



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

September 9, 2020

**CONTACT:**

City College of San Francisco

Media Relations Office

[CCSFmediarelations@ccsf.edu](mailto:CCSFmediarelations@ccsf.edu)

**BLACK AND BROWN ENTREPRENEURS GET A JUMP START ON PITCHING TECH VC COMMUNITY THROUGH \$  
INNOVATIVE CITY COLLEGE PROGRAM**

*The popular CEI program has already incubated several promising start-ups - and the program is growing*

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA** – City College of San Francisco’s (CCSF) Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation (CEI) is pleased to announce six new certificates of achievement under the program. Founded in 2018 with funding from [California’s Strong Workforce Program](#), CEI serves as an incubator for student entrepreneurs across academic disciplines to bring their business ideas to life. Since its inception two years ago, the program has already incubated promising ideas such as a [green waste recycling company](#) and a mobile payments product, and the program’s coordinators are excited about connecting equity populations to San Francisco’s start-up scene.

“The CEI empowers students from every background to engage in disruptive thinking and pursue a career in entrepreneurship,” said Interim Chancellor Dr. Rajen Vurdien. “It’s critical that we bring our communities of color and non-traditional learners into the fold as we build back our economy.”

The majority of students who enroll in the CEI are seeking to make a career shift, acquire new skills, or scale an ongoing passion project. Many students are members of populations who are historically left out of San Francisco’s start-up sector, and include older adults, immigrants, people of color, and underrepresented and marginalized learners.

According to [Pitchbook](#) citing a 2018 study conducted by Harlem Capital “just 105 companies with black or Latino founders have raised rounds of \$1 million or more since 2000,” and according to the [The Washington Post](#) “Only 1 percent of venture capital money goes to companies founded by black entrepreneurs, according to a Silicon Valley Bank study.” Due to these disparities in opportunity “[28 percent of black entrepreneurs](#) reported their profits were hurt by lack of access to capital, compared with 10 percent of white entrepreneurs.”

“Access and opportunity are key when it comes to entrepreneurship,” said Vivian Faustino-Pulliam, CEI program lead and faculty member. “By providing critical learning tools, resources, and networking opportunities with the entrepreneurial community in San Francisco and the Bay Area, we are closing the opportunity gap and expanding access to entrepreneurship and tech for our students,” she added.

Program highlights include the Entrepreneur-In-Residence which provides continuous mentorship and coaching to past students; the virtual iteration of the program and the popular Workshop and Lecture Series, which are available online are open to the public; and Startup Pitch Day, an opportunity for students to pitch their startup ideas to a panel of founders, media personalities, industry thought leaders and VC executives.

The number of student successes are too many to list in one place. Student Ysabelle Bernal, winner of the 2019 Startup Pitch Day competition, was tapped by Edge Mobile Payments and is now working with the startup to refine and bring her idea to market. Kevin Posadas was a top five finalist of the National Association for Community College's (NACCE) 2019's Student Entrepreneurship Challenge sponsored by the HP Foundation. Kevin pitched his idea for a recycling company he developed at CEI, and has since fully launched [GreenWayv](#), now serving over 70 homes and 8 restaurants in San Francisco.

"The guidance and networking opportunities I received at the CEI have been indispensable to my growth as an entrepreneur and to the success of my company," said Kevin. "My startup GreenWayv would not be where it is today without the CEI." !

"We've seen a growing demand for the resources we offer – such as mentorship, funding and collaboration with other like-minded learners - and are happy to have the opportunity to expand access to students as we continue to scale the program," said John Halpin, Dean of Workforce Development at City College of San Francisco. "Which is ! why we're particularly excited to launch six new certificates in the Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation that ! will provide students with access to even more areas of employment and entrepreneurship." !

The six new certificates being offered at the CEI are Certificate of Achievement in Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Broadcast and Electronic Media Arts; Certificate of Achievement in Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Business; Certificate of Achievement in Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management; Certificate of Achievement in Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Fashion Design and Merchandising; Certificate of Achievement in Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Journalism and Certificate of Achievement in Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Visual Media Design. !

To learn more about all the offerings through the CEI, please visit <https://www.ccsf.edu/academics/career-education/center-entrepreneurship-and-innovation>. !

### **About City College of San Francisco**

For 85 years, City College of San Francisco (CCSF) has been the region's premiere public, two-year community college. The college is now one of the first in the nation to offer free tuition, providing San Franciscans with the opportunity to access a quality college education and workforce training that leads to university transfer and good jobs. Since its founding in 1935, City College has evolved into a multicultural, multi-campus community college that is one of the largest in the country. CCSF offers more than 250 degrees and certificates and features an award-winning athletics program. For more about City College of San Francisco, please visit <https://www.ccsf.edu/>.