

# INNOVATION, IMPACT, AND LEADERSHIP IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

# 100

THE CLAREMONT COLLEGES

Graduates of **The Claremont Colleges (TCC)** are a unique blend of **entrepreneurial trailblazers** and **principled leaders** whose business ventures generate **meaningful change**. From founding billion-dollar biotech firms that **revolutionize healthcare** to advancing **sustainable agriculture** and **ethical technology**, TCC graduates bring a **liberal arts-informed ethos** to some of the world's most pressing challenges.

Claremont Graduate University graduate, Sandy Lerner (CISCO and Urban Decay), exemplifies this blend of **innovation and advocacy** through her transformative contributions to **tech and gender equity**. Similarly, Dr. Mark Reiley's (CGU graduate) breakthrough in spinal surgery and his parallel work as a fine artist embody the Claremont ideal: individuals who merge **technical excellence** with **creativity and social impact**.

Whether **shaping public policy**, **building mission-driven companies**, or **investing in underserved communities**, Claremont alumni reflect a distinct value system rooted in **interdisciplinary thinking**, **civic engagement**, and a commitment to the **common good**. Despite the consortium's small scale, its **outsized influence** demonstrates how a tightly integrated liberal arts education can prepare graduates not just to succeed but to **lead with integrity** and **vision** in a **complex global landscape**.

## PAVING THE WAY TO SUCCESS

The Claremont Colleges alumni's success in the startup ecosystem highlights the correlation between strong academic backgrounds and entrepreneurial success. Higher education has often played a key role in shaping future founders. A recent study from Crunchbase argues that a college education is one of the strongest predictors of unicorn success among startup founders.

*"Between the myth of the brilliant college dropout and the reality of founder education patterns, what does the data actually tell us? Unicorn founders are significantly more educated than the general population. They are six times more likely to hold a doctoral degree, three times more likely to have a master's degree, and twice as likely to have completed undergraduate studies compared to the average U.S. adult over 25 years old."*<sup>1</sup>

StoryHouse VC recently examined the success of unicorn founders (privately held startup companies valued at over one billion US dollars) and found The Claremont Colleges to be among the top ten universities producing unicorn founders.<sup>2</sup>

University	Rank	Unicorn Founders
Stanford University	1	122
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	2	87
Harvard University	3	73
University of California, Berkeley	4	60
Yale University	5	45
Cornell University	5	45
Princeton University	7	30
<b>THE CLAREMONT COLLEGES</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>29</b>
University of California, Los Angeles	9	25
Duke University	10	24
University of Pennsylvania	11	23

## THE CLAREMONT COLLEGES ECOSYSTEM

Since the early 2000's, The Claremont Colleges have emerged as a significant force in the entrepreneurial landscape.



1,800 venture-backed startups<sup>3</sup>

Raised over \$63.5 billion in financing<sup>3</sup>



19 companies have gone public<sup>3</sup>

219 companies acquired<sup>3</sup>



### SOURCES

<sup>1</sup>Strebulaev, I. (2025, February 21). The unicorn founder myth: Why education actually matters. Crunchbase News. <https://news.crunchbase.com/edtech/unicorn-founder-myth-education-matters-strebulaev-stanford/>

<sup>2</sup>StoryHouse VC 3/20/25

<sup>3</sup>StoryHouse VC 10/5/22