



UC DAVIS
Innovation Institute
for Food and Health



2025 / Case Study

Successful UC Davis Alumnus Creates a Unique Partnership with IIFH: Driving Food and Health Innovation



Aryeh Ganz
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Cornucopian Capital
& Barnstorm Foundry



Cornucopian
Capital



**Barnstorm
Foundry**
Propelled by Cornucopian Capital

Introduction

Aryeh Ganz, a 1993 UC Davis alumnus and successful investor/entrepreneur, exemplifies how strategic academic partnerships have the potential to yield attractive returns while driving societal benefits. Upon reconnecting with UC Davis, Aryeh established a unique relationship with the Innovation Institute for Food and Health (IIFH) and its Faculty Director, Justin Siegel, a renowned UC Davis professor. Their collaboration focuses on leveraging academic expertise to identify high-potential commercial opportunities in food and health innovation—a strategy that has become a cornerstone for Aryeh’s venture portfolio.

Aryeh’s engagement with UC Davis was driven by his desire to shift the healthcare conversation towards prevention, and his partnership with IIFH was the perfect fit. IIFH harnesses this expertise to drive science-based innovations to make food and health better for people and the planet. The dynamics of this partnership allow Aryeh to contract scientific research with multiple labs at UC Davis, engage in collaborative projects with other UC campuses, and set a foundation for commercial exploration.

“As a UC Davis alumnus, returning to my alma mater has been an incredible opportunity to shift the healthcare conversation toward prevention, particularly in the field of metabolic health. Building a collaborative partnership with Justin Siegel and IIFH has led to a powerful approach for translating academic research into highly impactful commercial ventures. Together, we are committed to building a science-based innovation pipeline that improves lives and reshapes industries.” - **Aryeh Ganz**

Background

Aryeh is the founder and principal of SAGEN Trust Company, Inc. (“SAGEN”), a private family office operating since 2001 after his family’s sale of SlimFast Foods. SAGEN has made numerous successful investments in private equity and venture capital in the U.S., China, and Western Europe. In 2020, Aryeh founded Cornucopian Capital (“Cornucopian”), a unique, private investment platform that leverages domain-specific expertise and resources to build and support a new generation of high-integrity, early-stage technology companies.

Cornucopian’s mission is to enable patient-consumers to attain metabolic health by seeding “Medicine 3.0”—a nascent industry redefining the multi-trillion-dollar intersection of nutrition, healthcare, consumer health, and wellness. “Medicine 3.0” represents the evolution from the 20th century medical philosophy of identifying and treating acute diseases to the 21st century’s emerging data-driven predictive and preventative model. New technologies will increase access to care, drive engagement with customers and patients, and reduce risks for chronic disease and treatments that have diminishing results.

Strategic Investment through Collaboration

Recognizing UC Davis’s strength in groundbreaking research in food science, biological sciences, engineering, and more, Aryeh embarked on the creation of Barnstorm Foundry (the “Foundry”), a venture studio for incubating startups, funded and managed by Cornucopian Capital. Led by Aryeh, the Foundry has developed a repeatable, stage-gated framework to accelerate and de-risk the venture creation process while recruiting world-class commercialization teams to explore specific opportunities. Since inception, the Foundry has spearheaded nine research projects that have so far resulted in four patents, including those underpinning two high-potential startups—Caffree™, a new gold standard for decaffeination delivering full flavors, greater convenience, health and sustainability; and Phenotap™, a company that develops advanced phenotypic data and bio-sensing technologies including continuous ketone monitoring to optimize personal health outcomes. The Foundry has now become a model for transforming innovative ideas into high-value ventures, delivering promising returns to early investors while further positioning UC Davis as a leader in food and health innovation.

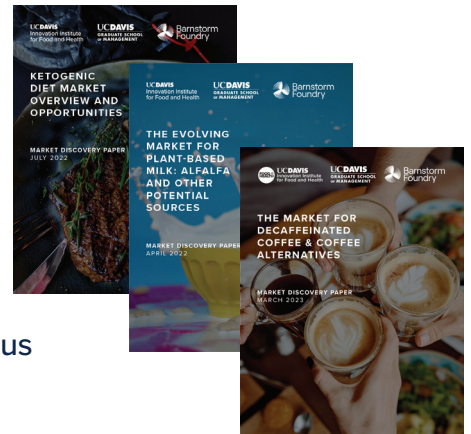


Synergetic Engagements with UC Davis and IIFH

Aryeh's collaboration with UC Davis extends beyond funding research and starting companies. In partnership with IIFH, he has co-created several synergetic programs to deepen networks and collaborations between students, researchers, entrepreneurs, investors, and industry leaders. Here are a few examples:

1. Educational Partnerships Driving Market Insight

In partnership with Dr. Rao Unnava, the Dean of the UC Davis Graduate School of Management, Aryeh co-developed a market research program working with MBA students to identify potential white spaces for food and health innovations. The reports generated by this program provided valuable market analysis and insights for further strategic collaborations across the UC Davis campus and contributed to the Foundry's early venture explorations.



2. Innovator Fellowships: A Strategic Edge

Aryeh has sponsored IIFH Innovator Fellows, a program pairing UC Davis PhD students and postdocs with venture capital firms. Aryeh has taken a new approach to hosting these Fellows by pairing them with MBA students to get fully immersed in the venture creation process. Their respective deep dives into technology and market demand have been instrumental in Barnstorm Foundry's commercial exploration, ensuring that investments are well-informed and strategically sound, while creating a unique startup experience for Innovator Fellows.

3. Discovery Forums: Identifying Commercial Opportunities

Aryeh's sponsorship of Discovery Forums has provided unparalleled opportunities for UC Davis researchers to collaborate on innovations with business leaders on cutting-edge topics. Through this partnership, IIFH and Aryeh have convened Discovery Forums featuring experts in fields like exogenous ketones and circadian health. As a leader in the food and health space, UC Davis can attract top academic researchers to participate in these forums. Likewise, through Aryeh's successful ventures he is able to attract industry leaders from around the world to participate.

These forums not only elucidate the commercial potential of science-based innovations but also empower UC Davis researchers to align their work with market needs, fostering impactful collaborations with entrepreneurs and industry leaders. Additionally, the insights gained have informed Aryeh's UC research programs and contributed to the success of startups like Phenotap and others in Cornucopian's portfolio.

Unique ROI

Aryeh's strategic investments through his partnership with UC Davis and IIFH have delivered a unique return on investment by leveraging academic research and supporting new ventures. For example:

The establishment of Barnstorm Foundry as a venture studio has created a sustainable pipeline of IP development, commercial exploration, and venture creation.

Startups like Caffree and Phenotap are on track for strong value creation, offering attractive returns for early investors.

Educational initiatives and Market Discovery Forums provide access to world leading scientific experts to enable IP discoveries and long-term value creation opportunities.

Aryeh's collaboration with UC Davis and IIFH sets a precedent for leveraging academic-industry partnerships to drive meaningful, profitable innovation.

Future Directions

Looking ahead, Aryeh plans to expand his focus on translating emerging technologies in collaboration with additional academic institutions interested in his Foundry model. His vision is to develop partnerships between UC Davis, IIFH, and other organizations to advance "Medicine 3.0" venture creation.

For IIFH and UC Davis, the vision includes scaling their role as global leaders in food and health innovation by deepening collaborations with industry experts and builders like Aryeh. This includes creating new platforms for interdisciplinary research, expanding the Market Discovery Forums to address emerging challenges, and enabling more researchers and students to contribute to impactful, market-driven solutions.

Together, Aryeh, IIFH, and UC Davis are committed to advancing science-based innovations that improve lives and reshape industries.