

Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics Awarded Bank of America Grant to Bolster Community Programming

ORANGE, CA, UNITED STATES, February 11, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics](#) at [Chapman University](#)'s Argyros College of Business and Economics has received a \$60,000 grant from [Bank of America](#) to scale its nine free startup programs that are open to the Orange County community. The grant will support efforts to create greater awareness of these programs, particularly among underserved populations in the entrepreneurial space, including female founders, people of color, veterans, individuals with disabilities, first-generation immigrants, college students, and others.



Bank of America Grant awarded to Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics

Selected in 2023 as Orange County's only Accelerate California Inclusive Innovation Hub by the California Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA), the Leatherby Center offers

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Allen Staff, President of Bank of America, Orange County

entrepreneurship programs that coach, educate, and inspire the next generation of talent so that they may launch and scale their own businesses. The grant from Bank of America will amplify the center's mission through expanded marketing and promotion while deepening its focus on providing equitable access to more individuals from underrepresented communities.

“We are grateful and honored to have been selected for the Bank of America grant,” says Dr. Cynthia West, Director of the Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and

Business Ethics. "These funds are mission critical to getting the word out about the Leatherby Center's status as the Accelerate California: Inclusive Innovation Hub of Orange County. We want any aspiring entrepreneur to know about our amazing programs that are available to them at no cost. Bank of America is so generous in helping us reach our goal."

The Leatherby Center's startup incubator and on-site mentorship were paused in 2020, but Dr. West's appointment in June 2023 helped reinvigorate its offerings following disruptions due to the pandemic. She also introduced several additional programs, including those focused on women leadership and first-generation monolingual entrepreneurs.

"Orange County is incredibly fortunate to have a resource like the Leatherby Center right in our own backyard, and the community should know about it," said Allen Staff, President of Bank of America, Orange County. "This region's economy runs on small businesses, so when budding entrepreneurs take advantage of the Center's offerings, they'll be better prepared to achieve business success. We expect the Center's ripple effect to be felt far and wide throughout Orange County."

While the center has three student-only programs — a minor in entrepreneurship, a student club, and a film production startup — the majority are open to the wider community. The nine no-cost community programs include events that connect entrepreneurs with investors and corporations, a startup incubator and accelerator, business mentorship, a "shark-tank"-like pitch competition, a female founders' group, an innovation podcast, and more.

"These impactful programs are made possible with the support of generous partners like Bank of America that are committed to strengthening community vitality in Orange County," says Dr. West. "We are excited to expand our reach and create more opportunities for underrepresented entrepreneurs to empower themselves through innovative new ventures, which will strengthen



**Argyros College of
Business and Economics**
Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship
and Business Ethics

The Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship is a part of the Argyros College of Business and Economics, at Chapman University



Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics Exterior

the entire Orange County business community as a whole.”

To learn more about the Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics, visit www.chapman.edu/research/institutes-and-centers/leatherby-center.

About Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics

The Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics is a prominent center for entrepreneurial education at Chapman University's Argyros School of Business and Economics. Founded in 1995 with an endowment by Ralph W. Leatherby, the center provides hands-on experience to the next generation of talent, guiding them to launch and scale ventures that aim to solve the world's most challenging problems. In addition to serving as an incubator for new business startups and offering a diverse course catalog, the Leatherby Center complements its curriculum with public events, roundtables, guest lectures, and other programs that inspire, educate, and empower the entire community to have an entrepreneurial mindset. To learn more, please visit www.chapman.edu/research/institutes-and-centers/leatherby-center.

About Chapman University

Founded in 1861, Chapman University is a nationally ranked private university in Orange, California, about 30 miles south of Los Angeles. Chapman serves nearly 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students, with a 12:1 student-to-faculty ratio. Students can choose from 123 areas of study within 11 colleges for a personalized education. Chapman is categorized by the Carnegie Classification as an R2 "high research activity" institution. Students at Chapman learn directly from distinguished world-class faculty, including Nobel Prize winners, MacArthur fellows, published authors, and Academy Award winners. The campus has produced a Rhodes Scholar, been named a top producer of Fulbright Scholars and hosts a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and most prestigious honor society. www.chapman.edu.

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