

The Drop Launches in Irvine, Blending Circular Fashion, Resale Culture, and Student-Driven Retail Innovation

ORANGE, CA, UNITED STATES, September 9, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new wave of retail is rising in Orange County, and it's called The Drop. Founded by [Chapman](#) University entrepreneurship student and retail veteran Sean von Kaenel, The Drop is more than a store—it's a social, cultural, and economic experiment in community-driven commerce. Designed with students in mind, The Drop fuses consignment, resale, vintage fashion, and a uniquely welcoming in-store experience to reshape what shopping can look and feel like.



Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics Exterior

The Drop opened its doors at University Town Center in Irvine, California, in June and in just over a month, it has already begun carving out a name for itself as the go-to hangout and shopping destination for students, local creatives, and Gen Z entrepreneurs.

“

The Drop is for everyone who's ever wanted to start something, try something, or find something that speaks to them”

Sean von Kaenel, Chapman Student

“At The Drop, you're not a customer—you're a client,” says von Kaenel, who spent years working in and around the sneaker and streetwear resale scene before launching the venture. “We've built a space where students can shop affordably, sell or trade their clothing, and even test out their own fashion brands in a low-risk, high-visibility environment.”

von Kaenel's journey into entrepreneurship began long before The Drop. As a high school student, he was reselling Supreme gear and flipping sneakers

with the help of early bot technology. He worked retail jobs at Zumiez and Foot Locker while still in school, where he witnessed firsthand the economics of hype culture.

“One day I realized I’d just spent eight hours working for \$100, and a customer made \$200 flipping a pair of sneakers they bought during my shift,” he says. “I knew I had to get on the other side of that equation.”

Using creative hustle and building relationships at sneaker consignment shops like Swish Studios, von Kaenel eventually became a store manager and developed a deep understanding of streetwear retail, logistics, and what it takes to move product in fast-paced environments. Working with

Chapman’s University’s [Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics](#) helped him refine his instincts and apply structured business thinking to his entrepreneurial goals.

The Drop isn’t just a consignment or resale shop. It’s a concept store rooted in community, creativity, and circular fashion. Located in one of the Irvine Company’s most prominent retail corridors, the store looks and feels more like a dorm lounge than a commercial storefront. A retro jean couch, a Mortal Kombat arcade machine, a video game station, and curated vinyl replace the typical rack-upon-rack retail display.

“We don’t want people to feel overwhelmed. We want them to feel invited,” says von Kaenel. “Even if someone doesn’t buy anything, they’ll tell their friends they had a great experience. That kind of word-of-mouth is the most valuable—and the most cost-effective—marketing there is.”

What truly sets The Drop apart is its inclusive, opportunity-focused business model. The store offers buy/sell/trade options for students to bring in their own clothes and receive cash, credit, or new gear; consignment opportunities for local fashion entrepreneurs, with a generous 35/65 revenue split, live DJ sets and creative events, hosted biweekly to spotlight Chapman and UCI students and emerging local talent; and upcoming flea markets and flash runway shows, with vendor collaboration in partnership with Late Edition Mag and local creatives.

This flexible approach has already attracted several up-and-coming fashion entrepreneurs, including a women’s Y2K vintage seller who will debut a dedicated rack in-store later this



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

**THE
DROP**

Drop Logo

summer. The Drop welcomes all styles and price points, maintaining an inventory where students can find items ranging from \$5 to high-end statement pieces.

According to von Kaenel, the traditional retail model is broken and brands that only ever sold one thing are going out of business. “We’re tapping into the circular economy and building something that can evolve in real-time with what’s trending,” he says.

von Kaenel credits his time at Chapman’s Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics for giving him the confidence to bring his vision to life. And now, just a few weeks after launching The Drop, he’s heading to Japan—not just for a family graduation trip, but to hand-pick exclusive merchandise for the store. His goal is to return from the trip with a suitcase or two of unique items students can’t find anywhere in the U.S.

This kind of curated sourcing is part of what makes The Drop so timely. It’s also a key survival strategy. With students returning in the fall and foot traffic currently lighter during the summer, every decision Sean makes—from merchandising to pricing to community engagement—is geared toward sustainable growth.

The Drop has big plans for fall. In collaboration with the Irvine Company and community partners, Sean hopes to host a pop-up flea market in the University Town Center, bringing together vendors, music, and fashion in an outdoor festival atmosphere.

But the true focus remains steady: serving students and building a space where entrepreneurship thrives.

“The Drop is for everyone who’s ever wanted to start something, try something, or find something that speaks to them,” says von Kaenel. “We’re not just selling clothes—we’re creating opportunity.”

About The Drop

The Drop is a student-driven retail concept store based in Irvine, CA, focused on resale, vintage fashion, community commerce, and circular fashion. Founded by Chapman University student Sean von Kaenel, The Drop offers consignment, buy/sell/trade, and collaborative brand partnerships, with a mission to make fashion affordable, inclusive, and experiential for the next generation of entrepreneurs. Follow The Drop on Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/thedropirvine/?hl=en>

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 over 100

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. Chapman also includes the Harry and Diane Rinker Health Science Campus in Irvine. The university features the No. 4 film school and No. 66 business school in the U.S. Learn more about Chapman University: www.chapman.edu. □□

About The Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics

The vision of the Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship is to inspire, educate, and empower the next generation of talent to have an entrepreneurial mindset. To teach students how to innovate and take risks, whether they are starting their own venture, or working inside a corporation. Through our curriculum and our incubator, we provide hands-on experience to the next generation of talent, teaching them how to develop, scale, and launch their own ventures as future global citizens in the world economy. Ralph W. Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics | Chapman University

Lisa James

KTM Agency

+1 719-201-3619

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