



2019 NSEE Awards of Excellence
Outstanding Leader in Experiential Education: Community-Based Organization



CommUniverCity

CommUniverCity SJSU is a community-focused organization that brings together three sectors: the Community (“Comm”), San Jose State University (SJSU, “Univer”), and City of San Jose (“City”). The relationship between these three sectors can be described as three legs of a stable stool, with the University, City of San Jose, and local residents & institutions each having an equal say. We focus our work in low-income neighborhoods surrounding the university, which are challenged by poverty, unemployment, homelessness, gang violence, and low educational attainment. CommUniverCity SJSU leads faculty and students in the design and implementation of practical projects that address community-identified needs ranging from affordable housing to improving third grade literacy.

In the 2017-2018 academic year, CommUniverCity SJSU led 35 experiential education programs; and since its inception in 2005 has engaged 106,610 residents and 19,492 SJSU students, who have invested 348,092 hours of volunteer efforts in experiential education. Once a community need is identified, SJSU faculty who have academic and practical expertise develop experiential education projects for their students. For example, this year sociology, political science, and urban planning students administered over 1,500 mobility surveys to participants at an open streets event, then analyzed the data and presented their findings to City staff. By leading community-engaged programs, CommUniverCity SJSU brings together residents, K-12 schools, the City of San Jose, and other community-based organizations with SJSU faculty and students to enhance the quality of life in neighborhoods surrounding the University and provide amazing learning experiences for SJSU students.