

## USC announces incubator program for companies in or above the prototype stage

This opportunity will give top students, alumni, and faculty or staff entrepreneurs of USC the resources and guidance to do more with



**By Emily Senkosky**

The University of Southern California Marshall School of Business, supported by the Lloyd Greif Center for Entrepreneurial Studies, is currently seeking applicants for its incubator program for Fall 2021. This opportunity will give top students, alumni, and faculty or staff entrepreneurs of USC the resources and guidance to do more with their ideas, faster.

In cooperation with more than 150 companies, over \$120 million has been raised for the program through successful Kickstarter campaigns, received NSF grants, funded accelerators like Y Combinator, and of course, shipped products to customers. Winners from past USC competitions like the New Seed Venture Competition, Stevens Student Innovator Showcase, Silicon Beach, the Min Family Challenge, and the Maseeh Prize have also contributed.



*USC Incubator*

The USC/Marshall Greif Incubator accelerates the development of USC's entrepreneurs through experiential education, mentorship, and community.

Since 2015, the incubator has worked with founders through the myriad of tasks, preparations, and campaigning needed to help transition their ideas into realities. Taking founders through a coursework of tailored compositions, the incubator helps participants create and execute their business game plan. Starting with feasibility and development work, understanding customer acquisition, manifesting a tested business model, getting distribution, building a team, and finally bootstrapping resources to devise investment preparation—this incubator is as business-savvy as it gets.

What is more, the school provides connections and access to legal and financial assistance on top of already provided assets.



*Paul Orlando*

The director of the incubator, Paul Orlando, is the founder of Startups Unplugged—a company designed to help build innovation programs and internal incubator and accelerator programs. Guiding companies to help them grow and develop new products, Orlando has taken funded startups and expanded them into corporations like Unilever, Visa, E&Y, Morgan Stanley, Merrill Lynch, and Applied Materials. His work has been featured in TechCrunch, Wall Street Journal, NY Times, and he has published a book entitled Growth Units, which shares expertise on Lifetime Value and Customer Acquisition Cost.

The program was built in the belief that great businesses are built by teams and that not one founder is alike. Seeking to bolster a wide breadth of skills including but not limited to, tech, design, businesses, and marketing, the USC/Marshall Greif Incubator's mission is to emphasize that entrepreneurship is wider than just technology.

To date, the program has supported a broad mix of companies, from machine learning, robotics, VR, SaaS, and industrial equipment, to consumer products, apparel, and food and beverage.

Driving continuity through challenging and encouraging founders to open and frequent conversations, the incubator manifests continuity and streamlined end-goals, rather than disaggregated singular events. What is more, chosen teams remain important long after they have graduated, and oftentimes the companies continue to work in collaboration with USC as cohorts—supporting an experience that has both discovery and longevity.



This year the program will be both in-person and virtual, which means that founders of startups outside of Los Angeles can throw their hats into the ring. With activities delivered on campus and also via Zoom and phone, the program facilitates work with member companies in Los Angeles and beyond as well.

The general outline for the program is delivered in weekly group meetings, weekly workshops, mentor visits, and individual office hours. Overall, in a typical month, incubator startups meet with the incubator's director, experts and mentors, and other startups to share concerns, get advice, and make decisions.

## Here is what The USC Marshall Greif Incubator is looking for in incubator companies:

- **Coachability:** Is your team open to take outside advice and potentially change direction?
- **Capability to Build:** Entering Incubatees should have most of the capability to build what their business requires, with small exceptions that fall outside the core of the business.
- **Commitment and Drive:** Is your team creative, resourceful, and patient, particularly when you hit bumps in the road?
- **Engagement:** Will your team be an active, interested part of our Incubator community, taking advantage of our events and resources, and helping out others?
- **Readiness:** This program is for teams already at the prototype stage. Even better if you have customers. (Please do not apply if you are still in the concept stage.)

Companies that apply must include a founder who is affiliated with USC in some capacity, whether that be a student, alumni, faculty, or staff. The program asks that if you do not have at least one founder who is affiliated with USC in one or more of those ways to please not apply. The program will run from September 20th to December 3rd. Applications are open for submission now and end on Monday, September 20, 2021, at 11:59 PM PST.