation,” Fitts added. “Through Carol’s generosity, Tulane is cementing its place as the cornerstone of New Orleans’ BioDistrict and as a driver for research-based entrepreneurship. Our community can’t thank her enough for advancing our downtown revitalization.”

Tulane’s Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Patrick Norton hailed the Bernick Downtown Investment Fund as a game changer.

“Successful urban innovation districts are not just places where people work in isolation and then go home,” he said. “They’re places where researchers and innovators come together in shared spaces both formally and informally — over lunch, a discussion outside or even a walk — to be inspired by each other’s ideas and make new connections. Carol’s gift allows us to begin to create those important community spaces that get people out into the public realm.”