



TAU announces early-stage venture fund for students and graduates

The new fund will invest in innovation and will be open to all students and graduates

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Tel Aviv University has established an early-stage venture capital fund, **TAU Ventures**, to invest initial pre-seed funding into startups founded by students and alumni within the TAU network and to further boost entrepreneurship on campus. This is the first time this business model is being established in Israel and is similar to venture capital funds at leading universities such as MIT, University of California Berkeley and Stanford.

The fund offices are located in a newly renovated work-share space, the Miles S. Nadal Home for Technological Innovation and Entrepreneurship, on the TAU campus. Among the fund's investors are the Singapore-based investment fund **Charter High Tech**, which syndicates leading Japanese businesspeople as well as investors from across the United States and Canada, including TAU Ventures co-founder and lead investor **Behzad Kianmahd**, a Los Angeles business leader, philanthropist, and chairman and CEO of Maxim Commercial Capital.

"Education is the best tool we have to help address critical issues facing our world today," said Kianmahd. "As a firm supporter of higher education

and the future of Israel, investing in TAU Ventures was a natural fit for me and a few of my closest associates. I'm honored to be a part of this innovative fund at Tel Aviv University, which will add exponential possibilities and open doors for young people in Israel."

Implementing a new model

The managing partner in the fund, **Nimrod Cohen**, is a former partner in Plus Ventures. While there, he led investments in companies such as YOTPO, Bringg, Ciampine, WSC Sports (which was sold to Snapchat) and many more.

President of Tel Aviv University **Prof. Joseph Klaffer**, who envisioned TAU Ventures, commented, "Tel Aviv University is one of the most innovative, entrepreneurial universities in Israel, and I am proud that we arrived to the next step by establishing TAU Ventures, the new venture investment arm of the University. This is a new model that is being implemented for the first time in Israel and sets the University in line with the leading universities in the world."

Cohen added, "The advantage of the fund will be identifying unique opportunities in new stages of development while creating added value to the entrepreneurs selected among TAU students and alumni — specifically through the various resources at the University's disposal, including close ties to a wide spectrum of industries."

Anchoring the fund, **Eyal Agmoni**, manager of Charter High Tech, said, "We made this investment out of our belief in the high tech industry in general and from knowing that a large share of the entrepreneurial community and activity in Israel is surrounding Tel Aviv University. The fund will allow early-stage entrepreneurs to advance the unique technologies they are developing and, in the future, be beneficial to our partners and their companies, while also exposing these startups to leading investors in Japan."

TAU has played a key role in Israel's rise as a tech hotbed and world leader in research across all faculties. It is Israel's largest university and boasts the best alumni entrepreneurial record among universities outside the United States. Approximately 25% of all Israeli entrepreneurs are alumni of TAU. TAU is currently ranked ninth globally, and first in Israel, for producing the most VC-backed entrepreneurs.

TAU Ventures is open to all students and alumni from Tel Aviv University.