



LaunchPad Campus Ambassador Program: 2020

FROM: Takhani Kromah

SUBJECT: Blackstone LaunchPad Campus Ambassador Program

LaunchPad Program Overview

The *Blackstone LaunchPad powered by Techstars* is an entrepreneurship network that supports student entrepreneurs on 24 campuses across the U.S. and Ireland. The *Blackstone LaunchPad powered by Techstars* network helps students succeed in entrepreneurship and in their careers. Accessible to over 750,000 college students per year, LaunchPad is designed to complement existing on-campus entrepreneurship resources, catalyze student ventures through off-campus connections, and convene students and staff at world-class events leveraging our industry-leading mentors, networks, and brands.

Table of Contents

Program Overview	pg. 2-3
Participating Schools	pg. 4
Next Steps & Timeline	pg. 5
Mentorship Guidance & Key Resources	pg. 6
Frequently Asked Questions	pg. 7-8

Program Overview

What is a Launchpad Campus Ambassador? Our LaunchPad Campus Ambassadors will serve as invaluable resources for the Program Directors at our LaunchPad universities, as well as for their student entrepreneurs. Each Campus Ambassador will be assigned to a specific LaunchPad university, and will serve as a liaison between the campus LaunchPad and the broader Blackstone network.

How many LaunchPad Campus Ambassadors will be assigned to a university? Each university will be assigned 2-3 LaunchPad Campus Ambassadors.

Will I be able to choose which university I am assigned to? Please let us know if you would like to be paired with a specific school. Depending on the need on a given campus and availability (first come first served) we will make our best effort to accommodate your request.

Commitment: This is a commitment for one calendar year (January 2020 - December 2020).

How to Apply: To learn more and/or to apply for consideration, please email Takhani Kromah (takhani.kromah@blackstone.com)

What are the responsibilities of a LaunchPad Campus Ambassador? Your commitment will be tailored to your unique capacity to support the student entrepreneurs and the needs of the campus LaunchPad. In consultation with the Campus Director, you will jointly determine the full extent of your engagement, which may include:

- **Advising the LaunchPad Campus Director:** Schedule a call once per semester with the Campus Director to provide strategic counsel to better understand their program and offer opportunities where Blackstone can be helpful, including any relevant introductions to your networks. Please connect with takhani.kromah@blackstone.com to follow up with any specific requests that need to be directed to the Foundation.
- **Supporting Student Entrepreneurs:** Schedule a minimum of 8 hours per semester to advise, mentor or otherwise support student founders. This may come in the form of the following:
 - Lead a workshop (in-person or virtual) on a technical skill that may be relevant to startup founders; successful past workshops have been on investment readiness, growth strategy, operations planning, etc.
 - Host “Blackstone Office Hours.” Be available by phone for 1-2 hours for students who want to ask questions, request advice or discuss any challenges they experience with their ventures. We suggest providing a conference line and scheduling students in 30 minute increments.
 - General support may look like pitch deck feedback, support with company financials, industry-specific expertise call (if relevant),

- **Attending one LaunchPad branded event in person and on campus**, where applicable, potentially engaging in any of the following activities:
 - Pitch competitions
 - Speed mentoring
 - Entrepreneurship or industry-related panel
- **Attending LaunchPad Signature Events:** Participate in mentorship engagement opportunities at LaunchPad annual events (e.g., LaunchPad Propel, LaunchPad Lift Demo Day and/or Startup Weekends)
- **Program Feedback:** Provide high level feedback to the Blackstone Charitable Foundation Team on your experience working with the universities and entrepreneurs - this can happen at any point during the engagement, and at least through a survey of your experience at the end of the academic year.

Universities are aware that student advising and mentorship is a unique opportunity, and you are not required to continue your mentorship past your year long commitment.. If you choose to continue working with any student entrepreneurs beyond this individual and time-bound commitment, feel free to do so, but we want to be respectful of your time.

Please note that Blackstone Campus Ambassadors are required to share personal bios and resumes at the start of the program. These will be shared with Campus Directors at the schools you are paired with.

Sign-up: Please send an email to Takhani.Kromah@blackstone.com confirming your interest.

Participating Schools:

- University of California - Berkeley
- University of California - Davis
- University of California - Irvine
- University of California - Merced
- University of California - Riverside
- University of California - San Diego
- University of California - Santa Cruz
- University of California - Los Angeles
- University of California - San Francisco
- University of Southern California
- University of Central Florida
- University College Cork
- University of Dublin, Trinity
- Montana State University
- Cornell University
- New York University
- State University of New York (Buffalo)
- Syracuse University
- University of Albany
- Temple University
- Texas A&M University
- The University of Texas - Austin
- The University of Texas - Dallas
- University of Montana

Note: Preference will be given to alumni of these schools, then based on interest, and likelihood of travel to the location.

Next Steps & Timeline

- A. **December 11:** Deadline to sign-up/re-confirm interest
- B. **December 11-20:** Match BX mentors to Launchpad campuses
- C. **December 20:** All Cohort email confirming BX executives participating, campuses matching and key areas for advising
- D. **January 14:** Campus Mentorship Onboarding Call (30-45min) – 4-5pm EST
- E. **January 16:** Campus Mentorship Onboarding Call (30-45min) - 4-5pm EST
- F. **January 17:** Campus Mentorship Onboarding Call (30-45min) - 4-5pm EST
- G. **February 1:** Deadline for BX Ambassador and LP Campus Director Onboarding Call
- H. **June 15-30:** Mid Year Evaluation & Check-in calls with BX mentors
- I. **December 15:** Year End Evaluation & Feedback to BXCF

Mentorship Guidance & Key Resources

What is a Mentor?

Mentors bring knowledge and expertise to significantly impact companies in the startup phase. They help in areas like product-market-fit, business model, distribution, customers, partners, and (when appropriate) offer their own networks with the companies.

Why Mentor?

Mentoring startups is a great way to gain exposure to new ways of thinking, learn new innovative techniques that you can bring back to your teams, and stay up to date on current market and technology trends.

Mentor Principles: (adapted from the Techstars' Mentor Manifesto)

- Be socratic.
- Expect nothing in return (you'll be delighted with what you do get back).
- Be authentic / practice what you preach.
- Be direct. Tell the truth, however hard.
- Listen and understand before giving advice. Ask thoughtful questions - wherever possible, try to let them get there on their own.
- The best mentor relationships eventually become two-way.
- Be responsive.
- Clearly separate opinion from fact.
- Hold information in confidence.
- Know what you don't know. Say I don't know when you don't know. "I don't know" is preferable to bravado.
- Set clear expectations of where you can and can't help and then do it.
- Guide, don't control. Teams must make their own decisions. Guide but never tell them what to do. Understand that it's their company, not yours.
- Accept and communicate with other mentors that get involved.
- Provide specific actionable advice, don't be vague. Be direct and do it quickly. They don't have time for traditional sugarcoating.
- Connect companies to as many resources as possible. Make introductions when appropriate.
- Be challenging/robust but never destructive.
- Have empathy. Remember that startups are hard. Deeply care for the future of each person as well as their company.

Useful Mentorship Resources:

- [Techstars Mentor Manifesto in Detail](#)
- [How to be a Career-Changing Mentor - 25 Tips From the Best Mentors We Know](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Blackstone Charitable Foundation and its mission?

The Blackstone Charitable Foundation, created in 2007 at the time of the firm's IPO, is the firm's philanthropic arm. It plays an integral role in the firm's effort to support the communities in which we work and live. The Foundation's mission is to invest Blackstone's philanthropic and human capital in targeted regions in order to expand opportunity and support economic development.

The Foundation has two primary functions: The Entrepreneurship Initiative, which runs programs that engages particular populations to increase access to entrepreneurship resources and economic opportunity; and Blackstone Connects, which oversees all volunteering, board service and giving on behalf of BX employees and the firm.

What is the Blackstone Charitable Foundation's Entrepreneurship Initiative?

The Foundation focuses its efforts in targeted regions of interest to the firm, and works closely with local stakeholders to build programs and make grants to support entrepreneurs. These programs foster networks and provide resources like mentorship, content, and events, to help entrepreneurs grow and scale their businesses.

What is Blackstone LaunchPad powered by Techstars?

Blackstone LaunchPad powered by Techstars provides higher-education students and recent alumni with access to a global network, mentorship, content and resources to accelerate their entrepreneurial success. As the Foundation's signature program of its *Entrepreneurship Initiative*, LaunchPad currently operates at 24 universities across the United States and Ireland. Across this broad network, over 750,000 students have access to the program each year.

LaunchPad takes student founders further, faster, by complementing their on-campus experience with proven accelerator content and resources; catalyzing their venture growth with connections to a powerful mentor network and other opportunities to showcase their ventures on a global stage; and convening them at world-class events where they can build a peer network, get advice from experienced entrepreneurs, and compete for venture funding!

LaunchPad benefits students, schools, and communities:

For students: LaunchPad helps transform ideas into thriving enterprises. We aim to derisk entrepreneurship for students, allowing for the entrepreneurial pursuit to be accessible and viable to all.

For schools: LaunchPad adds value to student offerings with access to important networks and events, while also serving as a concierge for students to efficiently navigate the institution's existing entrepreneurship resources.

For communities: LaunchPad helps fuel economic development by igniting entrepreneurship where student founders are. Entrepreneurs establish new businesses locally that both challenge and disrupt markets and create new jobs.

What is Techstars?

Techstars is the global ecosystem that helps entrepreneurs build businesses. Techstars was founded in Boulder, Colorado in 2006 by David Cohen, Brad Feld, David Brown, and Jared Polis. Through the Techstars Worldwide Entrepreneur Network, founders and their teams are able to connect to other entrepreneurs, experts, mentors, alumni, investors, community leaders, and corporate partners that will help their companies grow.

Techstars operates almost 50 accelerators around the world in places like Boulder, New York City, Boston, Seattle, Austin, Chicago, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Detroit, Minneapolis, London, Adelaide, Tel Aviv, Cape Town, Toronto, and Berlin. Techstars has both industry agnostic “city” programs, and “vertical” programs typically operated in partnership with large corporations. Techstars has accepted nearly 2,000 companies into its programs. Collectively, these companies have raised over \$8.3B USD. Fewer than 1-2% of the companies that apply to Techstars are accepted.