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Tech Companies Seek Out Entrepreneurial Students

By PUI-WING TAM

As Silicon Valley technology companies ramp up hiring and some venture-capital firms boost their investing, many are actively wooing students, both as hires and potential entrepreneurs to back. Some of the most intense courtship is taking place among budding entrepreneurs at Stanford University and the University of California, Berkeley.

Stanford's student-entrepreneur association, dubbed Bases, counts about 80 core members, while Berkeley's Haas Entrepreneurs Association has about 400 members. Both host speakers and events related to entrepreneurialism.



Tutu Lee

Ching Wu of Morgenthaler Ventures, far right, greeted Stanford students Alvin Tse, left, Anuj Panda, center rear, and Geoff Woo, right, at a mixer late last month.

While Silicon Valley tech and venture firms have done some outreach to Stanford and Berkeley's entrepreneurial groups in the past, the activity has ramped up markedly this year, say students in the groups.

At Stanford's Bases group, co-president Yin Yin Wu said she gets two emails a day from start-ups that want to recruit hires from the association. In addition, venture-capital firms and others that help sponsor Bases have stepped up their sponsorship amounts to around a total of \$300,000 this year, nearly double that of years past, she said. Among the group's main sponsors is venture firm Sequoia Capital, said Ms. Wu, a senior majoring in computer science.

"We've definitely noticed this year that there's been an incredible outreach from start-ups and venture firms," said Ms. Wu, a 22-year-old who plans to work on her own video-advertising start-up after she graduates. "Generally, the Valley is really wanting to get access to Stanford students."

At Berkeley, meanwhile, Brandon Yahn, co-president of the Haas Entrepreneurs Association, said the group plans eight or nine events this year, up from five previously, driven by interest from venture firms and start-ups. Venture firms also have invited Berkeley students to mixers and have ponied up more sponsorship dollars to the group, he said.

"Even without us reaching out to people, venture capitalists have reached out to us," said Mr. Yahn, 26, who is in the first year of a master's of business administration program.

One firm that has boosted its activities on both campuses is Morgenthaler Ventures, which last month held a mixer at its Sand Hill Road office in Menlo Park for Stanford and Berkeley students. The mixer, intended for

about 40 people, ultimately ballooned to around 85, including start-up companies on the hunt for employees, said Ching Wu, Morgenthaler's vice president of marketing.

Gary Little, a Morgenthaler venture capitalist, added that some of the students landed internship and job interviews through the event and that his firm is considering giving several of them start-up funding.

"It really is a battle for the best and brightest," said Mr. Little. "The best students are in such demand that you have to keep looking, looking, looking."

Corrections & Amplifications:

A previous version of this article misspelled the name of the co-president of the Haas Entrepreneurs Association Brandon Yahn. The photo caption misspelled the name of Stanford student Anuj Panda.

Write to Pui-Wing Tam at pui-wing.tam@wsj.com

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