

**San José State University**  
**One Washington Square**  
**San Jose, CA 95192**

**SS-S24-3, Sense of the Senate Resolution, Reaffirming  
Freedom of Speech and Expression and Promoting  
Respectful and Civil Dialogue in our Campus  
Community**

**Whereas:** San José State University continues to affirm its commitment to “creating a diverse community guided by core values of inclusion, civility, and respect for each individual,” ([University Policy S01-13: Commitment to a Campus Climate that Values Diversity and Equal Opportunity](#)), and

**Whereas:** San José State University has declared that “All members of the university community: students, staff, and all faculty” are protected by the tenets of academic freedom ([S99-8 and 9 A](#)); and

**Whereas:** San José State University supports a “lively and fearless freedom of debate and deliberation” and notes that “all members of the University community share in the responsibility for maintaining a climate of mutual respect” ([SS S21-3](#)) ; and

**Whereas:** The Academic Senate of San José State University has condemned ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and racism ([SS S20-6](#)), called on our university to preserve civility and combat bullying ([Amendment B to University Policy S99-8](#)), and has reaffirmed our “commitment to an inclusive campus climate” ([SS-F16-1](#)) and a “safe, supportive, and welcoming community” ([SS-F16-1](#)); and

**Whereas:** On February 19, 2024, a serious incident arose in Sweeney Hall between an SJSU professor and Pro-Palestinian protestors, which led to heightened tensions within the campus community, both for students, faculty, and for staff who were and were not present in the building; and

**Whereas:** Freedom of speech is a principle that supports the freedom of an individual or a community to articulate their opinions and ideas without fear of retaliation, censorship, or legal sanction; criticism of a government, political dissatisfaction, and the advocacy of unpopular ideas that people may find distasteful are nearly always protected by the First Amendment to the US Constitution. Only expressions that are shown to belong to a few narrow categories of speech, such as, but not limited to, defamatory language, threats, and words that explicitly incite violence, are not protected by the First Amendment; therefore, be it

**Resolved** that the Academic Senate of San José State University encourages faculty, staff, and students to learn about the resources and policies in place to support peaceful discourse over ideas. We urge our community to be mindful and empathetic when disagreeing with others, and to be aware of how actions can cause anxiety and fear amongst students, which often leads to feelings of deprived belongingness. We encourage our community to respectfully welcome discourse and disagreement, as they are the foundation and virtue of a free and democratic society. Be it further,

**Resolved** that the Academic Senate of San José State University strongly encourages, and suggests, the use of the Intra-Group Dialogue (IGD) [Program](#) in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion as a useful tool for engaging in difficult but civil discussions of controversial issues. IGD can build one's capacity for inclusive excellence and engagement with social issues in day-to-day work /life. We believe this form of communication is vital for the future of our democracy. Be it further,

**Resolved** that the Academic Senate encourages the campus community to engage in civil and respectful discourse, without disrespecting or dehumanizing members of our community. We reaffirm that all ideologies and opinions are welcomed in our community, as long as they are protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. We also reaffirm our University's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Estevan Guzman**  
**Kelly Masegian**  
**Sarab Multani**  
**Kenneth Peter**  
**Julian Vogel**