

# A Platforms Vision for Advancing University Innovation

Richard Lyons, Associate Vice Chancellor, UC Berkeley

10/30/23

At R1 research universities, our biggest opportunities to advance innovation capacity lie in building *platforms*. MP3 audio files existed for some time before Apple developed the iTunes platform. Similarly, our commonly decentralized approaches to developing ecosystems have produced outstanding successes, but they remain too fragmented. Realizing a vision of assembling successes into platforms and extending them requires painting a sharp picture of what the future could look like and building a team that understands, without centralizing authority, how to create a path toward the shared platform.

At Berkeley, we now have many examples of capacity-building platforms

- 1) [Scientific Instrument Sharing](#): This platform is the *Berkeley Research Infrastructure Commons* (FAQ at the live link). Think “AWS-izing” scientific instrument use.
- 2) [Shared-Return Venture Funds](#): Family of 7 such funds (~10% of total return to UCB). The category is exploding, including now large outright gifts to such funds.
- 3) [Berkeley Changemaker](#): A wider, more inclusive way to teach and learn entrepreneurial thinking. It has enrolled ~20% of Berkeley undergraduates in fewer than 3 years.
- 4) [Begin.berkeley.edu](#): Integrated portal for navigating all of Berkeley’s ecosystem. We curate it regularly. See especially the Directory section on Inclusion.
- 5) [Equity Solutions Group](#): Increases value to UCB from acquired equity in startups. We believe it is a first within a university tech-transfer group.
- 6) [Leader Network](#): Innovation Council connects ~80 campus Exec Directors and other leaders. Includes Masterclasses taught by members for the benefit of other members.
- 7) [Bio-Innovation Cluster](#): We have a new term center whose sole mandate is to help integrate the innovation activity of other elements of the bio-innovation ecosystem.
- 8) [ACE Platform](#): Accelerating Careers in Entrepreneurship through internships. Launched out of the SkyDeck accelerator, the platform now serves over 1,000 students per year.
- 9) [I&E Service Platforms](#): Acceleration services ([SkyDeck](#)) and innovation services ([IPIRA](#)) – these reflect our “Innovation As A Service” transformation.
- 10) [Societal Challenge Acceleration](#): Platforms built specifically to address I&E for the big 3 – [Climate Action](#), [Life Sciences/Health](#), and [CDSA](#) (Computing, Data Science, and AI).