LaunchPad Summer Startup Fellowship

As LaunchPad students approach graduation and the first summer during/following the COVID-19 crisis and following economic downturn, their attention and concerns have increasingly turned to lost and more challenging job and internship prospects.

In an effort to both distribute financial assistance and to encourage continued work on some of the most promising LaunchPad startups in a remote setting, we will host a unique, new opportunity for a LaunchPad Summer Startup Fellowship.

In this 8-week Fellowship, participant ventures will be awarded $5,000 in grant funding to support their time working on advancing their startup companies. The Fellowship is largely self-driven, but will include weekly reporting requirements, a number of webinars to support the program, and a final report. The Fellowship is open to all current students and recent graduates in the LaunchPad Network, and will accept 50 participants.

Program Dates: June 8th-July 27th, 2020


Application Deadline: May 25th, 2020

Accepted applicants notified by the 1st week of June

Selection Criteria: Applicants will be judged based on the quality of their 30 second video pitch, articulation of realistic goals and milestones, quality and detail of the proposal narrative, description of next steps following the Fellowship, and need statement. Special consideration will also be given to ensure selected companies represent the diversity of the LaunchPad Network.

Fellowship Grant: $5,000 will be awarded to fellowship participants to support financial needs during the program period. It should be noted that grants are issued after proper paperwork is received by the Blackstone Charitable Foundation. Grant processing often takes a number of weeks, so participants should plan accordingly.

Fellowship Structure: As with a typical Fellowship, this initiative is largely self-directed and independent of a strict curriculum. Because of this, it is critical that applicants have demonstrated the ability to work independently with little guidance or structure. Despite this format, the Fellowship will include a number of “light” programmatic elements:

- Program kickoff call
- 2 “Founder Story Fireside Chats” with Techstars founders
- Program wrap-up call, introduction to Techstars pipeline manager
- Weekly reporting and final report
- Access to our mentor request form for ad-hoc assistance
Fellowship Requirements: All participants must...
- Clearly define goals and objectives for the Fellowship
- Track progress towards these goals on weekly basis using a progress tracking spreadsheet and submit the progress tracker at the end of the program
- Participate in program kickoff / conclusion calls
- Complete a final report and survey detailing their work in the Fellowship, results and next steps.
- Work with Campus Ambassadors to review their final report

Campus Director Responsibilities: Because of the large number of participants, it is critical that LaunchPad Directors actively participate with teams accepted into the Fellowship in their programs in the following areas:
- Review weekly progress trackers
- Take action if students are not completing progress reports
- Facilitate introductions to Campus ambassadors / mentors as needed to support the student’s progress
- Ensure student participates in weekly calls and completes the final report on time
- Help students with planning for next steps and connect students to pipeline opportunities

Application criteria:
The applicant must...
- be a current student (undergraduate level, graduate-level) or a recent graduate (2018-2020) and active participant in LaunchPad programming on campus.
- have an existing startup company.
- be self-motivated and driven to complete work independently and with minimal oversight.
- have well-defined goals and milestones to be completed within the 8 week period of the fellowship.
- be past the idea-stage and already have a pitch deck, executive summary, a logo, a website, LinkedIn account, Twitter account, and ideally, a prototype.
- have traction e.g. early sales, MOUs, funding raised, customer interest, etc (we will ask for examples in this form)
- have demonstrated leadership in both executing the business and galvanizing support.
- have experience working with mentors, integrating feedback into their venture, and show coachability.

Application submissions:
All applicant must apply via this link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/lp-fellowship
On or before May 25th, 2020.

Final Report:
A final report will be due by August 14th, 2020. The final report template can be reviewed HERE.

Fellowship Contacts:
- Grant contact (for all grant / financial-related questions): Takhani Kromah, Director, the Blackstone Charitable Foundation, Takhani.Kromah@blackstone.com
- Programmatic contact (for questions regarding calls / webinars, mentorship needs, final report submissions): Courtney Gras, Engagement Director, Techstars, courtney.gras@techstars.com