



## Urban Entrepreneurship Initiative expands board with world-class innovation and economic development leaders

*New members bring national leadership in entrepreneurship, healthcare innovation, and emerging technologies as UEI expands its mission and scope.*

### **Contact:**

Anshiq A Agrawal  
Urban Entrepreneurship Initiative  
[anshiqa@urbanei.org](mailto:anshiqa@urbanei.org)  
(734) 383-5935

**Detroit, MI — March 19, 2026** — The nonprofit **Urban Entrepreneurship Initiative (UEI)** today announced the addition of three new members to its Board of Directors, strengthening the organization's leadership as it expands its mission to empower innovators and entrepreneurs working to improve urban communities.

Founded in 2014, UEI supports innovators focused on solving complex urban challenges through entrepreneurship, technology, and community engagement. In 2025, the organization launched the **Urban Innovator Platform (urbanei.org)**, a digital community designed to provide information, inspiration, and connections for innovators working to improve quality of life in cities.

As UEI expands its programming and geographic reach, the organization has added three accomplished leaders to its governing board: **Leslie Lynn Smith, Lisa Prasad, and Felipe Sahn Furtado.**

### **Leslie Lynn Smith**

Leslie Lynn Smith serves as President and CEO of the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation and is widely recognized as a national leader in community and economic development. Over the course of her career she has led major entrepreneurship and innovation initiatives, including serving as President and CEO of TechTown Detroit and as founding President and CEO of Epicenter Memphis. Smith has raised more than \$75 million to support entrepreneurial ecosystems and economic development initiatives and has served on numerous national boards supporting entrepreneurship and economic mobility.

Leslie Smith's deep experience building entrepreneurial ecosystems and mobilizing stakeholders around economic opportunity will help guide UEI's continued growth.

## **Lisa Prasad**

Lisa Prasad serves as Vice President and Chief Innovation Officer at **Henry Ford Health**, where she leads enterprise innovation and commercialization strategy and oversees partnerships that bring new technologies and ventures into the healthcare system.

Before joining Henry Ford Health, Prasad co-founded U3 Ventures, a firm focused on leveraging anchor institutions such as universities and hospitals to drive urban economic development. She has led major initiatives connecting entrepreneurship, real estate development, and innovation ecosystems across the United States.

Lis Prasad's experience in innovation strategy and urban development will support UEI's mission to connect entrepreneurs with transformative technologies and institutional partners.

## **Felipe Sahb Furtado**

Felipe Sahb Furtado, MD, is currently completing his MBA at the **University of Michigan Ross School of Business** and will join **McKinsey & Company** as an associate in Detroit later this year.

Furtado previously conducted research at **Massachusetts General Hospital** and **Harvard Medical School**, publishing multiple highly cited papers in cancer imaging and medical innovation. He has also led digital health and AI initiatives in Brazil and has been actively involved with UEI's research collaboration with McKinsey on the Urban Innovator Platform.

Felipe Furtado's interdisciplinary background in medicine, business, and technology will help UEI explore new approaches to innovation and platform development.

---

## **Leadership Perspective**

"We are grateful to welcome these three exceptionally capable leaders to our board," said **W. David Tarver**, founder and president of the Urban Entrepreneurship Initiative. "Their willingness to serve reflects their belief in our mission and in the role innovation and entrepreneurship can play in strengthening urban communities."

Leslie Lynn Smith added, "I have long wanted to focus squarely on putting the latest innovations and technologies to work in service to the communities that need them most. UEI is uniquely positioned to help innovators bring meaningful solutions to urban challenges, and I'm excited to support that work."

Lisa Prasad joined the UEI board effective **December 1, 2025**, while Leslie Lynn Smith and Felipe Sahb Furtado joined effective **March 1, 2026**.

---

## **About the Urban Entrepreneurship Initiative**

Detroit-based but globally minded, the **Urban Entrepreneurship Initiative (UEI)** provides the **Urban Innovator Platform**, a membership-based ecosystem designed to connect innovators, entrepreneurs, and organizations working to improve the quality of life in urban communities.

Through its platform, UEI provides access to knowledge resources, human networks, technology tools, and funding opportunities that support the development of scalable solutions addressing the most pressing challenges facing cities.

Learn more at [urbanei.org](https://urbanei.org).