

Clark Atlanta University's Center for Entrepreneurship Announces Cohort for Startup Program

University's Southeast Regional Center for Entrepreneurship Announces Inaugural Cohort for Startup Scholars Program

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- Clark Atlanta

University's Southeast Regional Center for Entrepreneurship, one of four

regional partners of The Howard University and PNC National Center for Entrepreneurship, has selected the inaugural cohort for its Startup Scholars program, an initiative designed to empower and support student entrepreneurs at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) as they grow their business ideas and pursue higher education.

Nine students were selected from the 28 HBCUs in the Southeast region to receive a \$10,000 scholarship, as well as an integrated portfolio of support from the Center, including business funding. Additional program benefits include one-on-one business consulting, business management workshops, and networking events.

"I am inspired by the student scholars selected for our inaugural cohort of student entrepreneurs," said Nsenga Burton, Ph.D., director of the Southeast Regional Center for Entrepreneurship at CAU. "These students run the gamut in diverse business ideas, which gives me hope for our future business leaders."

"This program allows our underrepresented enterprising entrepreneurs from historically black colleges and universities in Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and the U.S. Virgin Islands to capitalize on the Center's access and resources to gain increased knowledge of building and scaling businesses, while developing a cohesive network of entrepreneurs committed to creating a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem."

The 2023-24 Startup Scholars include:

- Kofi Ada-Zulu, Bethune Cookman University, Computer Information Systems major, runs Adukicks, a sneaker restoration company for students.



Clark Atlanta University Campus logo

- Gera Baano Stewart II, Morehouse College, Software Engineering major, developed Simp Now, a pioneering social dating app that merges authentic connections with innovative features.
- Navardo Butler, Clark Atlanta University, Business Administration major, created Perlo Club, a clothing brand offering high-quality and stylish apparel for people who value growth, positivity, strength, love and understanding.
- Paul Ekowmen, Clark Atlanta University, Accounting major, ideated a fashion brand called Community Garden, with proceeds supporting clothing giveaways and sock drives for people experiencing homelessness, as well as camps for kids.
- Kamina Griffin, Spelman College, Economics and Comparative Women's Studies double major, created SECURE, an innovative platform for undergraduate students that will include a dating app, social media platform, and educational resource hub with the help of AI technology.
- Alexia Hann, Clark Atlanta University, Business Administration major, created LexLuxury Couture Designs, an online women's clothing boutique offering unique clothing and accessories for customers.
- Suzie Jackson, Trenholm State Community College, Culinary Arts major, will create Suzie's Bakery & Treats, a small business venture specializing in custom-made cupcakes, cakes, cookies, puddings, and brownies.
- Malik Poag, Florida Memorial University, Business Administration major, runs a popular photography business in Miami Gardens, Florida.
- Nichele Washington, Spelman College, Political Science major, developed Oshun, a movement prioritizing sustainable living and environmentalism with its signature product, the Zero-waste lipstick case.

Eligibility for the Startup Scholars program requires candidates to be a rising sophomore, junior or senior at an HBCU with a previously launched or forthcoming business idea launch in the 2023-24 academic school year. Upon successfully completing the program, all participants will be recognized at the National Center's annual conference in June 2024 in Washington, D.C. Scholarship award winners will also serve as ambassadors for the National Center and Southeast Regional Center on their respective campuses.

The Howard University and PNC National Center for Entrepreneurship supports expanded opportunities for Black entrepreneurship through ownership, innovation, and creativity. As a regional partner, CAU leads initiatives to establish or strengthen centers for entrepreneurship on HBCU campuses in Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The PNC Foundation provided a five-year, \$16.8 million grant to Howard University to create the National Center for Entrepreneurship, with the goal of serving the nation's network of more than 100 HBCUs and their communities. This grant is part of PNC's \$88 billion Community Benefits Plan, launched in 2022, which pledges to provide \$88 billion in loans, investments, and other financial support to bolster economic opportunity for low- and moderate-income individuals, communities, and people of color over a four-year period.

"We're proud to support Clark Atlanta University and its efforts to elevate and empower these

enterprising student entrepreneurs in Atlanta and throughout the Southeast region,” said Eddie Myers, PNC regional president for Greater Georgia. “Small businesses play a vital role in our community, and ensuring the success of minority-owned businesses is critical to building a more inclusive and vibrant economy.”

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About PNC Foundation

The PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group (www.pnc.com), actively supports organizations that provide services for the benefit of communities in which it has a significant presence. The foundation focuses its philanthropic mission on early childhood education and community and economic development, which includes the arts and culture. Through PNC Grow Up Great®, its signature cause that began in 2004, PNC has created a bilingual \$500 million, multiyear initiative to help prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life. For more information, visit <http://www.pncgrowupgreat.com>.

About Clark Atlanta University

Clark Atlanta University was formed with the consolidation of Atlanta University and Clark College, both of which hold unique places in the annals of African American history. Atlanta University, established in 1865 by the American Missionary Association, was the nation’s first institution to award graduate degrees to African Americans. Clark College, established four years later in 1869, was the nation’s first four-year liberal arts college to serve a primarily African American student population. Today, with nearly 4,000 students, CAU is the largest of the four institutions (CAU, Morehouse College, Spelman College, and Morehouse School of Medicine) that comprise the Atlanta University Center Consortium. It is also the largest of the 37-member UNCF institutions. Notable alumni include: James Weldon Johnson, American civil rights activist, poet, and songwriter (Lift Every Voice and Sing, “The Black National Anthem”); Ralph David Abernathy, Sr., American civil rights activist; Congressman Hank Johnson, Georgia District 4; Kenya Barris, American award-winning television and movie producer; Kenny Leon, Tony Award-winning Broadway Director; Jacque Reid, Emmy Award-winning Television Personality and Journalist; Brandon Thompson, Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion for NASCAR; and more.

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