

# Tulane's Provost's Proof of Concept Fund Propels Innovation: Spring 2024 Cohort Announced

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Doug Chrisey, Kristen Clement and Diyar Talbayev accept their Provost's Proof of Concept Awards from Dr. Kimberly Gramm and Dr. Nassir Marrouche.

Tulane innovators continue to develop and advance their groundbreaking ideas and technologies through the Provost's Proof of Concept Fund (PPOC), which announced its third cohort of winners at the Tulane Research, Innovation, and Creativity

Summit.

The Tulane Innovation Institute (TUII), in partnership with Provost Robin Forman, has now granted \$540,324 to eleven projects, including \$150,000 to the recent Spring 2024 awardees. PPOC grants aim to support research taking place at Tulane by providing funding to new commercialized discoveries that will eventually positively impact society by advancing their technology readiness level.

PPOC funds early-stage research and technology development that presents a viable market application that potentially has a feasible business model. The awarded grants can cover various tasks, including studies, consulting, customer discovery efforts, detailed IP analysis, and prototype development. Successful PPOC proposals were assessed based on activities and project milestones relevant to addressing fundamental commercialization questions, such as: Does it work as intended? Do we know who is likely to use or license it? The grantees can receive up to \$50,000, and the program is available to Tulane faculty, staff, and trainees.

“We are thrilled with the success of PPOC, which is an early-stage commercialization program here at TUII with our Provost, Robin Forman, as a partner. This program has really taken off.” Said Kimberly Gramm, David and Marion Mussafer, Chief Innovation and Entrepreneurship Officer

**The Provost's Proof of Concept Fund Spring 2024 awardees include:**

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**Kristen Clement, PhD Student,** Department of Microbiology and Immunology, School of Medicine (Advisor: Jacob Bitoun)  
Enterotoxigenic Escherichia coli (ETEC)-Derived Outer Membrane Vesicles (OMVs) as a Platform for a Multi-Valent ETEC Vaccine Prototype

*"I'm so grateful that the Innovation Institute sees promise in my research and has invested funding through the PPOC grant. This award will be so impactful to the preclinical development of my vaccine candidate," — Kristen Clement*

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**Diyar Talbayev, Professor,** Department of Physics and Engineering Physics, School of Science and Engineering - Terahertz Pulse Shaper for High-Contrast Biomedical Imaging

*"We have a unique commercial opportunity in our hands: we just discovered a way to increase image contrast 100-fold in optical imaging with Terahertz light. We will use the PPOC award to explore commercial applications in medical diagnostics, tumor visualization, pharmaceutical/industrial quality control, environmental and chemical sensing and security." — Diyar Talbayev*

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**Doug Chrisey, Jung Chair of Materials Engineering**, Department of Physics and Engineering Physics, School of Science and Engineering - Single Defects in SiC for Qubits

*"The PPOC funding will allow me to prove a new approach to the large-scale fabrication of Qubits, the most important component necessary for quantum computers." — Doug Chrisey*

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The Spring 2024 applicant pool was the largest and most diverse to date, with twenty applications representing five schools across the university. Applications came from Tulane PhD students, Fellows and Postdocs, and faculty members. The next round of applications will open in July 2024. To learn more about past award honorees, [please visit this page](#).