



OVERVIEW

UC Berkeley is a rich and diverse milieu of student life, academic scholarship, and initiative. UC Berkeley is a rich and diverse milieu of student life, academic scholarship, and initiative. Berkeley is home to a long and rich history of student leadership, activism, and engagement. In the 1930s, Berkeley students organized protests against totalitarianism and fascism. In the 1950s, Berkeley students challenged campus administrators on the loyalty oath required for UC employees that required each employee to declare in writing that he or she was not a member of the communist party. In 1964, a sit-in at Sproul Hall launched the Free Speech Movement. In the 1970s, students advocated for disability rights and women activists launched the “second wave” of the women’s movement. Today, students on campus continue to advocate for the rights and welfare of their fellow students.

THE CHALLENGE

The challenge for this category is to describe a new policy, program, course, initiative, or service that improves the UC Berkeley student experience in a meaningful way. Projects can serve students on-campus and/or engage students in off-campus activities that also benefit the larger community. Proposals must also be aligned with the strategic priorities of the ASUC, as outlined in the ASUC Student Government Preamble.

Examples of proposals include (but are not limited to) the following:

- An outreach project that aims to promote the physical and mental health of students.
- A mentorship program that seeks to support and welcome first generation college students on campus.
- A sexual violence awareness campaign that trains students in bystander interventions and provides education consent and healthy relationships.
- An educational program that aims to improve the financial literacy of undergraduate students and provides education on student loans, credit, and money management.

BIG IDEAS PAST WINNERS

PIONEERS IN ENGINEERING

1st Place Winner, Improving Student Life (2012)

Berkeley is the #1 public university in the world, but resides next to some of the most underserved public schools in the nation. UC Berkeley's College of Engineering is among the finest in the nation, but for students in surrounding communities, there are high barriers to exploring and pursuing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) careers. Pioneers in Engineering (PiE) is a UC Berkeley student organization that promotes STEM education through an exciting, mentorship-based process. The team strongly believes that no student should be denied a quality STEM education experience.

Status: Seven years ago, Pioneers in Engineering started with four founding members and served six schools. Now, it is a 501(c)(3) serving 24 schools and 350 students across the Bay Area. Its current offerings include a semester-long 2-unit Prep Program field work class led by a team of PiE staff members, 8-week robotics competition, and alumni scholarships.

<https://pioneers.berkeley.edu>



FINANCIAL LITERACY AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE CONFERENCE

1st Place Winner, Improving Student Life (2015)

This project proposes an annual, student-organized Financial Literacy and Economic Justice Conference (Flejcon) at UC Berkeley. It draws together faculty, administrative offices, community partners and student leaders to facilitate workshops on financial literacy and economic justice for the greater student body. The conference aims to provide financial literacy training and knowledge of economic disparities for students where, currently, there are very few opportunities to develop financial literacy skills and knowledge on campus.

Status: The team held their first Flejcon conference in April 2016 at UC Berkeley. The event featured keynote speaker California State Controller Betty Yee, and won the Chancellor's Award for Public Service that year.



FREE VENTURES

3rd Place Winner, Improving Student Life (2013)

Free Ventures is UC Berkeley's first student initiated non-profit startup accelerator with the vision of eliminating students' excuses for not pursuing a project or startup. It gives students course units to work on their startups, provides small amounts of capital, and brings in alumni entrepreneur mentors to guide them on their way. Free Ventures supports students in turning an idea or project into a scalable business, and in doing so sparks venture-backed businesses that would not otherwise exist.

Status: Since winning an award from Big Ideas, Free Ventures has incubated 34 startups in 6 batches, who have collectively raised over \$20 million.

<http://www.freeventures.org>

