

A Dynamic Approach to Investing in the College

Through the UCLA Venture Capital Fund, alumni and friends in the Silicon Valley lend their expertise in support of the College of Letters and Science.

UCLA is a dynamic place where bold new scholarly and scientific research regularly occurs. Support for these groundbreaking ventures, through public funding or private gifts and grants, becomes an investment in the expertise and imagination of outstanding faculty and gifted students. Their pioneering work generates new cures for devastating diseases, greater understanding of human history, fresh economic theories, inventive art forms, and revolutionary scientific discoveries.

Now, in partnership with several forward-thinking alumni and friends, the university is engaging in another kind of bold new endeavor, the UCLA Venture Capital Fund. Josh Green, a UCLA alumnus (B.A. '77; J.D. '80), a Bruin parent, and a partner in MDV-Mohr Davidow Ventures, is chair of the Fund and has been involved since its beginning.

"There's a dual purpose to the UCLA Venture Capital Fund," he said. "One is to raise money for the College and to benefit the Athletics Department. The second purpose is to establish a community of UCLA alumni, parents and friends in the Silicon Valley. The Fund creates an ideal forum where people can get together regularly and reconnect with UCLA."

The UCLA Venture Capital Fund is based on the funding method used as one of the primary sources of capital for the creation of new technology companies.

Venture capitalism encourages new business and innovative ideas, bringing to the marketplace products and services that otherwise might not exist. Approximately one-third of the world's venture capital activities are based in northern California's Silicon Valley. Many technologies developed at UCLA have been brought into the commercial world through venture capital-backed start-up companies.

The premise of venture capital involves forming and investing in companies whose shares are not yet traded publicly. Many of these ventures are just individuals with a novel business plan or an exciting product that will address a widespread problem. These entrepreneurs often need funding, and that's where venture capital comes in.

Venture capital firms provide financial backing, but they also share their expertise, helping with hiring management teams, securing additional funding, and bringing the product or service to the market. In exchange, they receive shares in the new company—stock that initially possesses very little value. If the company fails, the investment is lost. If it succeeds, it will eventually hold a "liquidity event"—either an initial public offering of stock or a merger or acquisition deal with another, established company—and the value of its stock will soar, bringing tremendous profits to the entrepreneurs and investors.

These are the kinds of investments that the UCLA Venture Capital Fund seeks.

Patricia O'Brien, executive dean of the College, is enthusiastic about this innovative new way for alumni, parents and friends to get involved and support the College.

"When a dynamic group of northern California venture capitalists and entrepreneurs who also happen to be alumni and friends of UCLA get together to help this university,

Josh Green: *"Both my undergraduate and law school days at UCLA were important times when I built the foundation for my career in law and venture capital. The Venture Capital Fund is an opportunity for me to give back to the university in a unique, hands-on way."*





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and when that group has Josh Green as its chair, magic happens,” O’Brien said. “Josh and the executive committee of the UCLA Venture Capital Fund are bringing their expertise, creativity and proven track record to the table to enrich the academic mission of the College through their entrepreneurial vision.”

UCLA is one of only a handful of universities around the nation that have invested this way. The Fund was first established in 2000 as the College of Letters and Science Fund (CLAS). At that time, participants generally contributed both cash and advice about investment opportunities. When the NASDAQ stock market declined shortly after the fund’s formation and the dot.com industry collapsed, the CLAS went dormant. Recently, though, the region has recovered its vitality as the world’s leading entrepreneurial research and development center. Earlier this year, the CLAS, combined with a similar fund in the Athletics Department, was reborn as the UCLA Venture Capital Fund.

Today most of the participants, half of whom are venture capitalists and half entrepreneurs, make pledges of stock in start-up companies rather than cash. Green explained, “We’re really looking for people to contribute more than stock. We want their skills and knowledge, too. People who are involved in the venture capital-backed entrepreneurial community understand how this environment works; they know the nature of good deals versus bad.”

Currently the Fund is invested in more than 15 companies. When a start-up goes public, the plan is for everyone to benefit: the donor receives a substantial charitable tax deduction based on the new, higher value of the stock; and UCLA benefits from selling the shares at their greater value.

Entrepreneur Treb Ryan is the CEO of Opsource, Inc., a venture capital-funded company that helps software manufacturers deliver their services over the internet. Ryan attended UCLA in the 1980s and became an early contributor to the UCLA Venture Capital Fund.

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when we don’t have a lot of cash available, to contribute to UCLA in a way that works for us,” Ryan said.

What motivated people like Green and Ryan to get involved in the UCLA Venture Capital Fund?


“I’m a fan of public schools across the board,” said Ryan. “If I can help UCLA continue to provide high-quality education at an affordable price, I want to do that.”

Green feels a true fondness for UCLA and is pleased to be able to lend his expertise.

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Green believes that the other participants in the Fund feel the same way.

“There’s a labor of love here,” he said. “We all want to contribute time as well as money and stock, but the ability to reconnect with UCLA is, in large part, the motivation for getting involved.”

To participate in the UCLA Venture Capital Fund or for more information, contact Tim Dolan, director of leadership gifts in the UCLA College of Letters and Science, at tdolan@support.ucla.edu. 

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Creating New Leaders in Scientific Research

A \$1 million grant from the Amgen Foundation will provide 25 students with a summer of immersion in scientific studies.

In recent years, UCLA has assumed a leadership role in providing scientific research opportunities for undergraduate students. Now, in a move that will secure the university's status in this area, the Amgen Foundation has chosen UCLA as one of a select group of academic institutions to receive a \$1 million grant in support of undergraduates involved in research in the biomedical sciences, chemistry, bioengineering, and chemical engineering.

The Amgen Scholars Program builds partnerships with ten of the nation's top universities to give undergraduate students hands-on research experience. The program will provide a total of \$25 million to the universities over an eight-year period.

"The Amgen grant provides generous support for outstanding students to participate in UCLA's Summer Program for Undergraduate Research (SPUR)," said Judith L. Smith, vice provost for undergraduate education. "For many this will be an important stepping stone to graduate studies and a career in scientific research."

Beginning in summer 2007, UCLA will host 25 Amgen Scholars, 12 from UCLA and 13 from other four-year colleges and universities around the nation. Professor Patricia Phelps of the Department of Physiological Science will direct the program as part of the Undergraduate Research Center for Science, Engineering and Math.

The Amgen Scholars, each of whom will be paired with a faculty mentor, will work for eight to ten weeks during the summer in science laboratories around the campus—side by side with graduate students, postdoctoral



Maggie Zhu, a junior studying molecular, cell and developmental biology: "The Amgen Scholars Program will provide me with precious opportunities to connect with other students doing research at UCLA and other universities."

scholars, and faculty members. In addition, weekly lunch meetings will provide opportunities for them to gather and discuss their work with faculty speakers, and career development workshops will help with such activities as applying to graduate school and making research presentations. The program also will offer GRE test preparation, as well as social events to allow for networking with other summer researchers.

In midsummer, a three-day biotechnology symposium held at Lake Tahoe and sponsored by the Amgen Corporation will give the students a chance to hear presentations by leading scientists in industry and academia and to discuss their own research. At the end of the summer, UCLA will host an undergraduate research conference where each student will give a poster presentation describing his or her research project.

Sophia Yang, a sophomore majoring in physical chemistry at UCLA, said, "The Amgen Scholar award will allow me to conduct research over the summer on improving early cancer detection. After refining our new techniques for MRI imaging, I will be testing the method on *in vitro* samples of glioblastoma multiforme, an advanced central nervous system tumor found in the brain."

Other student awardees are equally enthusiastic. UCLA senior Ni Feng, a biology major, will be conducting research focused on the hormonal and neuromuscular aspects of the courtship display in the Golden-collared manakin, a bird found in the rainforests of Panama.


"The Amgen Scholars program will not only allow me to continue my project this summer," said Feng, "but it will also help me prepare for graduate level research."

Maggie Zhu, a junior in molecular, cell and developmental biology who is studying the molecular bases of mammalian sex differentiation, added, "The Amgen Scholars Program will provide me with precious opportunities to connect with other students doing research at UCLA and other universities."

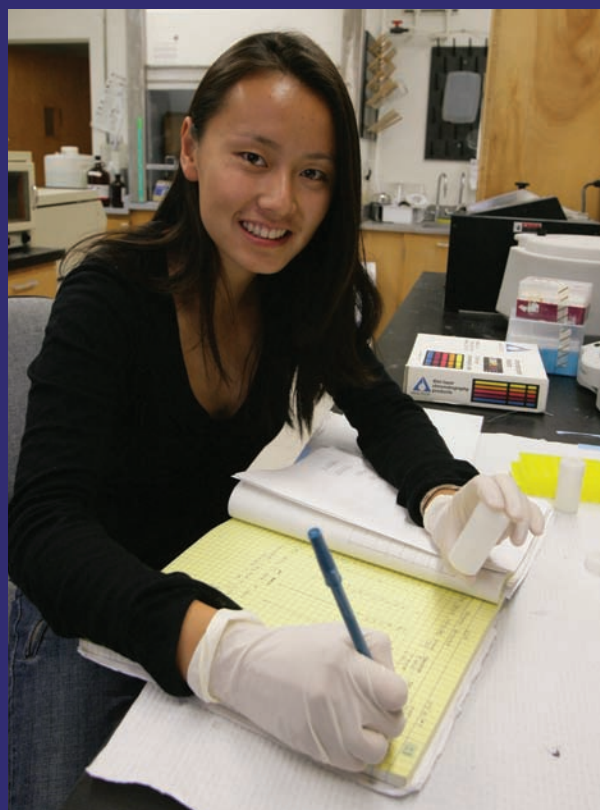
Financial support is a key component of the program. All Amgen Scholars, regardless of their financial status, will receive on-campus room and board and a stipend of \$3,500, as well as a travel allowance.

"Private giving from UCLA alumni and friends has made it possible for the university to support more than 200 undergraduate research fellows and scholars each year," said Smith.

But, with each new freshman class numbering more than 4,000 students—about 40 percent of whom are science majors—more funds are needed.

"Support for undergraduate research is essential," Smith said. "The Amgen Scholars Program will be a welcome addition to UCLA's Summer Program for Undergraduate Research. We are grateful to the Amgen Foundation for this very generous grant." 

The Amgen Scholars, each of whom will be paired with a faculty mentor, will work for eight to ten weeks during the summer in science laboratories around the campus—side by side with graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and faculty members.



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For information about supporting the UCLA College of Letters and Science, call Tracie Christensen, assistant vice chancellor of development (310)206-0699.