



NEWS RELEASE

Demo Day Powered By Sunstone Brings Entrepreneurs, Investors Together At Cal State Long Beach

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LONG BEACH, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Entrepreneurs from all over California converged on Long Beach last Friday to present their ideas to investors at the CSU Demo Day Powered by Sunstone.

Almost 100 people attended the second annual event, hosted at California State University, Long Beach, by the CSULB Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship. The day featured presentations by 26 teams of students and faculty from the 23-campus California State University system. Wade Martin, IIE director, said 21 investors were on hand, according to the attendee list.

"CSU Demo Day 2023 showed significant growth from the first year," Dr. Martin said. "We were very pleased to see more than 20 investors attend the event and look forward to even more joining us next year. The CSU Demo Day is a critical step forward to support the creativity and innovation coming out of the world's largest university system. The support from Sunstone Community Fund allows these founders to access equity investors and support local economic development throughout California and beyond."

CSULB President Jane Close Conoley opened the day with praise for sponsor Sunstone Management, Inc.'s vision for the future of the entrepreneurial economy.

"Sunstone's collaboration with the institute adds an edge of excellence," Conoley said. "Silicon Valley has been the longtime center of innovation. Now, the CSU system is the center of power."

It took two rooms at the CSULB student union to complete the 26 presentations in the allotted time. Business founders had just a few minutes to explain their product or service, and to pitch how investment could further their cause.

Concepts ranged from a peer-to-peer platform driving student recruitment and retention at the university level to a card/online game manufacturer and consultant. Students traveled from as far away as San Jose to participate.

“CSU Demo Day was an amazing experience for my business partner and I to demo our product to people at the event and further perfect our business pitch to investors,” said Denzill Loe, co-founder of Potion Slingers. “We brought down 10 sealed copies of our card game just to show on the table and we ended up selling them all. It’s a great opportunity to participate in an event like this because of the valuable connections we made with investors, CSU professors, and fellow entrepreneurs who came and talked to us.”

Sunstone helped create the system-wide approach to Demo Day and the entrepreneurial education emphasis.

“We’re grateful for our partnership with the CSU system,” Sunstone CEO and Managing Partner John Keisler said. “You take 550,000 students and couple that with the training, hope and vision provided by entrepreneurial programs like that seen at the Institute ... and it can power the California economy, the world economy. We’re honored to be a part of that.”

Next spring, these teams and others from the CSU system will have a chance to compete at the Sunstone CSU Startup Launch Competition, where \$200,000 in prize money will be at stake. This year’s competition will take place at CSU Dominguez Hills.

For more information about the CSULB Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship, go to <https://www.csulb.edu/institute-for-innovation-entrepreneurship>.

About Sunstone Management

Sunstone Management is a diversified private capital management firm with headquarters in Southern California that provides a range of early-stage venture capital, real estate, and fixed income funds to qualified and accredited investors. The firm delivers new and exciting options for economic growth through innovative public-private partnerships, making use of its unique experience across government, education, and private sectors. Identified by Financial Times as one of America’s Fastest Growing Companies three years in a row. In the second quarter of 2023, PitchBook ranked Sunstone the seventh most active early-stage venture capital firm in the country, and 18th overall.

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