

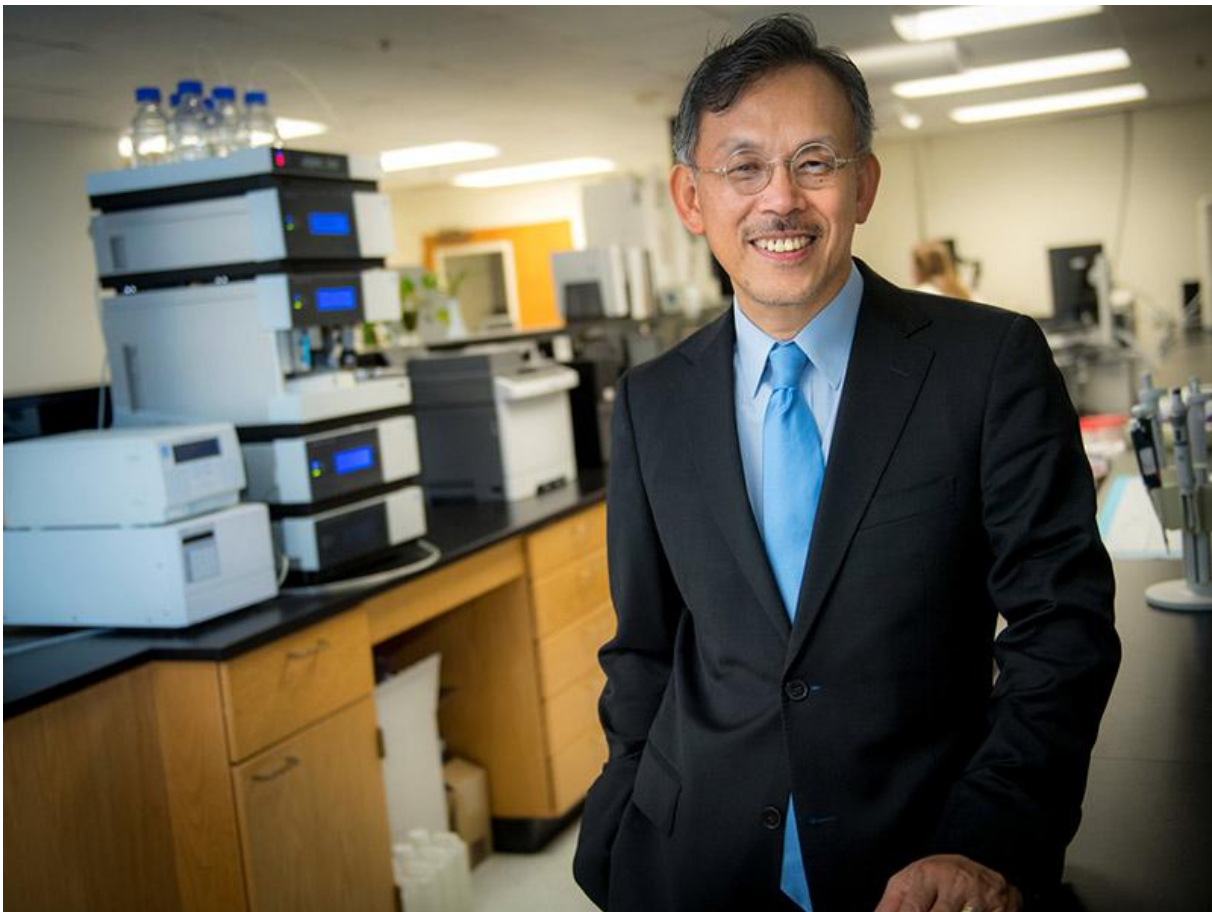
Tulane University to invest \$5.7 million to expand research institute

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TUTSI Director Dr. Jiang He, Joseph S. Copes MD Chair and Professor of Epidemiology at Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano.

Tulane University will invest \$5.7 million to significantly expand the [Tulane University Translational Science Institute](#) (TUTSI) into a university-wide center

focused on finding better ways to diagnose, treat and prevent disease and translate scientific discoveries into medical practices that improve patient care and public health.

The institute will include new graduate degree programs to develop the next generation of clinical investigators, new training programs for clinical research coordinators and a shared “biobank” freezer farm to store and preserve patient samples for use by researchers across multiple studies and institutions. The institute will include other infrastructure improvements to support large-scale patient recruitment for clinical trials, data analysis and research study design.

The goal is to expand research across the university and increase the impact of scientific discoveries on the well-being of individual patients and society as a whole, said Tulane President [Michael Fitts](#).

“This investment will help Tulane grow in its role as a national powerhouse of clinical and translational research,” Fitts said. “Better equipping and serving the needs of the university’s research community will translate into better medicines, diagnosis, treatment and care for patients. This past year has underscored the need for such investment like never before.”

TUTSI will include researchers from Tulane School of Medicine, School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, School of Science and Engineering and School of Social Work. It will focus on three areas: clinical research, which includes clinical trials for new drugs, diagnostics, surgical advances or medical devices; translational research, which translates basic science findings “from bench to bedside” where they can improve patient care; and implementation research, which aims to integrate evidence-based practices, interventions and policies into routine health care and disease-prevention.

“We have to grow our research infrastructure to keep up with the extraordinary growth in the research activity and ambition of our faculty,” said Robin Forman, Tulane senior vice president for academic affairs and provost. “This added support for translational and clinical research will help energize all of our health-related research by making more seamless the transition from basic research to translational research to clinical research to improved clinical care.”

[Dr. Jiang He](#), Joseph S. Copes MD Chair and Professor of Epidemiology at Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, will lead TUTSI as director

and [Dr. Lee Hamm](#), senior vice president and dean of Tulane University School of Medicine, will serve as co-director.

TUTSI was first established in 2016 as a National Institutes of Health-funded [Center of Biomedical Research Excellence](#) (COBRE) focused on developing more scientists devoted to clinical research aimed at helping patients suffering from high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes and related conditions. The COBRE will continue within TUTSI providing support and mentorship for early career faculty.

The new funding will allow TUTSI to improve its existing services, build out several new university-wide research cores and develop training programs for faculty, staff, and students in research methods and implementation. Among the planned initiatives are: an expanded Clinical Research Core; access to biostatistics, epidemiology, and research design consultations from a team of experts through a new Research Methods Core; and new postdoctoral and PhD programs focused on clinical and translational research, as well as annual clinical research coordinator workshops, offered through a new Training Core.

“TUTSI’s expansion will do more than help meet the immediate, short-term needs of investigators and their projects. More broadly, it will engage researchers, both new and established, and across disciplines and schools in conducting truly transformative research,” He said. “Clinical and translational research is inherently multidisciplinary and collaborative, and the new and enhanced TUTSI core services that we will offer should go a long way in fostering this spirit of collaboration here at Tulane.”

TUTSI’s new leadership team also includes Associate Director Dr. Amanda Anderson, associate professor of epidemiology and Clinical Director Dr. Jing Chen, professor of medicine and epidemiology.