Dec. 11, 2015

Dear campus community,

As we work toward increasing graduation and retention rates at San Jose State, we have a new report that offers some insights into why some students leave before completing their degrees. The report, “Why Do Students Leave? A Study of Student Departure from San Jose State University,” was conducted during summer and fall 2015 by Dr. Michael Cheers, Dr. Rona Halualani, Dr. Lisa Oliver and Dr. Marcos Pizzaro.

I would like to thank these four professors for their work on this valuable report, the first of its kind on our campus. The goal of this study was to learn more about the experiences of SJSU first-time freshmen who have either stopped out (meaning they left SJSU with the intention of returning in the future), dropped out or are persisting at a different institution.

The percentage of first-generation students, underrepresented minorities in particular, who left SJSU after attending for just one year was significantly higher than the overall population. Using telephone and online surveys, and online focus groups, the researchers discovered four recurring factors that influenced students when they made the decision to leave. These factors include:

- Difficulty in attaining classes
- Precipitating event or crisis point in a student’s life, and a perceived lack of assistance from staff, faculty or advisors
- Feeling no connection to the campus
- Difficult encounters with advisors

A summary of the study and the full report are available online (link to website). I encourage you to review the data now and attend forums in the spring when the team will further discuss the results of the study.

I invite you to work with us as Academic Affairs continues to collaborate with the campus community to develop a student success strategic plan. The information from this study and your input will be integral in addressing the needs of all of our students.

Sincerely,

Andy Feinstein
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs