

San José State University
Proposed Admissions Guideline Modifications, 2013/14
Date: March 9, 2012 (Final Revision 3/16/12)

Executive Summary

San José State University (SJSU) is considering changes to admissions guidelines for Academic Year 2013/14. Three changes are currently proposed:

- Including the major of “Undeclared” as an impacted major for all applicants, consistent with all other majors in the university that are already impacted;
- Establishing campus-level minimum requirements for admission consideration, which continue to provide admission preference to applicants from the local area;
- Ensuring outreach to communities characterized by low socioeconomic status and historically low rates of college going.

These proposed changes reflect SJSU’s commitment to California residents to provide access to higher education, quality of instruction, and student success, while reflecting the realities of increasing student interest in SJSU, severe resource constraints, and limited capacity to meet demand.

Background

SJSU has a strong reputation for academic quality, student engagement, and outstanding graduates from both its undergraduate and graduate programs. Combined with its long-standing commitment to access, both as a priority within the local community and as a statewide CSU policy, this reputation continues to generate ever-increasing interest among highly qualified students. Applications for admission to the university in the Fall 2012 semester set new records for the second year in a row. At the same time, severe budget restrictions across California and throughout the CSU continue to limit our ability to serve all qualified applicants with the quality of educational experiences that our students and community expect and deserve.

Over the past three years, and more, SJSU has implemented numerous changes to increase degree completion, shorten time to degree, use scarce resources more efficiently, better manage the number of students across all levels (freshman, transfer, credential and graduate) and majors, continue to provide access for local students, maintain diversity and breadth among the student population, and improve the preparation of students for college success.

One important change has been the implementation of revised admissions guidelines through a process called “program impactation.” When a major is impacted, it means that applicant demand for the program exceeds the program’s capacity to serve all applicants, so the program applies supplemental criteria (such as Eligibility Index, community college GPA, or specific coursework) for admission into the major. The Fall 2012 semester represents the fourth consecutive year of significant impactation at SJSU,

and the second year in a row where all majors are impacted – with the exception of the Undeclared major that is the subject of current consideration.

CSU Impaction Status

1. Four CSU campuses have declared all programs impacted: Fullerton, San Diego, San Jose, and San Luis Obispo. A fifth, Long Beach, is currently in the process of declaring all programs impacted for 2013/14.
2. Sixteen campuses are impacted at freshman level and seventeen at transfer level for 2012/13. More are likely for 2013/14.
3. Applications for admission to the CSU have continued to increase at many campuses, due in part to rising fees at UC and other competitor schools that make CSU enrollment more attractive.
4. Severe budget reductions continue to threaten the quality of academic programs and support services across all campuses. Similar reductions in K-12 and community college funding affect the preparation of applicants seeking to enter CSU.

SJSU Impaction Status

1. SJSU received over 43,000 applications for admission to the Fall 2012 semester, the second consecutive year of record-setting applications.
2. For undergraduate applicants, SJSU only accepts applications for First-Time Freshmen (“frosh”) and Upper-Division Transfers (“transfers”) who have completed at least 60 transferable units. With only rare exception, applications are not accepted from Lower-Division Transfers (those who have not completed their full community college coursework).
3. Fall 2012 is the fourth year where significant impaction has been in place at SJSU. In 2009/10, the campus in its entirety was declared impacted as part of a CSU-wide need to reduce enrollments to meet severe budget reductions. In 2010/11, 18 programs were declared impacted at the frosh and/or transfer levels. In 2011/12, all programs were declared impacted at both the frosh and transfer levels, a status that remains in effect for 2012/13.
4. In order to provide California residents with access to certain programs that have limited or no availability elsewhere in the CSU, the local service area is extended to cover the State of California for these programs known as “state-wide” programs.
5. All majors except Undeclared are impacted at both frosh and transfer levels.
 - a. Supplemental criteria are in effect for both applicant categories, using Eligibility Index (EI)¹ for frosh and community college GPA for transfer applicants.

¹ Eligibility Index (EI) is a mathematical calculation that combines high school GPA and either SAT or ACT score. SAT/ACT score is a requirement for FTF admission at SJSU. Using SAT as an example (a similar approach is used for ACT), Eligibility Index is calculated as: $EI = (\text{high school GPA} * 800 + \text{SAT Score Excluding Writing})$.

- b. All applicants, regardless of school of origin (i.e., local or non-local) use the same admission eligibility standard, with the exception of transfer applicants who are applying to SJSU through the [STAR Act \(SB 1440\)](#) and are granted priority application to their selected major.
 - c. Every major in the university, except Undeclared, has a specific threshold for admission that is determined each semester based on the major's calculated capacity for number of students in the major. Thus, major admission thresholds may vary from one major to another, and from one semester to the next.
 - d. Frosh may apply to the Undeclared major; transfers **are not permitted** to apply to Undeclared and must select a major when they submit their application.
6. Frosh applicants who do not meet the supplemental criteria to the major for which they applied (the "application major") are evaluated for admission to SJSU based on CSU-minimum eligibility standards.
- a. California resident applicants have lower CSU minimum eligibility thresholds than non-resident applicants or non-graduates of California high schools.
 - b. All applicants from the "local service area" (defined as high schools within Santa Clara County) are admitted to SJSU and assigned to the Undeclared major. This is the practice known as the "local area guarantee" for frosh – i.e., admit all local applicants who meet the CSU-minimum admission standard.
 - c. A certain proportion of applicants from outside the local service area may be admitted to the university and assigned into the Undeclared major, using a threshold at or perhaps higher than the CSU minimum.
 - d. Students admitted to Undeclared through this admission process are referred to as "Assigned Undeclared" to distinguish them administratively from frosh applicants who choose to apply directly to the Undeclared major.
7. Transfer applicants who do not meet the application major supplemental criteria are evaluated for admission to SJSU based on CSU-minimum eligibility standards.
- a. California resident applicants have lower CSU-minimum eligibility thresholds than non-resident applicants.
 - b. All applicants from the "local service area" (defined as colleges in Santa Clara County or Santa Cruz County) are admitted to SJSU into the Undeclared major. This practice is known as the transfer "local area guarantee."
 - c. Transfer applicants admitted as Assigned Undeclared are immediately required to obtain extensive academic advising and have limited time (typically 15-30 units maximum) to find and change to a major into which they can be admitted.
 - d. Pending campus capacity, transfer applicants from outside the local service area may be granted admission to SJSU through assignment to the Undeclared major.
8. With the exception of changes noted below, these and other elements of the current program impaction will remain in effect.
- a. Programs and areas with specific CSU-authorized admissions exceptions such as special talents, military veterans, disabled students, and certain lower-division transfers retain their current status and approvals.

Proposed Changes to SJSU Impaction

San José State University is considering changes to its admissions guidelines beginning 2013/14 that will modify some elements of its existing impaction structure. Guiding principles behind these proposed changes are:

- Serve students fairly, equitably, and well
- Maintain quality in all academic programs
- Enable all students to make steady progress to degree
- Maintain access to higher education to the extent possible
- Maintain diversity across many dimensions within the student body
- Balance enrollments of new frosh, transfer, credential, and graduate students
- Give priority consideration to local frosh and transfer community consistent with CSU policy

Three changes are proposed:

1. Include the major of “Undeclared” as an impacted major for all applicants, consistent with all other impacted majors in the university.
 - a. Currently, local applicants who either apply as frosh to Undeclared or who do not meet major admission thresholds as frosh or transfer may be admitted to SJSU and assigned to Undeclared if they meet the CSU minimum admission standards.
 - b. This creates an unintended loophole that enables students who realize they will not qualify for their desired (or perhaps any) major to gain admission to the university, despite having insufficient qualifications to likely find and/or be successful in a major once enrolled.
 - c. As a result, the Undeclared major also becomes a “landing point” for many applicants, with little opportunity for the university to manage the number or quality of applicants who arrive as Undeclared majors.
 - d. **IMPLICATION OF THIS CHANGE:** This proposal closes the Undeclared loophole by enabling the university to calculate the number of students who may be admitted as Undeclared majors, and to set supplemental criteria for determining admissibility to that major. It also helps set appropriate expectations for admitted students regarding opportunity to pursue a particular major.
2. Establish campus-level minimum requirements for admission consideration, which continue to provide admission preference to applicants from the local area.
 - a. Minimum requirements for consideration of **frosh applicants**
 - i. SJSU will continue the current requirement that frosh applicants must apply during the priority filing period and be CSU eligible.
 - ii. SJSU will continue the current requirement that frosh applicants must provide SAT or ACT scores.

- iii. SJSU will continue the current requirement that frosh applicants must select an alternative major from the list of options provided by the on-line CSUMentor application system.
 - iv. SJSU will establish a minimum eligibility index above which frosh applicants who do not meet major admission thresholds will be admitted to the university and assigned to the Undeclared major. This threshold will be determined based on the university's calculated capacity to serve the overall student population, within the principles outlined above.
 - v. The campus minimum eligibility index for frosh applicants from the local service area will be lower than the minimum eligibility index required for applicants from outside the local service area, thus providing admission preference to applicants from the local area.
 - vi. For SJSU impacted State-wide majors that have limited or no availability elsewhere in the CSU, SJSU will continue the current practice to admit local and non-local frosh applicants below the SJSU minimum, but not lower than the CSU minimum, if the program determines it has sufficient capacity to serve the pool of applicants.
 - vii. **IMPLICATION OF THIS CHANGE:** This change replaces SJSU's long-standing "local area guarantee" at the CSU minimum eligibility level with a "local preference" for admission of applicants from the local service area. It also means that some frosh applicants from the service area who meet CSU minimum eligibility but not the campus-level minimum may be denied admission to SJSU. The campus will work closely with community colleges and other CSU campuses to assist these applicants in finding a pathway to college for which they are eligible and that meets their educational interests.
- b. Minimum requirements for consideration of transfer applicants
- i. SJSU will continue the current requirement that applicants must apply during the priority filing period and be CSU eligible.
 - ii. SJSU will continue the current requirement that transfer applicants must declare an intended major.
 - iii. SJSU will continue the current requirement that transfer applicants must select an alternative major from the list of options provided by the on-line CSUMentor application system.
 - iv. SJSU will establish a minimum eligibility index above which local transfer applicants who do not meet major admission thresholds will be admitted to the university and assigned to the Undeclared major. This threshold will be determined based on the university's calculated capacity to serve the overall student population, within the principles outlined above.
 - v. The campus minimum eligibility index for transfer applicants from the local service area will be lower than the minimum eligibility index required for applicants from outside the local service area, thus providing admission preference to applicants from the local area.
 - vi. For SJSU impacted State-wide majors that have limited or no availability elsewhere in the CSU, SJSU will continue the current practice to admit local and non-local transfer applicants below the SJSU minimum, but not lower

- than the CSU minimum, if the program determines it has sufficient capacity to serve the pool of applicants.
- vii. **IMPLICATION OF THIS CHANGE:** This change replaces SJSU’s long-standing “local area guarantee” at the CSU minimum eligibility level with a “local preference” for admission of applicants from the local service area. It also means that some transfer applicants from the service area who meet CSU minimum eligibility but not the campus-level minimum may be denied admission to SJSU. The campus will work closely with other CSU campuses to assist these applicants in finding a pathway to upper-division admission for which they are eligible and that meets their educational interests.
3. Ensure outreach to communities characterized by low socioeconomic status and historically low rates of college going.
 - a. SJSU will develop a program known as “Spartan Pathways” to serve a limited number of CSU-eligible frosh and transfer applicants who do not meet major or campus minimum admission thresholds.
 - b. Applicants to Spartan Pathways will be encouraged to submit applications and a personal essay and letters of recommendation for holistic review for admission consideration.
 - c. Admissions criteria for applicants will include community involvement/leadership, overcoming significant hardship, and potential for degree completion.
 - d. Spartan Pathways will be administered by the Student Outreach and Recruitment Office (SOAR). Applications review and admission recommendations will involve a committee of representatives from SOAR, Educational Opportunity Program, Disabled Student Services, Student Services, Academic Affairs, and faculty.
 - e. Initially, a minimum of 100 enrollment spaces will be allotted to Spartan Pathways, split approximately equally between frosh and transfer applicants. Depending on campus capacity, the number of enrollment spaces filled by applicants to the Spartan Pathways program may be higher.
 - f. **IMPLICATION OF THIS CHANGE:** This program is intended to serve applicants, perhaps from disadvantaged backgrounds, who are likely to have a higher chance of college success than their qualifications would suggest. It provides them with an opportunity for college access based on factors beyond grades and test scores only.

Closing

San José State University welcomes feedback and questions on the admissions program, impact status, and proposed changes for Academic Year 2013/14. Additional information is available and comments can be submitted by visiting

<http://www.sjsu.edu/publicaffairs/announcements/admissionshearings/index.html>.

San José State University — Silicon Valley’s largest institution of higher learning with 30,000 students and 3,850 employees — is part of the California State University system. SJSU’s 154-acre downtown campus anchors the nation’s 10th largest city.