

## San José State University

### **Pathway Through the First Year**

We created a pathway for our entering students for their passage from high school to the university and their progression through their first year. We introduce the students to the pathway and provide them with the initial experiences and tools they will need to succeed via a mandatory, summer orientation program. We then progressively guide them and support them in their journey with a Welcome Convocation, a Welcome Week, a first year experience course and co-curricular activities. Each stepping stone in the pathway is described briefly below.

#### Mandatory Orientation (Summer Prior to Enrollment)

We introduce the students and their parents to the university with this mandatory, two-day orientation program. During the first day, students and parents learn about what it means to be a university student, including the challenges and the richness that a university experience offers. They also learn about the mechanics of negotiating the university and what it takes to graduate. In addition, the students and parents get an opportunity to meet one-on-one with faculty members to make that first, important connection with the faculty. On the second day, the students (without their parents) meet with a team of academic advisors and an associate dean who give them a course plan for the first semester. They next instruct the students about how to register and direct them to computers where the students register for their assigned classes online.

#### Welcome Convocation (First Day of the Fall Semester)

The Welcome Convocation marks the official start of a student's academic career. The University invites the students and their families to hear the University President's welcome address, view the traditional faculty processional, and to be introduced to some of SJSU's traditions. The students also meet the student body president, other new students, faculty and staff. Following the Convocation, the new students get acquainted with each other by playing games, directed by student orientation leaders, and by sharing lunch with the SJSU community.

#### Welcome Week (First Two Weeks of the Fall Semester)

Many activities are scheduled during Welcome Week, including additional advising sessions, departmental receptions and tours, a student success fair, a student organization fair, and a student service project.

#### First Year Experience (Fall Semester and Follow-up Activities in the Spring)

We offer four first year experience courses including MUSE courses, which are multidisciplinary, Science 2, Engineering 10, and Business 10. Some of these courses include co-curricular activities and involve peer mentors, who provide additional support for the students. Data gathered from MUSE courses and Science 2 indicate that students who take these courses subsequently achieve higher GPAs than a matched population of students who do not take these courses.