



Dr. Cynthia Teniente-Matson, President

Dear Spartans,

College campuses across the country are being faced with the challenge to maintain an atmosphere that upholds the Constitutional right to free expression while ensuring that our diverse campus communities feel seen and understood, valued and supported. Speakers will come to our spaces, hosted by a variety of campus organizations and recognized student groups, that will expand our understanding of one other, challenge us, and at times, they will outrage us.

At San José State University, we make an unwavering commitment to the diversity of our campus community. Our campus is a beautiful tapestry of race, gender, religion, age, physical and neuro ability, country of origin, and sexual and gender identity and expression. We deeply value the history and lived experience of our students, staff, and faculty and we recognize the histories of injustice, discrimination, oppression, and hate that some in our community have endured and still endure. No matter who speaks on our campus, these histories will continue to be valued and welcomed and our diversity will be elevated as fundamental to our mission.

Our obligation to the First Amendment is unquestioned. Protecting the voices of those with unpopular opinions, opinions wholly different from our own, and/or opinions that challenge people in power is the most important function of free speech. It is, as the Supreme Court has written, the indispensable condition of every other form of freedom. But that does not mean it is easy, and we know that communities will be impacted by speech that does not align with their values and at worst threatens their existence.

We are a community built on values of respect, diversity and inclusion. This means we also have an obligation to be an institution that stands up for our diversity, for the safety of our community and for our belief in inclusion and justice for all. So, although our campus strives to be a community where no one chooses to express hate, when this happens, free speech also allows us to speak truth to power.

We invite you to view the [Freedom of Speech webpage](#) where you will find more information and resources on this important topic. Included are a series of videos from student and campus leaders who describe our campus' commitment to free expression, and define our values as an institution. We hope you will take time to watch them and feel empowered to engage, speak, and be heard.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cynthia Teniente-Matson".

Dr. Cynthia Teniente-Matson

President
(she/her/ella)



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