

# Sun Devil startups poised to score big at pitch event

## InvestU 'Tee Up For Funding' event offers ASU entrepreneurs chance to advance ventures

By Tiffany Gonzalez, ASU News  
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Max Bregman's drive to change the world became personal when he couldn't charge his electric vehicle at home, despite having chargers in his apartment complex, because of the lack of a management system for them.

Bregman, who earned his degree in business data analytics from Arizona State University's [W. P. Carey School of Business](#) in 2024, brought the issue up to his friend and fellow ASU student Tony Manjooran. Together, the pair envisioned a solution. Then, [ASU Enterprise Partners'](#) InvestU program helped them take it to the next level.

[InvestU](#) connects investors with startups across ASU communities, facilitating early-stage investment and fostering partnerships with local investors and global alumni. The program not only empowers startups but also highlights the university's commitment to supporting its community; especially alumni who thrive thanks to ASU's resources — like the student-driven, research and development-focused Luminosity Lab, where Bregman and Manjooran met — and networks.

This year, InvestU will be hosting its annual Tee Up for Funding pitch event on Nov. 17. Each year, the event spotlights nine ASU-affiliated startups. Selected from a pool of more than 40 applicants, the finalists are chosen based on criteria including a full-time management team, scalable business model, proprietary technology and potential for venture-grade returns.

During the event, investors network in foursomes on a golf course while founders pitch their ventures in two-minute, rapid-fire sessions at each tee box. The day concludes with a reception for continued networking and dealmaking.

Last year, the event helped Bregman and fellow entrepreneur and ASU alumna Heather Watkins advance their startups by raising a combined \$650,000 in funding.

"ASU helped connect us with mentors early on to help make sure we were ready to launch, connected us with investors and customers to grow and now is a customer of ours as well, while continuing to support us with referrals to other schools," said Bregman, CEO and cofounder with

Manjooran of BreatheEV, a startup that simplifies EV charging for renters and multifamily communities.

After graduating from ASU, Watkins spent 15 years running businesses and leading marketing teams before cofounding Bold Reuse, a company that helps businesses cut down on single-use packaging waste by providing reusable containers and cups.

The company's impact extends beyond business: Bold Reuse supports NFL teams like the Kansas City Chiefs, San Francisco 49ers and Chicago Bears in rolling out stadium-wide reusable cup programs, setting a new standard for sustainability in sports.

Watkins' journey reflects ASU's lasting impact — a legacy that continues through programs like InvestU.

"I wouldn't be where I am today without ASU," she said. "The friends I made in undergrad supported Bold Reuse from day one — helping with everything from ops to HR to legal. I even met my husband there and now we're raising a family together. I'm so grateful for ASU — and even more for the grads who make the world a better place."

InvestU not only showcases promising startups through events like Tee Up for Funding, but also reinforces ASU's culture of giving back. Founders like Bregman and Watkins, whose ventures embody innovation and community impact, are part of a growing movement to give back through ASU's Game Changers Pledge.

This pledge encourages founders and investors to give back by committing a portion of future earnings to ASU programs. Flexible and nonbinding, it fosters a culture of philanthropy and keeps successful alumni connected to the university's mission.

Watkins' and Bregman's stories are just a couple examples of how ASU's entrepreneurial ecosystem continues to uplift its alumni. The same spirit of innovation and community support is at the heart of InvestU's annual Tee Up for Funding pitch event, which this year will welcome a new wave of ASU-affiliated entrepreneurs eager to build on the legacy of leaders like Bregman and Watkins — proving that with the right support, Sun Devils can drive change far beyond the classroom.

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*This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).*

## Main image



2024 Tee Up for Funding participants at Papago Golf Club. Photo courtesy of InvestU at ASU