Policy Recommendation

Codification and Revision of Undergraduate Student Honors

Legislative History

In 1996, F96-5 codified several previous Senate policies on honors, replaced previous University Policies S 65-24, F 86-5, S 93-6, S 66-7, F 85-9, S 86-7, and used forgotten information from supposedly superseded policies F65-12 and F67-10.

RESCINDS AND REPLACES STUDENT HONORS POLICY: F96-5

Whereas, San José State University’s current policy codifying student honors, F96-5, is more than 20 years old; and

Whereas, Several conditions of F96-5 have not been consistent in their implementation; and

Whereas, Awarding Honors at Entrance for freshmen based on GPA, ELM, and EPT scores is difficult to implement because they are not awarded until after the student matriculates; and

Whereas, Determining President’s and Dean’s Scholars based on a two-semester “block of work” excludes the possibility of entering students earning honors their first semester, causes confusion for students and advisors, and complicates the computing process; and

Whereas, Students and faculty have requested a means by which honors-level work could be recognized in interdisciplinary course sequences; therefore be it,

Resolved, The attached document rescinds previous policy F96-5 and implements "Undergraduate Student Honors at San José State University.”
1.0 Overview and General Procedures

1.1 In order to encourage and reward outstanding academic achievement of students, San José State University awards honorific designations in these categories:

2.0 The Semester Honor Roll: President's and Dean's Scholars
3.0 Departmental Major Honors
4.0 Honors in a Special Course Sequence
5.0 Latin Honors at Graduation

1.2 All references to grade point average (GPA) in this document are to a 4.0 letter grading system, as defined in the SJSU catalog.

2.0 The Semester Honor Roll: President's and Dean's Scholars

2.1 Honor Roll designations will be determined twice a year, for the Fall and Spring semesters. Summer and Winter term coursework does not play any role in determining Fall and Spring Honors.

2.2 Only SJSU courses are counted for honor roll calculations. A minimum of 12 letter-graded units (UG) is required to qualify for consideration. Credit (“CR”) grades are not counted either in the calculation of grade point average nor towards the 12-unit minimum. Any grades below “C” (2.0) and/or any No Credit (“NC”) grades disqualify a student from consideration.

2.3 The determination and transcript notation of honor roll designations shall be done as soon as possible following the census date of the following Fall or Spring semester.

2.4 Semester honors may be awarded retroactively for students who have Incomplete (“I”) and/or Report Delayed (“RD”) grades that are cleared after honors status reporting per Section 2.2 and 2.3 of this policy. Retroactive honors requests shall be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs.

2.5 Any undergraduate student who has earned an SJSU GPA of 4.00 for the Fall or Spring semester shall be deemed to be a President’s Scholar for that semester.

2.6 Any undergraduate student who has earned an SJSU GPA of 3.65 or higher GPA shall be deemed to be a Dean’s Scholar for that semester.

2.7 Recognition and Privileges
2.7.1 All honor roll awards, whether earned for the previous Fall or for the previous Spring, will be recognized at the yearly Honors Convocation organized by the Office of the Provost and held during the Spring semester.

2.7.2 Honor roll status will be shown on the transcript beneath the semester in which it is earned, together with a notation explaining what the designation means.

3.0 Departmental Major Honors

3.1 Qualifications: Departmental major honors are awarded to students who successfully complete an approved program with their major.

3.1.1 Each department that elects to have a major honors program should customize the program to its individual discipline.

3.1.2 Departmental major honors programs must be approved by the same on-campus mechanisms that are used to approve other academic programs. This includes review by the appropriate college curriculum committee and the relevant curriculum committees of the Academic Senate.

3.1.3 Approved departmental major honors programs are then filed with the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs, which then notifies the appropriate campus agencies to begin implementation.

3.2 Criteria for departmental major honors programs: honors should be earned by specific honors level work as contrasted to work only in regular classes and should reflect the student's choice to attempt departmental major honors.

3.2.1 Departmental major honors should be awarded strictly for academic achievement (GPA and specified coursework).

3.2.2 Departmental major honors will be given only to students who distinguish themselves within their department with outstanding academic achievement. Among the methods used to measure this achievement, there must be a component that uses grades earned in the department.

3.2.2.1 This may include use of a minimum GPA requirement in the major

3.2.2.2 This may include use of a minimum GPA requirement in a specified group of departmental major courses
3.2.3 There must be a component of academic work that is unique to the
departmental major honors program, (e.g., honors thesis, an honors
colloquium, etc.)

3.2.4 There may be other components as recommended by the department and
approved by the relevant committees.

3.2.5 Programs must be constructed so as to provide the opportunity
for transfer students to participate.

3.2.6 All indications of departmental major honors prior to successful
completion of all requirements must be noted as tentative and
dependent upon maintenance of honors standards in the student’s final
semester.

3.3 Recognition and Privileges

3.3.1 Departmental major honors status will be shown on the transcript,
together with a notation explaining what the designation means.

3.3.2 Departmental major honors status will be indicated on the official diploma of
the student.

4.0 Honors in a Special Course Sequence

4.1 Qualifications: Honors in a Special Course Sequence (SCS) are awarded to students
who successfully complete an approved SCS honors program.

4.1.1 SCSs are unique course sequences outside of a major program,
which provide students with an interdisciplinary perspective on
topics of broad interest. By their nature, SCSs require curricular
oversight and subject expertise across departments and/or colleges.
SCSs are subject to the same unit minima as minors.

4.1.2 Honors requirements for a SCS must be approved by the same on-
campus mechanisms used to approve other academic programs. This includes
review by the appropriate college curriculum committee(s) and the relevant
curriculum committees of the Academic Senate.

4.1.3 Approved SCS honors programs are then filed with the Office
of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs (GUP), which then
notifies the appropriate campus agencies to begin implementation.
4.2 Criteria for SCS honors: honors should be earned by specific honors level work in the designated SCS.

4.2.1 SCS honors should be awarded strictly for academic achievement (GPA and specified coursework).

4.2.2 SCS honors will be given only to students who distinguish themselves within their SCS with outstanding academic achievement. Among the methods used to measure this achievement, there must be a component that uses grades earned in the SCS.

4.2.2.1 This may include use of a minimum GPA requirement in the SCS

4.2.3 There may be other components as recommended by the coordinating body and approved by the relevant committees.

4.2.4 All indications of SCS honors prior to successful completion of all requirements must be noted as tentative and dependent upon maintenance of honors standards in the student’s final semester.

4.3 Recognition and Privileges

4.3.1 SCS honors status will be shown on the transcript, together with a notation explaining what the designation means.

4.3.2 SCS honors status will be indicated on the official diploma of the student.

5.0 Latin Honors at Graduation

5.1 Qualifications

5.1.1 The Latin honors designations depend upon the achievement of a high grade point average at graduation in each of two categories:

5.1.1.1 An “All College” GPA, which reflects all graded, accredited baccalaureate work and assures that the honor is bestowed for outstanding achievement in the earning of the entire degree; and

5.1.1.2 The “SJSU cumulative” GPA, which reflects all graded
collegiate work at this university and assures that the honor (also)
reflects outstanding achievement in work completed at SJSU.

5.1.1.3 Each average will include work completed during the semester
immediately preceding graduation. Graduation programs will note that
indications of honor awards are tentative and depend on maintenance of
honors standards in the student's final semester.

5.1.2 Any undergraduate student who has earned a 3.90 or higher GPA (both
All College and SJSU Cumulative), shall graduate Summa Cum Laude.

5.1.3 Any undergraduate student who has earned a 3.70 or higher, but less
than 3.90, GPA (both All College and SJSU Cumulative), shall graduate
Magna Cum Laude.

5.1.4 Any undergraduate student who has earned a 3.50 or higher, but less
than 3.70, GPA (both All College and SJSU Cumulative), shall graduate
Cum Laude.

5.2 Recognition and Privileges

5.2.1 All those earning Latin honors shall be authorized to wear a symbol on
their academic regalia, which shall be chosen by an appropriate Academic
Senate committee.

5.2.2 Latin honors status will be indicated on the transcript, together with a
key explaining what the designation means.

5.2.3 Latin honors status will be indicated on the official diploma of the student.

Approved: April 3, 2017
Vote: 11-0-0
Present: Kaufman (Chair), Walters, Yao, Simpson, Miller, Wilson, Nash, Perea, Mendoza,
Spica, Sen, Bruck (non-voting)
Financial impact: None
Workload impact: The result of this policy would be a decrease in the number of students
receiving honors (elimination of Honors at Entrance) and potentially smaller numbers of Latin
honors designations due to higher GPA requirements. Semester honors designations will be
determined on a shorter time scale, but by eliminating the use of the past 3 semesters work,
fewer total honors designations are likely.