LCMC chief highlights Tulane partnership in Freeman Lecture

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In a fireside chat with Associate Professor of Management Science Claire Senot (left), Greg Feirn, CEO of LCMC Health, discussed his career path, the changing health care

environment and his company’s new partnership with Tulane University.

In the last 14 years, LCMC Health, the hospital system that grew out of Children’s Hospital in New Orleans, has become the second-largest healthcare system in New Orleans, with nine hospitals, 2,800 physicians and nearly 17,000 employees.

But in an appearance at the A. B. Freeman School of Business on April 18, LCMC Health CEO Greg Feirn (MBA ’06) said the company’s recent acquisition of Tulane Medical Center, Tulane Lakeside Hospital and Lakeview Regional Medical Center was about more than just growth.

“For hospital systems, we’ve got to focus on the critical care model, whether it’s the burn unit or the neurosciences unit [or the cancer unit],” Feirn said. “To be financially viable, we’ve got to invest in those services, and I think that comes from expertise like Tulane and LSU faculty — academic medicine.”

Feirn was on campus to serve as the business school’s 2023 R. W. Freeman Distinguished Lecturer. In a fireside chat with Claire Senot, associate professor of management science, Feirn addressed a wide range of topics, including his career path, the changing environment of health care, the challenge of delivering medical care in New Orleans, and, not surprisingly, LCMC’s partnership with Tulane.

“Tulane was already a part of LCMC Health,” Feirn said, noting that Tulane physicians provided services at both University Hospital and Children’s Hospital, “it’s just they were also a part of Tulane Medical Center and HCA. There’s not always mission alignment between a for-profit [like HCA] and a health care system at a university — it’s hard to get those lined up — and I think for years that was part of the struggle. So from a mission and strategic alignment standpoint, it’s what made this deal make so much sense, not just for us but also for Tulane.”

Feirn also discussed emerging job opportunities in health care, highlighting in particular the growing role of artificial intelligence.

“I think it’s important to pay attention to what’s happening with technology,” Feirn said. “AI is going to happen, so managing that impact and how to deploy it will present opportunities to younger folks coming out of an MBA program. It’s going to be that mindset that I think will make a difference in how we use [AI] to start to change our workforce. I think it will create opportunities in health care.”

In closing, Feirn offered the students in attendance some admittedly simplistic advice: Work hard.

“If you work hard and have pride in what you’re doing, you’re going to continue to move up in your career and get recognized,” he said. “You’re not always going to have that perfect job, but if you work hard and do it well, you’re going to move up.”

The R.W. Freeman Distinguished Lecture series is named in honor of Richard W. Freeman Sr. (BBA ’34), who served as president and chairman of the Louisiana Coca-Cola Bottling Co. and chairman of the board of Delta Air Lines. Freeman served on the Board of Tulane for 13 years and led the effort to name Tulane’s business school in honor of his father, businessman and philanthropist A. B. Freeman. Shortly after his death in 1985, his three children — Richard Freeman Jr. (BBA ’60), Louis M. Freeman (’63) and Tina Freeman, together with their families — established the R.W. Freeman Distinguished Lecture Series to honor his legacy.

Members of the Freeman family in attendance at this year’s lecture included Richard Jr., Louis, Tina, Philip Woollam, Louis Freeman Jr. (BSM ’86), and West Freeman (UC ’03).