Provost Update: Fostering Community Collaboration

San Jose State is the oldest public institution in California. Our first campus buildings were constructed at a time when much of the valley was still covered in orchards. The city and the university have grown up alongside each other so it’s no surprise that we often find ourselves working together for the betterment of our community.

The partnerships we form are mutually beneficial as CommUniverCity has proven for the last 10 years. CommUniverCity provides research, scholarship and creative activity opportunities for faculty while providing...
students with engaged learning experiences. Their programs such as College Day and the Records Clearance Project offer our students an opportunity to gain hands-on skills while also benefitting the neighborhoods surrounding SJSU.

The unique CommUniverCity partnership received national accolades in November. I was fortunate to travel to Indianapolis with the program’s Assistant Director Katherine Cushing to receive the C. Peter Magrath Community Engagement Scholarship Award. The award gives merit to the importance of university-community partnerships in providing educational opportunities for students as well as long-lasting, positive support to our campus neighbors. Thank you to Dayana Salazar, the executive director of CommUniverCity, along with her team, for their vision and leadership.

We have many more community collaborations, some that are well established and others that are just getting started. It has been 15 years since we broke ground on the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library at the corner of Fourth and San Fernando streets. The joint city-university library was the first of its kind and it is truly an example where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Just this month, we finalized an agreement with the city for SJSU to operate the Hammer Theatre Performing Arts Center and I look forward to watching this new connection develop.

As Provost, I always keep an eye out for potential partnerships with city, business and community leaders. As a member of the San Jose Rotary, I and other campus leaders share information about the university while fostering relationships that we hope will lead to even more opportunities to grow together in the future.

In addition to our community partnerships, campus collaborations are also important. As President Sue Martin announced last week, Information Technology Services (ITS) has joined the Academic Affairs Division. ITS managers and employees have long been strong partners in supporting student success. Join me in welcoming them to our division.
I wish you all a wonderful winter break and look forward to seeing you at the start of the spring semester.

Sincerely,

Andy Feinstein
Provost and VP for Academic Affairs

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CommUniverCity: A Model of Learning and Service

An SJSU student volunteer works with elementary school children through CommUniverCity.

San Jose State’s unique CommUniverCity program, which marked 10 years of service to the San Jose community this year, was honored at the Association of...
Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) annual meeting Nov. 17 with the C. Peter Magrath Community Engagement Scholarship Award.

For a decade, San Jose State students, faculty and staff have fostered a unique partnership with the City of San Jose and community organizations through CommUniverCity. The collaboration supports residents in neighborhoods that surround the campus with such activities as after-school tutoring, nutrition education, adult financial literacy classes and much more.

For the last five years, CommUniverCity has been involved in College Day with volunteers visiting 13 downtown schools this year. Volunteers included SJSU students, staff, faculty and alumni who spent an hour each visiting 50 K-12 classrooms in an effort to get younger students thinking about college.

Lorri Capizzi, a lecturer in the counselor education department in the Connie L. Lurie College of Education, motivated students in one of her courses to adopt Lowell Elementary School for College Day.

"Her class usually has 25 to 40 students," said Elizabeth Figueroa, the Education Programs manager for CommUniverCity. "They provide great visuals and get a lot out of the experience."

College Day participation is just one of more than 50 community action projects that together brought national recognition to CommUniverCity this fall. Representatives from each college are involved in projects.

Provost Andy Feinstein and CommUniverCity Associate Director Katherine Cushing, who is also an associate professor in the College of Social Sciences environmental studies department, traveled to Indianapolis to represent SJSU at the APLU meeting where the winner of the C. Peter Magrath Community Engagement Scholarship Award was announced.

Dayana Salazar, the executive director of CommUniverCity and a professor in the College of Social Sciences urban and regional planning department, said she and her office colleagues jumped up and down when they got the news from Feinstein that they had won.

"It's national visibility, which is something we have been intentionally putting more effort into," Salazar said. "It deserves a lot more recognition. It is quite special. It keeps bearing fruit and taking new directions -- it is renewed every year."
Salazar said there is potential for sharing the model with other universities and cities as well as more opportunities to delve deeper into the established programs in San Jose.

"We do a lot of work day to day," she said. "We know we all put a lot of heart in our work. We don’t have a lot of opportunities to stop and take a look at the larger picture. It’s time to take pause and look back and celebrate."

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**SJSU Helps 'Restore Coyote Creek'**

Watch a video about a Coyote Creek cleanup on Oct. 17.

When Sarat Lue, an electrical engineering student, arrived at SJSU he said he wanted a way to connect with his new community.

“(Michael Fallon) told me about the Coyote Creek project and I thought it would be a good opportunity to make an impact in my new community,” Lue said. “I feel a sense of belonging to this community because I am making a positive impact and driving this community forward.”

Michael Fallon is the director of the **SJSU Center for Community Learning & Leadership (CCLL)**. He facilitates partnerships between the university and
organizations that help students engage in the community while developing leadership skills. In the latest National Survey of Student Engagement, SJSU students reported a higher participation in service learning, compared to their peers in California and the nation.

Lue was one of several group leaders who guided 222 volunteers on a massive cleanup of the South Bay watershed on Oct. 17. Since August 2014, volunteers have removed 62 tons of trash from the creek.

The SJSU **Restore Coyote Creek** project is one part of the South Bay Creeks Collaborative, which includes SJSU faculty, staff and students; community organizations; the City of San Jose and the Santa Clara Valley Water District. The group received the Outstanding Environmental Project of the Year Award at the San Francisco Estuary Conference in August for its work.

Deb Kramer has been the program manager for **Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful** since May, when she was hired through a joint grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the City of San Jose and the Santa Clara Valley Water District.

Kramer said SJSU has helped the grant go even further through volunteer efforts, “in so many ways.”

“From more hands on the creek to more awareness to student activities to student projects,” she said, the university has provided key resources.

In addition to physical cleanups, students and faculty have also raised awareness about the watershed. Students and faculty were instrumental in hosting the Coyote Creek Howl conference last spring, a one-day summit that focused on the ecology and human issues related to the watershed.

Social Work students have been involved in looking at the homeless population around the creek. CCLL and the Social Work Graduate Student Association hosted a premiere of a documentary, “Exodus from the Jungle,” at SJSU in October with homeless advocacy groups. The documentary looks at several homeless residents who sought new shelter after being removed from an area along Coyote Creek known as “The Jungle” which closed in 2014.

“We are facing obstacles such as homeless people living along the creek,” Lue said. “Unfortunately for them, there is no permanent solution to house them which forces them to rely on quiet spots along the creek to rest their heads.”
Hammer Theatre Partnership Moves Forward

SJSU students and other pedestrians walk passed the Hammer Theatre on Paseo de San Antonio. SJSU has signed an agreement with the city to operate the downtown theatre space.

Education at San Jose State extends beyond the edges of the urban campus and starting in 2016, students will count the Hammer Theatre Center as a learning space and the community can once again count the Hammer among the downtown performing arts centers.

San Jose State and the City of San Jose finalized an agreement for the university to operate the Hammer Theatre for three years on Dec. 1 when council members signed an amended agreement. The space, previously managed and operated by the San Jose Rep, has been closed since June 2014 when the theater company shut down.

“Opportunities such as SJSU’s involvement in Hammer 2.0 with the City of San Jose only come along once in a generation,” said Lisa Vollendorf, the dean of the College of Humanities and the Arts. “This partnership will allow the university, the city and the community to work together to bring the Hammer Theatre Center alive again, bringing diversified, high-quality artistic, cultural,
and educational programming to this distinctive venue.”

The city council authorized city staff to negotiate a contract with SJSU in June 2015, when university and city staff members began to assess infrastructure needs for the building. They are in the final stages of making improvements and purchasing equipment to get the building ready for renters. As with all of the other city-owned cultural facilities, there will be an annual city subsidy to offset operating costs.

“Thanks to San Jose State, I think we have something to offer the community that is going to be extraordinary,” said Mayor Sam Liccardo, at the Dec. 1 meeting.

Vollendorf said the university is assessing potential SJSU programming that can move into the facility in spring 2016 while also creating an inquiry process and rental agreement forms. The goal is to create a financially sustainable model that provides space for SJSU, nonprofit arts groups and professional performances in the downtown core.

“We are building this model to be responsive to university, community, and financial concerns, so we are asking everybody to be patient while we get staffing in place and build mechanisms for inquiries, rentals and scheduling,” Vollendorf said.

Learn more about Hammer 2.0, sign up for updates or fill out our rental inquiry form online.

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**CHAMP Connects Students and Seniors**
Jonathan Dinson, right, takes Leticia Medrano's blood pressure at the Senior Wellness Fair in 2014. Dinson, then a student in SJSU's Valley Foundation School of Nursing, is just one of dozens of students to volunteer at the wellness fairs in the last five years.

SJSU’s Center for Healthy Aging in Multicultural Populations (CHAMP) partnered with the Santa Clara county Department of Aging and Adult Services and the Timpany Center to host the Fifth Annual Senior Wellness Fair Oct. 24.

More than 500 people attended the fair. SJSU students and faculty provided health education, basic health screenings and community resources to the visitors with whom they interacted. Employees and volunteers from local nonprofits, city and county agencies also set up tables in the gymnasium to share resources with senior citizens during the fair.

The College of Applied Sciences and Arts’ CHAMP is an interdisciplinary effort of the School of Social Work; the Valley Foundation School of Nursing; Nutrition, Food Science and Packaging; Kinesiology; Occupational Therapy; Psychology; and Communicative Disorders and Sciences. Students and faculty from each of those departments volunteered at the Senior Wellness Fair, with students from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications (JMC) providing PR for the event.

“It was excellent,” Harlow Williams, 71, of San Jose, told JMC students at the event. “I didn’t realize how many different things would be available.”
He said the wellness fair was comprehensive.

“I am hard of hearing and I found a number of things very specific to that situation,” he said, noting that he and his wife also found services that would help a friend in need of assisted living services. “I'm not computer literate so it is important to me to talk to people one-on-one to listen to what they have to say and be aware of what they have to offer.”

Naomi Gomez, a social work graduate student, said she and her fellow students were there to educate seniors on mood changes that lead into depression in the aging population.

“We are offering seniors today different support systems and referrals to help lift their moods, or if they know of someone, they can pass this useful information to (them),” Gomez said.

Sadhna Diwan, director of CHAMP and a School of Social Work professor, said the fair offers students an opportunity to practice their communication skills, learn how to engage seniors in screenings and health education, and learn about the array of community services available to promote wellness and healthy aging.

*Eddie Jimenez, College of Applied Sciences and Arts, contributed to this report.*

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We also encourage you to share your ideas and stories for consideration. Please email Melissa Anderson, the executive communications specialist for the provost, at melissa.anderson@sjsu.edu with any updates you would like to share.