



**San José State**  
UNIVERSITY

A campus of The California State University

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**SS-S01-6**

At its meeting of May 7, 2001 the SJSU Academic Senate passed the following Sense of the Senate Resolution presented by Sue Malloy for the Instruction and Student Affairs Committee.

**SENSE OF THE SENATE RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE PROPOSED  
METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY SCHOLARS' EXPERIENCE  
(MUSE) NEW STUDENT SEMINAR PROGRAM**

- Whereas: first year retention, as well as retention to graduation of new first year SJSU students, show room for improvement, and
- Whereas: recent efforts to provide structured advisement for new first year students have been well received by these students and their families, and
- Whereas: the number of new first year students has increased significantly and is expected to grow for the next several years, and
- Whereas: a high proportion of new first year SJSU students need assistance in making a successful transition from high school to college, and
- Whereas: critical thinking, use of campus resources and improving library research skills are important components in a successful college transition, and
- Whereas: this resolution addresses a program that complements, but does not replace discipline-based orientation programs for new students, therefore be it
- Resolved: that the Academic Senate go on record in strong support of the concept of the Metropolitan University Scholars' Experience (MUSE) Program proposed by the Provost (see Attached), and be it further
- Resolved: that, if the MUSE program is implemented, there be an ongoing outcome evaluation of this program, to commence within one year of implementation.

## **Proposed Metropolitan University Scholars' Experience (MUSE) New Student Seminar Program**

Provost Marshall Goodman has asked that SJSU develop a new student seminar program similar to those in place at a number of universities throughout the U.S. Described below are essentials of a model used by the faculty of Letters and Sciences at the Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM). This model is a starting point to determine what is appropriate to the SJSU environment, where many faculty and students are in professional and technical disciplines not represented among L&S faculty at UWM.

The Class: Three semester units, baccalaureate credit, no prerequisites. A-F grading. Two or three weekly meetings, not just one three-hour session per week. Enrollment limited to 15. Prefixes are departmental, but a common number is used across all programs, e.g., 1S or 10S might work at SJSU. Whether units count towards a major would be up to each department.

At UWM, it was possible to include the course in GE. At SJSU this may not be possible without the kind of policy deliberation that would delay the program beyond Fall, 2002, the target date for initial Seminars. Area E is a sometime possibility.

Students: First time freshmen, preferably in the first semester; UWM retention statistics reveal improved 2 to 3 year retention for frosh who take the seminar in their first fall, not for those who take it in spring. Students must apply to be a "Freshman Scholar." It works (go home and tell your family you chose not to be a Freshman Scholar.) In Fall, 2000, over 900 became Scholars at UWM. Acceptance is automatic. At UWM a few new transfers or other undergrads were enrolled, but it is clearly a freshman emphasis.

First come, first served. Freshmen may take any seminar. They are not restricted to subject matter related to their intended major.

Subject Matter: Faculty teach "what they are passionate about." Course titles are chosen to be interesting and attractive. (Provost Goodman taught a section on "Character in U.S. Presidents). It is expected that in every section the students will learn something about what Lewis Bundy calls, "how to do college." That is, they will be introduced to the library and other campus services, they will be guided in note-taking and effective reading of books and other texts, they will have to write and will receive feedback on the quality of their written work, and they will be required to come to class prepared to engage in – and lead – classroom discussion. But they are graded on content, not on study skills; the structure of each class is up to the instructor in charge. But it is also not meant to be a "hurdle" course; many UWM faculty give a B grade to students who participate regularly, do all assignments with good effort, etc. The intensive faculty-student interaction of a small class means that problem situations come to light early and thus lend themselves to resolution.

Extras: During the semester Scholars attend arranged events as a group, sometimes formal such as plays, sometimes fun such as barbecues. "Bonding" to one another and to the university is critical. These events are essential to success at UWM.

Faculty: The courses are directed towards baccalaureate content, so instructors must have subject matter to teach. These are not orientation or study skills courses. Established lecturers, professional librarians, professional counselors, or similar professionals with "subject matter" expertise would be welcome to offer a seminar.

- Faculty apply for the program, and must participate actively in a four-day "good teaching" workshop, largely devoted to interactive discussions and led by facilitators such as those who might be engaged in ITL activities at SJSU. The workshops occur in mid to late summer, and faculty at UWM receive \$500 for attending, plus meals and other expenses. Faculty may teach in repeat years without attending another workshop. *Attendance at the full workshop is absolutely required.* At UWM many faculty claim that the workshops have been one of the highlights of their careers.
- At UWM, in the first year faculty taught seminars as a voluntary overload. After that the three WTUs were funded as part of the regular teaching load. (Teaching load at UWM is lower than in the CSU).
- At UWM, involvement of science faculty has been lower than that of faculty from letters, arts and social sciences. There is a continuing effort to engage more science faculty.

A few preliminary questions for SJSU (beyond funding, finding rooms, and scheduling, which are not at this time the charge of the organizing group...):

- How to make the seminars appeal to a broad cross-section of SJSU's first time freshmen, expected to number over 2500, perhaps as many as 3000, in Fall '02.
- How to assure that faculty facing RTP who choose to participate are not penalized at department and college level for their involvement.
- How to teach serious college material to students enrolled in developmental writing and math classes (approximately 2/3 of SJSU's frosh are in one or both).
- How to assure that the diversity of which SJSU is justifiably proud suffuses the program.