Stanford AUV sits under its mother organization, Stanford Student Robotics. At Stanford Student Robotics (SSR), community is built on accessibility. Unlike traditional, highly selective university engineering groups, our RoboSub team operates on a strict zero-barrier entry policy: all programs, workshops, and team memberships are open to any student with no application or tryout required. By removing these traditional academic gatekeepers, we actively cultivate a diverse, multidisciplinary environment where students from entirely non-technical backgrounds can collaborate alongside experienced engineers to solve complex underwater robotics challenges. Students can participate in and out as they wish, conforming to their schedules.

Our commitment to community extends far beyond team boundaries. Recognizing that ocean robotics can feel intimidating or inaccessible to younger generations, our RoboSub members regularly leverage public platforms to inspire future STEM pipelines. This past year, we hosted high-visibility interactive showcases at the Stanford Engineering Centennial Celebration and RoboFest. At these events, local middle and high school families interacted directly with our Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV). Our members engaged with hundreds of excited students, answering technical questions, demonstrating our vehicle's custom sub-systems, and sharing practical advice on how to get started in hands-on robotics outside a standard school curriculum.

Looking forward, we are expanding our local impact by actively collaborating with nearby FIRST Robotics groups at high schools in Palo Alto and Menlo Park to share our lessons learned in autonomous navigation and hardware validation. Additionally, through SSR’s upcoming modular drone initiative, we are establishing partnerships to donate 3D-printed robotics platforms and beginner-friendly software kits after our dronehacks competition to nearby underserved schools. By demystifying autonomous systems and actively lowering financial and academic barriers, the Stanford AUV team ensures that the next generation of engineers, regardless of their background, is empowered to dive into the future of marine robotics.