

Louisiana Cancer Research Center  
Board of Directors Meeting  
A Hybrid Meeting was held  
On June 26, 2025, at 3:00 p.m.

The following members of the Board of Directors were in attendance:

**Dr. Lee Hamm**, Senior Vice President & Dean, School of Medicine, Tulane University, Chairman  
**Dr. Richard DiCarlo**, Dean, School of Medicine, LSU Health, Vice-Chairman  
**Ms. Barbara Goodson**, Executive Director, Firefighters' Retirement System, Secretary/Treasurer  
**Dr. Brian Boulmay**, Professor of Clinical Medicine, Hematology and Oncology, LSU Health  
**Ms. Paige Carter**, Chief Business Development Officer, Louisiana Economic Development  
**Dr. Patrice Delafontaine**, Executive Dean, School of Medicine, Tulane University  
**Dr. Brian Moore**, Director, Ochsner Cancer Institute  
**Dr. Florastine Payton-Stewart**, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs, Xavier University  
**Ms. Pamela Ryan**  
**Ms. Carroll Suggs**

The following members of the Board of Directors were not in attendance.

**Mr. Walter Leger, Jr.**, Senior Partner, Leger & Shaw Attorneys and Counselors  
**Mr. Darren Mire**, Member, Board of Regents; Director of Valuation, Orleans Parish Assessor's Office

Also, present were:

Mr. Paige Sensenbrenner, Senior Partner, Adams & Reese, Legal Counsel, LCRC  
Dr. Stefan Grant, Co-Director, LCRC, Director, Tulane Cancer Center, Tulane University  
Mr. Sven Davisson, Chief Administrative Officer, LCRC  
Ms. Deborah Reeder, Chief Financial Officer, LCRC  
Mr. Ryan Graffagnini, Controller, LCRC  
Dr. John Cole, Director of Clinical Cancer Research, Ochsner Health  
Ms. Tammy Vaccaro, Sr. Research Administrator, Tulane Cancer Center & Radiation Oncology  
Ms. Lee Sabatini, Director, External Affairs, LSU LCMC Health Cancer Center, LSU Health  
Mr. Terrell Neal, CFO, Louisiana Public Health Institute  
Ms. Shelina Davis, CEO, Louisiana Public Health Institute  
Dr. Michael Celestin, Director, Tobacco Control Initiative, LSU Health  
Dr. Earl Benjamin-Robinson, Director, TFL and COE, LCRC  
Dr. Prescott Deininger, Associate Director, Basic Science, Tulane Cancer Center  
Ms. Seanne Falconer, Executive Director, Tulane Cancer Center  
Ms. Melanie Cross, Director of Communication & Engagement, Tulane Cancer Center  
Ms. Janice Williams-Lucas, Business Manager, LSUHSC Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center

**Dr. Hamm** called the meeting to order. The roll was called and there was a quorum.

**Dr. Hamm** requested approval of the minutes of May 29, 2025, Board meeting.

A motion was made by **Dr. Delafontaine** and seconded by **Dr. DiCarlo**  
RESOLVED, with all in favor, to approve the minutes of the May 29, 2025, Board meeting.

**Dr. Hamm** called for the Finance Committee Report.

**Ms. Goodson** called on Mr. Graffagnini to present the Financial Update.

Mr. Graffagnini presented the Budget to Actuals report for all budget components through May 2025. As of the reporting date, 47% of the total Cancer Research and 32% of the Cessation budgets remain unspent. The primary reason for the unspent funds for Cancer Research is delayed faculty recruitment.

Ms. Reeder provided additional financial updates. The June Finance Committee meeting was canceled due to budgets being incomplete and requiring some reworking. She explained that budget allocations and structure issues need to be resolved.

Ms. Reeder discussed the Louisiana Economic Development (LED) funding agreement related to faculty recruitment, emphasizing the requirements for use of allocated funds, invoicing, and reporting necessary to draw down the funds. Ms. Reeder stated that LED continues to prioritize faculty recruitment funding, but stresses adherence to compliance and reporting requirements before releasing any funds.

Ms. Reeder also reported that a \$1 million shortfall due to tobacco tax revenue under collections is projected. Also, a 5.9% reduction in the appropriation level for FY26 further compounds the budget issues. For the Cancer Research budgets, funds from reserves including from the one-time FY24 supplement will be made available to maintain current funding levels for FY26. However, cessation funded budgets units have been asked to reduce spending by 2%, as no one-time supplemental funding is available to offset their cuts.

Ms. Reeder cautioned us that the current budget structure and funding levels, which rely on supplements and funds for specific purposes, are unsustainable in the long term.

**Ms. Goodson** added that the declining trend in revenue generated from the tobacco tax sources has contributed to the recurring budget shortfalls. She recommended that the Board begin exploring alternative revenue streams, develop a plan for new funding sources, and prepare to present proposals to the state legislature in the future.

In response to a question from **Ms. Ryan** regarding the vaping tax, Mr. Davisson stated that the current rate is 15 cents per milliliter of wholesale product. The first \$28 million of this revenue is allocated to the State Police and the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

**Ms. Goodson** concluded the Finance Committee report.

**Dr. Hamm** requested a change in the order of presentations, asking that the CAO Update be presented before the Research Update.

A motion to change the order of presentations was made by **Dr. DiCarlo** and seconded by **Dr. Delafontaine**.

RESOLVED, with all in favor, to change order of presentation.

**Dr. Hamm** called for the CAO Update report.

#### **CAO - Legislative Update:**

Mr. Davisson highlighted key legislative updates. He noted that the Youth Cessation and Prevention Fund (HB 517 Brass) did not pass in the Senate Finance Committee. However, the House passed a resolution establishing the Youth Tobacco and Nicotine Cessation Task Force (Rep. Brass), which includes a representative from the LCRC. Ms. Davis addressed a question regarding the percentage of the tobacco tax allocated for vaping, indicating that the current vaping tax is set at 15 cents per milliliter at the wholesale level, with the first \$28 million of that revenue designated for funding the State Police and Wildlife & Fisheries.

Furthermore, Mr. Davisson reported that Act 388, which establishes a Rare Cancer Advisory Board (Hilferty), was signed into law on June 20, 2025. A representative of the LCRC will chair this new advisory board and will include representatives from the LCRC, LSU, Tulane, Xavier, Ochsner, and other entities.

Lastly, Senate Resolution 47 recognized Dr. Lucio Miele for his appointment to lead the pursuit of NHI accreditation, with the commendation issued on May 1, 2025.

Mr. Davisson noted that Tobacco Cessation Initiative Postdoctoral Fellow, Dr. Julie Martin, authored a new article on quitting nicotine and tobacco for the Society of Behavioral Medicine's Health Living Series.

**Dr. DiCarlo** will be assuming the Chair as **Dr. Hamm** needs to leave the meeting, and the vice chair is taking over the role of the chair in leading the meeting.

**Dr. DiCarlo** called for the Research Update report.

Dr. Grant presented an update on LCRC Research activities. The **Tobacco Cessation Program** review proceeding. An agreement with Dr. Eric Donny, PhD., professor from Wake Forest University, is in process and anticipating an on-site visit this summer,

The 2025 SUCRE Fellows began this year's program on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. The group is comprised of seven students from Louisiana universities (Tulane x3, LSU x2, & Xavier x2) and four from out of state (one from UCLA, two from UAB, and one from Syracuse University, the latter being a New Orleans native).

The SUCRE poster presentation will be held on July 24<sup>th</sup> from 12:00-1:00 p.m. in the LCRC 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Rooms.

**Collaboration Highlight** – Collaboration between Dr. Victoria Belancio, PhD. at Tulane and Dr. Monika Rak, PhD. from LSU resulted in a paper published in the Journal of Cancer Gene Therapy. Their joint research provides insights into the role of human endogenous retroviruses in glioblastoma.

### **Tulane Research Updates**

Xiaochao Tan, PhD., recently received a 1% score on his NCI R01 grant application, while the current payline is at 3%. Additionally, Ms. Sarah Bigelow, the Executive Director of the Clinical Trials Office, participated as a Steering Committee member and Expert Panelist on Clinical Trial Operations Transformation at the American Association of Cancer Institutes – Clinical Research Innovation Summit.

Dr. Grant highlighted recent publications that appeared in high profile journals:

Ralph Corsetti, MD – Breast Cancer  
MRI-based Radiomic Features for Risk Stratification of Ductal Carcinoma in Situ in a Multicenter Setting (ECOG-ACRIN E4112 Trial). Radiology. 2025 Apr;315(1):e241628. doi: 10.1148/radiol.241628. Erratum in: Radiology. 2025 Apr;315(1):e259005. doi: 10.1148/radiol.259005. PMID: 40167440.

Erin Boh, MD, PhD. - Lymphoma  
Accetta J, Gioe R, Falgout L, Chastain W, Bitar C, Boh E. Cutaneous T cell lymphoma arising in patients treated with dupilumab: A case series of 18 patients. J Am Acad Dermatol. 2025 Apr;92(4):924-926. doi: 10.1016/j.jaad.2024.10.119. Epub 2024 Dec 15. PMID: 39681271.

Xiaochao Tan, PhD. – Lung Cancer Wang S, Guo H, Fukushima R, Terajima M, Liu M, Xiao GY, Koudelková L, Wu C, Liu X, Yu J, Burris E, Xu J, Schiavonato A, Russell WK, Yamauchi M, Tan X, Kurie JM. Lysyl hydroxylase 2 glucosylates collagen VI to drive lung cancer progression. J Clin

## LSU Health Research Updates

Dr. Miele then presented several updates from LSU. Dr. Adithya Hari has been recruited as an Assistant Professor and Physician/Nuclear Oncologist at Pennington Biomedical, specializing in nuclear oncology and translational science. Ongoing interviews are being conducted for the new Associate Director for Administration. Additionally, the organization has received further infrastructure funding, which will support key projects, including the LSU Health New Orleans Medical Education Building that aims to enhance cancer research capabilities. The total investment in research infrastructure for the LSU System amounts to \$7.5 million, with allocations of \$3 million for Pennington, \$2.5 million for LSU Health Shreveport Equipment, and \$2 million for LSU AgCenter. Furthermore, Dr. Trayambak Pathak has been awarded an NIH R00 grant to explore mechanisms of obesity and its treatment to prevent cancer.

## Xavier Research Updates:

Dr. Christopher Williams presented Xavier research, highlighting that interviews are currently ongoing for two faculty positions supported by the LCRC. A faculty candidate is scheduled to visit this week. Dr. Williams noted that the candidate has six active grants with a total funding amount of \$8,888,312. The funding sources for these grants include the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the National Institute on Aging, the Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program of California, and the California HIV/AIDS Research Program.

## Ochsner Research Updates:

Next, it was reported that the American Cancer Society has awarded a \$389K grant (PCEG-25-1415951-01-IMPACT) for the development of a remote advanced prostate cancer clinic aimed at serving the underserved River Parishes of Louisiana, with Dr. Brian Halbert, MD, as the principal investigator. This initiative is expected to create an infrastructure that will support ongoing collaborative efforts to provide NCORP and other clinical trials in the River Parishes.

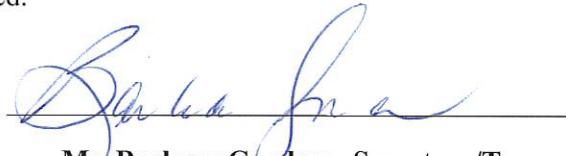
Additionally, the 2025 annual scientific retreat took place at Xavier University on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, receiving positive feedback overall, with speaker quality rated as good and the event itself rated from good to excellent.

Dr. Grant also provided an update on the challenges facing NIH funding, highlighting the administration's budget request, which includes a proposed 40% cut to the NIH budget. Multiple professional organizations, including the American Association of Cancer Research Institutes and the Association of Independent Research Institutes, both of which LCRC is a member, are collaborating in a joint advisory group to formulate recommendations aimed at improving the indirect (F&A) cost system.

**Dr. DiCarlo** called for any old business.

**Dr. DiCarlo** called for any new business. There was none.

With no further discussion or business, the meeting adjourned.



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Ms. Barbara Goodson, Secretary/Treasurer