

Panel highlights intersection of medicine and business

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Dr. Corey Hebert (R '01), left, answers a question during the panel presentation "The Business of Medicine," which took place at the Freeman School on Feb. 21. Joining Hebert for the discussion of career opportunities combining business and medicine were, left to right, Trivia Frazier (SSE '08, M '12, MBA '18), Dr. Russell Ledet (MD/MBA '22) and moderator Gary Hoover.

The Freeman School welcomed a distinguished panel of healthcare professionals on Feb. 21 for a wide-ranging discussion about opportunities to combine medicine and business. "The Business of Medicine," presented as part of Freeman Black Alumni Friday, drew alumni, faculty, staff and students as well as students from New Orleans Charter Science and Mathematics and Eleanor McMain high schools in New Orleans. All Freeman Black Friday events were free and open to the public.,

Moderated by Gary Hoover, executive director of Tulane's Murphy Institute, the panel featured Tulane alumni Dr. Russell Ledet (MD/MBA '22), Dr. Corey Hebert (R '01) and Trivia Frazier (SSE '08, M '12, MBA '18), who shared their insights on medicine, business and science while also stressing the importance of representation in healthcare.

Ledet, a triple board resident in pediatrics, adult psychiatry and child psychiatry at Indiana University School of Medicine, emphasized the value of a Freeman education in his medical career. "Not only are they getting a United States veteran, a scientist [and a] a physician, but they're getting a businessman," Ledet said, noting that his business skills helped distinguish him from peers and make him the first Black man to match into a triple board residency at Indiana University.

Frazier, co-founder, president and CEO of Obatala Sciences and member of the Board of Tulane, highlighted the critical need for diversity in medical research. "Historically, 75% of the clinical data that feeds into the decision-making process of therapies targeting obesity, targeting diabetes, targeting women's health products have been made from and derived from males of European descent," Frazier said, noting that this data gap leads to disparities in healthcare outcomes.

With humor and passion, Hebert, associate professor of pediatrics at Tulane University Medical Center and LSU Health Sciences Center and a highly regarded medical broadcast journalist, challenged the high school students in attendance to overcome self-doubt and cultural assumptions. Referencing studies on stereotype threat, which refers to the fear of confirming a negative stereotype about a group, Hebert explained how testing environments can negatively impact performance when students internalize negative stereotypes. "You think in your heart and in your core that you are not as smart," Hebert said. "And that's what you've got to get rid of, because when paired up, you're as smart as anybody."

All three panelists stressed the importance of community and embracing one's heritage with pride. They encouraged students to support one another rather than view peers as competition. The panelists also discussed various pathways to medical careers, including scholarship opportunities like the National Health Service Corps, which Hebert said paid for his medical education in exchange for his service.

For the high school students in attendance contemplating their futures, the panel challenged them to aim high and lift up their peers. "Your competition ain't with the person you're sitting in the classroom with," Ledet emphasized. "That's your teammate."



Freeman School Dean Paulo Goes speaks at the unveiling of "The New Orleans Black Experience," a mural by artist Brandan B. Mike Odums on the first floor of the Goldring/Woldenberg Business Complex.

According to Freeman's Office of EDI, which helped arrange the panel, the event highlighted the impact Freeman alumni are making as well as the importance of representation.

"It was wonderful to see Russell, Trivia and Corey discuss their careers and share some of the challenges they overcame and lessons they learned," said Associate Dean Erick Valentine. "For the students in attendance, I hope it enlightened them about opportunities to combine business and science and inspired them to fearlessly pursue their dreams."

In addition to the panel presentation, Freeman Black Alumni Friday also featured a luncheon honoring Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs Carolyn Barber-Pierre, a health fair in the LBC Pocket Park, and the unveiling of a new mural by artist Brandan B. Mike Odums, "The New Orleans Black Experience," on the first floor of the Goldring/Woldenberg Business Complex.