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LSU's new state-funded research center won't duplicate existing efforts, officials say

([Brett Duke, NOLA.com](#) | [The Times-Picayune](#))

LSU, with financial help from the state, has created the Transformational Technology and Cyber Research Center in an effort to attract federal research dollars. But some wonder if LSU already has that ability with its Center for Computation & Technology. Supporters of the new initiative concede the CCT is also going after significant federal grant projects, but Jeff Moulton, director of the new TTCRC, said the two entities are extremely different.

"The CCT and others, are focused on a lot of basic research and development, (but) that's not our focus," Moulton said on his first day on the job. "Our focus is to bridge the gap of what's going on in the classrooms and laboratories and actually take that technology and apply it to an operable environment.

In other words, this new effort will look for ways to monetize informational technology research already underway on the LSU campus.

Moulton, who previously served as director of program development at the Georgia Tech Research Institute, says CCT will play a critical role in the new research center's mission going forward.

"CCT will be instrumental in supporting the transformational technology and cyber research center and it will give us hardware, software, researchers and the environment to actually take our systems that we're working on for customers in the field," Moulton said, adding that the CCT will basically become a proving ground for system designs and solutions.

Announced in mid-August, the [TTCRC will go after federal and commercial research projects](#) in applied technology fields. Initially, the center will receive \$3 million in state funds and \$1.5 million from LSU. Going forward over the next three years, for every \$10 in research funding the center attracts, the state (\$1) and LSU (50-cents) will collectively provide a 15 percent match. The goal is to raise \$30 million in research contracts by July 1, 2017.

"The Transformational Technology and Cyber Research Center will help LSU attract tens of millions in new research funds while also resulting in new knowledge-based jobs in our state," Gov. Bobby Jindal said in an August news release.

Moulton says the goal at the center "is to be completely autonomous and fully functioning, and a pay-as-you-go entity in the next 24 months."

"What we're trying to accomplish is to develop and engineer solutions to solve (for) customers," he said, adding that the university itself is a good foundational building block for basic research but what the new center's mission is to take those fundamental basic research solutions and put them in an applied space, in the real world where it works.

Moulton says the center will be heavily focused on informational technologies.

"For example, 3-D printing was a transformational technology," Moulton said. "It allowed you to do things that were never able to be done before and it's a construct that requires very minimal from a manufacturing prospective, things this center wants to investigate are those types of technologies.

"Be relevant, not repetitive," a mantra Moulton says the TTCRC is striving for.

"We're looking at the integration of things, how do machines work together, how do you verify or validate the machine is doing what you want it do," Moulton said of the center's primary work.

"Everything works in a laboratory setting but when you take it out and actually put it in the field and use it where the application is meant to be used things go wrong and that's what we want to focus on, we want to focus on the applied R&D piece, not the basic R&D," Moulton said. "LSU, like other universities focus on basic research and development, we are an applied research and development operation."

Moulton says it's his job to go out and set the vision, go out and look for opportunities for LSU.

"I know what LSU can do and I want to marry up the strengths of LSU with those requirements and problem sets with the customers out there that I know very well," Moulton said.

Some potential customers for the center include the national government agencies including the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security and the United States military.

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