

SJSU SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

Associate Vice President for Student Equity and Belonging

Leadership Profile

Fall 2024/Winter 2025



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

San José State University (SJSU) seeks a strategic, action-oriented, collaborative, and innovative leader who is committed providing students with a transformative educational experience to serve as its first Associate Vice President for Student Equity and Belonging (AVPSEB).

Founded in 1857, San José State University (SJSU) is the oldest public institution of higher education on the West Coast. Located in the heart of California's Silicon Valley, SJSU is the fifth largest of the 23 campuses of the California State University (CSU) system, which is the largest four-year university system in the United States. SJSU is one of the most diverse universities in the nation, with over 85% of its population self-reporting as students of color and 42% identifying as first-generation college students. It is also a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and an Asian American Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI). As one of the 200 top research universities in the nation, SJSU has robust NSF and NIH-funded research programs and one of the highest levels of research funding in the CSU system. The rigorous coursework it offers to over 36,000 undergraduate and graduate students and the opportunity to graduate with less than half the average student debt of their California counterparts are some of the reasons why *Money Magazine* ranked SJSU the #1 most transformative university.

San José State University is poised to evolve and innovate, strengthening its connection to the surrounding San José and Silicon Valley community and further fulfilling its social justice mission of access and equity. The campus strategic plan—[Transformation 2030](#)—released in spring 2019 and updated under the leadership of [President Teniente-Matson](#), provides the framework for unparalleled growth and prioritizes a sense of belonging and well-being and engaging students to thrive in campus life. The new Associate Vice President for Student Equity and Belonging will be integral to the success of that effort.

Reporting to Dr. Mari Fuentes-Martin, Vice President for Student Affairs, the AVPSEB will play a significant role as a key thought partner and innovator as the Division of Student Affairs redefines the SJSU student experience. With a particular focus on providing strategic oversight, vision, and management of programs and services to support marginalized student

populations and close equity gaps, the AVPSEB's work will directly align with and contribute to SJSU's success in meeting the goal of the [California State University System's Graduation Initiative 2025](#). The AVPSEB will provide strategy and support for the new Student Equity and Belonging team, which, for the first time, brings together the following units: Education Outreach Program (EOP), TRIO (SSS/ASPIRE) Program, Guardian Scholars Program, Black Leadership Opportunity Center (The BLOC), Center for Asian Pacific Islander Student Empowerment (CAPISE), Chicana/Latinx Student Success Center (Centro), Gender Equity Center, MOSAIC Cross Cultural Center, Native American Indigenous Student Success Center (NAISSC), PRIDE Center, and UndocuSpartan Student Resource Center. It will be important for the AVPSEB to build structures for effective collaboration and decision making across SJSU and cultivate and implement a culture of assessment and evaluation to advance student equity and belonging initiatives.



The ideal candidate will have a minimum of eight years of progressive experience working in a complex organization including management and supervision of teams in student services, equity, diversity, or a related field, preferably in higher education. The AVPSEB will have experience leading initiatives and using data and research to inform strategic analysis and assessment that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion and improves student outcomes for historically underrepresented students. A strong understanding of higher education systems, student retention strategies, and issues related to access and equity are essential. The AVPSEB will have a proven track record of collaborating with academic and administrative departments, including Academic Affairs and DEI offices. Familiarity with TRIO, EOP, Guardian Scholars, and other federal or state-funded support programs; experience working with culturally diverse populations, including first-generation college students, students from low-income backgrounds, and underrepresented racial and ethnic groups; and experience with data-driven decision making and assessment of student outcomes will be assets for the role. A master's degree is required; a doctorate degree is preferred.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see the "Procedure for Candidacy" section at the end of this document.



Role of the Associate Vice President for Student Equity and Belonging

The Associate Vice President for Student Equity and Belonging (AVPSEB) reports directly to and partners with the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) to develop vision, direction, and actualization of inclusive co-curricular learning environments. The AVPSEB serves on the Student Affairs Senior Leadership Team and acts as the senior diversity advisor for Student Affairs by providing strategy, consultation, and guidance across all Student Affairs departments (including auxiliaries) concerning services and policies to ensure the promotion of an inclusive co-curricular learning environment. The AVPSEB is responsible for providing strategic oversight, vision, and management of programs and services, and will collaborate closely with various departments within Academic Affairs, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), and other key campus stakeholders to promote student retention, to close equity gaps, and enhance campus climate.

The student body at San José State University (SJSU) is highly diverse. Eighty-five percent of students identify as people of color, with 36% identifying as Asian Pacific Islander (API), 30% as Hispanic/Latinx, and 3% as Black/African American. Additionally, SJSU is home to over 500 Native American and Indigenous students and more than 2,600 international students. The API population reflects the rich diversity of the Asian diaspora, including East Asian, Southeast Asian, South Asian, and Southwest Asian communities. Economic diversity is also present, as 30% of students are Pell Grant recipients and 57% received need-based financial aid. Furthermore, 42% of SJSU students are the first in their families to attend college.

The position administers a CSU Operating Fund budget of more than \$3.3 million. The position directly supervises 11 staff members (MPP and bargaining unit staff) and indirectly leads an additional 16 team members.

The Associate Vice President for Student Equity and Belonging oversees the following functional areas:

- [Educational Opportunity Program](#): EOP is designed to improve student academic support of first-generation, limited-income, and educationally disadvantaged students. The program provides admission, academic, and financial assistance to EOP-eligible undergraduate students considered California residents or AB540 students.
- [TRIO \(SSS/ASPIRE\) Program](#): Since 1977, the TRIO (SSS/ASPIRE) Program has been helping first-generation, low-income, and students with disabilities with class scheduling, major/career exploration, academic advising and financial aid assistance. The program supports and motivates SJSU students towards a successful completion of their college education.
- [Guardian Scholars](#): Guardian Scholars at San José State University is committed to supporting students who have experienced foster care and students who are determined Independent through the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships. Guardian Scholars provide a network of integrated support and resources that focus on academic, career, and lifelong personal development.
- [Black Leadership and Opportunity Center](#): The Black Leadership and Opportunity Center (The BLOC) is the hub for Black student life at SJSU. BLOC provides cultural programming, professional development and academic initiatives that promote community building and overall student success.
- [Center for Asian Pacific Islander Student Empowerment](#): The Center for Asian Pacific Islander Student Empowerment (CAPISE) provides community-building and cultural and academic empowerment opportunities for Asian and Pacific Islander students at SJSU.

- [Chicanx/Latinx Student Success Center](#): The Chicanx/Latinx Student Success Center, also known as Centro, provides a community gathering space as well as programs and services to support the success of all Chicanx and Latinx students at SJSU.
- [Gender Equity Center](#): The mission of the Gender Equity Center (GenEC) is to advocate for social justice, respect, and safety for all members of the San José State University community, by educating on issues experienced by people because of their gender and/or their perceived gender, through an intersectional lens.
- [MOSAIC Cross Cultural Center](#): The MOSAIC Cross Cultural Center provides a safe and welcoming environment that honors and celebrates diversity. MOSAIC offers support, advocacy for historically underrepresented groups, leadership opportunities, and intentional programming that focus on critical thought, social justice, and cultural empowerment for the SJSU community.
- [Native American Indigenous Student Center \(NAISSC\)](#): The Native American Indigenous Student Success Center (NAISSC) affirms and supports Native American Indigenous students' unique needs by promoting cultural, ancestral, and community relations as key elements that advance Indigenous student success.
- [PRIDE Center](#): The PRIDE Center supports the LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Questioning, Asexual, Nonbinary, etc.) students of SJSU. Through dynamic programming and educational outreach, the PRIDE Center seeks to improve the campus climate for LGBTQ+ students and advocate for the respect and safety of all members of the campus community.
- [UndocuSpartan Student Resource Center](#): The UndocuSpartan Student Resource Center (USRC) is invested in creating educational opportunities that will further the success of UndocuSpartans at SJSU. The USRC uses a cross-cultural and social justice lens to provide holistic support and resources to undocumented students and the campus community.



Essential Responsibilities and Tasks

- **Strategic Leadership & Vision:**
Lead the development and implementation of strategies to support the success and retention of students from marginalized communities, including first-generation, low-income, and historically underrepresented students. Champion efforts around diversity and inclusion in the division strategic plan and the university's Inclusive Excellence framework. Create an integrated approach amongst the portfolio that pursues shared goals and metrics.
- **Strategic Advisor:**
Serve as a key advisor to the VPSA on matters of equity and belonging. Additionally, serve as the Vice President's Division representative on various campus-wide standing committees as assigned.
- **Personnel and Program Oversight:**
Build a cohesive and interconnected team. Recruit, professionally develop, supervise, support, and evaluate departmental staff. Provide oversight and direction to ensure alignment of these programs with institutional goals for equity, retention, and student success.
- **Collaboration with Academic Affairs:**
Partner with Academic Affairs to design and implement initiatives that support the academic achievement of underrepresented students. Work collaboratively to ensure that academic support services align with the needs of diverse student populations.
- **Collaboration with Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI):**
Work closely with the Chief Diversity Officer and Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to develop inclusive policies, practices, and initiatives that address institutional barriers and foster an equitable campus environment. Collaborate on campus-wide training and programming to promote diversity and inclusion.
- **Data-Informed Decision Making:**
Create evaluations and utilize pre-existing data to identify trends to inform decision making and direction of programming. Lead efforts to analyze equity gaps and use evidence-based practices to reduce gaps. Provide regular reports and recommendations to senior leadership.
- **Retention and Student Success:**
Develop and implement programs that improve retention and graduation rates for underrepresented student populations. Advocate for resources and policies that promote an inclusive learning environment and reduce systemic barriers to equity.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:**
Engage with internal and external stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, and community partners, to build a network of support for equity initiatives. Represent the Division of Student Affairs in a liaison role with communities and organizations that represent the identities of SJSU's students including religious communities, campus and community diversity groups, and culturally based faculty-staff associations.
- **Budget and Resource Management:**
Oversee budgeting, resource allocation, and staff management for units under the AVP's supervision. Ensure efficient use of resources to maximize impact on student retention and success outcomes.



Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

Working closely with the Vice President for Student Affairs and other key constituents, the new Associate Vice President for Student Equity and Belonging will address the following critical leadership issues, among others:

- **Develop the vision, direction, and actualization of inclusive co-curricular learning environments that supports student success for SJSU.**

With the recent appointment of Dr. Mari Fuentes-Martin as Vice President for Student Affairs, the Division has launched various strategic initiatives to create a sense of belonging for students across the campus. Along with the Associate Vice President for Health, Wellness, and Student Services and the inaugural Associate Vice President & Dean of Students, the AVPSEB will play a significant role as a key thought partner and innovator as the Division redefines the SJSU student experience.

In creating this position, SJSU seeks to establish cohesive leadership for the various programs and services that support marginalized student populations in order to provide laser focus on closing the equity gaps. This work aligns with the California State University's (CSU) [Graduation Initiative 2025](#), an ambitious plan across all 23 CSU campuses to increase graduation rates, eliminate equity gaps in degree completion, and meet California's workforce needs. As 2025 nears, the CSU and SJSU is committed to continuing and expanding this work in the new [Year of Engagement initiative](#). The AVPSEB will help to shape common performance indicators and metrics to assist SJSU in demonstrating meaningful progress towards those goals while continuing to promote, support, and scale the high-touch practices that make a significant difference in the lives of individual students.

SJSU's identity-based centers, along with SJSU's resource centers – including TRIO, EOP, and Guardian Scholars – are important sources of support for students to cultivate academic and personal development, community, and a sense of belonging. As the definition of underserved students expands, the AVPSEB must be mindful of the diverse populations of students that SJSU serves and bring an intersectional approach to implementing initiatives to ensure an increase in graduation rates across all demographics. By bringing these units together for the first time, SJSU can put in place a vision of what holistic student success looks like for SJSU writ large and move the units forward in alignment with the institution's mission.

- **Provide strategy and support for the new Student Equity and Belonging team.**

As the first person to inhabit the role, the AVPSEB will assess how best to build alignment across the portfolio's units. The AVPSEB will develop a vision, strategic priorities, resource analysis, and education and outreach initiatives to make the newly reorganized portfolio a successful endeavor that is embraced by the campus. The AVPSEB will encourage strong linkages between the units, enhancing the areas where synergies already exist and identifying opportunities for additional collaboration. The AVPSEB will need to unify, inspire, motivate, integrate, and lead the portfolio in creating a shared mission, setting strategic direction, identifying shared language and metrics, and establishing mechanisms for collaboration and accountability. The new portfolio will unite around delivering opportunities, services, and programs that allow students to flourish with a sense of belonging that will underwrite their successful persistence to graduation. The AVPSEB will honor the histories and contexts in which each unit was developed while supporting the evolution of programs and services to meet the needs of today's SJSU student.

The AVPSEB will join a team of highly dedicated professionals who are eager to meet the needs of the SJSU student body and will support the ongoing development of staff members, creating conditions in which the team can thrive, including recognizing their expertise, growth edges, and modeling creative and data-informed DEIJ practices. The AVPSEB will work to remove barriers for the team; ensure that the team's workload affords the proper balance of time spent devoted to programmatic efforts and being in conversation and community with students; provide support, care and professional growth opportunities; foster needed change; and advocate for the support and resources necessary for the units to be successful.

- **Build structures for effective collaboration and decision making across SJSU to advance student equity and belonging.**

Money Magazine rated SJSU the #1 most transformative university, and SJSU is a campus that is deeply committed to justice and equity and understands that closing the equity gap needs the attention of every single faculty and staff member on campus. Academic Affairs is focusing on programming to establish a strong sense of belonging through new advising models and exploring courses that might have greater equity gaps than others. The college associate deans in collaboration with the Office of Undergraduate Education and Center for Faculty Development, are creating college equity plans and faculty learning communities focused on pedagogy that will help SJSU address the gaps. Enrollment Management, housed in Academic Affairs, is looking at enhancements to technical and business processes that would facilitate graduation for students. The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is planning to launch a new climate survey in 2025, partnering with the Center for Faculty Development, University Personnel, and the identity-based centers to design, facilitate, and evaluate forms of social justice education.

In conjunction with these campus partners and others, the AVPSEB will bring visibility to the work, breaking down silos and building structures, processes, and communications across SJSU. It will be important for the AVPSEB to identify and champion how the work of the portfolio intersects and supports the larger institution's work around Inclusive Excellence, equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging encompassing education, training, campus culture, community-building, and policy. An adept collaborator with a proven track record of fostering relationships in a university context, the AVPSEB will build the infrastructure that will facilitate effective, collaborative work, and will establish trust, secure commitment, and generate enthusiasm and support for initiatives related to student equity and belonging.



- **Cultivate and implement a culture of assessment and evaluation**

Executing on ambitious goals requires the ability to harness data to shape strategic direction. The AVPSEB will cultivate a culture where the various forms of data are utilized to accurately understand the perspectives, needs, and experiences of current and future students. The AVPSEB will work with campus stakeholders to facilitate the collection, analysis, and reporting of data and ensure data reliability. The AVPSEB will bring those data as well as in-depth knowledge of local, regional, and national trends to contribute to conversations about challenges, opportunities, and tradeoffs that SJSU will encounter as it strives to reach its goals. It will be important for the AVPSEB to be adept at interpreting both quantitative and qualitative data to aid the university in decision making and give a voice to the work of the Student Equity and Belonging team.

Using data and best and promising practices, the AVPSEB will establish a culture of assessment and evaluation of Student Equity and Belonging programs. Developing and communicating monitoring strategies and building a cadence for accountability will highlight progress and identify specific areas for continued improvement, thus focusing efforts and resources to do truly transformational work. Whether implementing impactful programming, reviewing the policies of the division, or reaching across the campus to work on institutional initiatives, the AVPSEB will exhibit enthusiasm and patience to gather both feedback that will inform and advance the work. The assessment and evaluation of programs will inform intentional vision-setting and strategic planning to shape initiatives that will be sustainable, scalable where appropriate, and aligned with the strategic direction of the division and institution. Seeking out and incorporating student voices will be a key component of this process.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The Associate Vice President for Student Equity and Belonging will have eight years of experience in student services, equity, diversity, or a related field, preferably in higher education. A master's degree is required; a doctoral degree is preferred.

Required Qualifications:

- Demonstrated experience in leading initiatives that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion and improve student success outcomes for marginalized students.
- Strong understanding of higher education systems, student retention strategies, and issues related to access and equity.
- Proven ability to collaborate with academic and administrative departments, including Academic Affairs and DEI offices.
- Strong management and supervision with a demonstrated ability to hire, supervise, develop, and evaluate professional staff.
- Excellent leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills with an ability to communicate with varying levels of stakeholders and partners.
- Experience managing staff, budgets, and institutional resources effectively.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Familiarity with TRIO, EOP, Guardian Scholars, and other federal or state-funded support programs.
- Experience working with culturally diverse student populations, including first-generation college students, students from low-income backgrounds, and underrepresented racial and ethnic groups.
- Experience with data-driven decision-making and assessment of student outcomes.
- A sense of cultural humility and self-awareness regarding a wide range of DEIJ communities and issues.
- Demonstrated ability to maintain confidentiality and appropriately handle sensitive communications within the university and with external agencies.
- Demonstrated ability to handle multiple work priorities, organize, and plan work effectively, in a professional manner, in a detail-oriented and fast-paced environment.
- Demonstrated ability to lead individuals in team effort to accomplish institutional and divisional goals and objectives.
- Demonstrated ability to be self-directed but work effectively as a collaborative team player.

The Division of Student Affairs

As one of the 200 top research universities in the nation, San José State University offers rigorous coursework and research opportunities to over 36,000 undergraduate and graduate students. SJSU holds HSI (Hispanic Serving Institution) and AANAPISI (Asian American, Native American and Pacific Islander Serving Institution) designations.

The [Division of Student Affairs](#) provides comprehensive programs and services designed to support the academic, career, and life aspirations of students and create a climate for learning and engagement that enhances the student experience. The rich diversity of backgrounds within the student body at SJSU informs the work of the division.

An experienced and committed staff of approximately 380 professionals work in partnership with faculty and students to maximize the opportunities for student success on a campus with a distinguished history of activism and a current commitment to a richly multicultural community. The division aspires to organize its resources and services in support of the needs of its students. With 4,200 students currently in residence on campus and thousands more students living in apartments around the university, the student life program at SJSU is both complex and comprehensive.

Mission

In keeping with the academic mission of the institution, the Division of Student Affairs exists to provide student-focused programs and services that support student success and enhance the student experience at San José State University. The Division aims to create critical student learning opportunities beyond the classrooms that support the intellectual, personal, and civic growth of our students.

Values

The employees and professions in the Division of Student Affairs are committed to six core values – Learning, Student Success, Excellence, Integrity, Diversity, and Community – which are reflected in the many programs and services offered to students and the campus community.



About San José State University

Overview

San José State University is a major, comprehensive public university located in the hub of downtown San José and in the heart of California's Silicon Valley. Its distinctive character has been forged by its long history, its location and its vision – a blend of the old and the new, of the traditional and the innovative. Among its most prized traditions is an uncompromising commitment to offering access to higher education at both the graduate and the undergraduate levels to its diverse communities, yielding a stimulating mix of age groups, cultures and economic backgrounds for teaching, learning and research. SJSU takes pride in and is firmly committed to teaching and learning with a faculty that is active in scholarship, research, technological innovation, community service, and the arts.

Founded in 1857, San José State University is the oldest public institution of higher education in the West. From its beginnings as a normal school that prepared teachers for the developing frontier, SJSU has progressed into a major metropolitan university that offers 241 areas of study. Quality teaching is a priority at SJSU, where tenured professors teach introductory as well as advanced courses.

One of the 200 top research universities in the nation, SJSU offers rigorous coursework and research opportunities nearly 36,000 undergraduate and graduate students.

San José State University's location in Silicon Valley provides an exceptionally rewarding learning environment for students and a stimulating environment for faculty. Silicon Valley's firms and agencies seek SJSU students for internships, summer work programs and for assistance with research and development projects. Silicon Valley companies employ more graduates from SJSU than from any other university in the nation.

Mission

Honoring our roots as the first public university in the West, SJSU is an empowering institution enrolling historically underserved students, driving inclusion, and embracing talent from diverse cultures from our region and across the globe. SJSU's spirit of innovation and creativity drives academic excellence, teaching, research, and service in a learning environment where all students belong. Together, we nurture leaders to thrive and transform our community, Silicon Valley, and the world.

Academics

Teaching, Research, Collaboration

With a breadth of academic programs, research and applied learning, SJSU is perfectly positioned to examine essential questions facing the community and world. Growing SJSU's research and innovation environment allows the university to adapt to and set the pace of change.

Colleges and Departments

Each college houses schools, [departments and programs](#) specific to its area, creating a rich variety of offerings for students and the community.

- [Lucas College and Graduate School of Business](#)
- [Connie L. Lurie College of Education](#)
- [Charles W. Davison College of Engineering](#)

- [College of Graduate Studies](#)
- [College of Health and Human Sciences](#)
- [College of Humanities and the Arts](#)
- [College of Information, Data & Society](#)
- [College of Professional and Global Education \(CPGE\)](#)
- [College of Science](#)
- [College of Social Sciences](#)



Spartan Athletics

Intercollegiate Athletics is an integral part of the university and exists to promote equitable opportunities for men and women to compete at the NCAA Division I Level. The athletics program strives to create a diverse and inclusive environment emphasizing academics, compliance, student-athlete welfare, fair play, sportsmanship and Spartan pride. SJSU offers a diverse variety of both men's and women's athletics. Please visit Spartan athletics for more information.

Leadership

Dr. Cynthia Teniente-Matson, President



Dr. Cynthia Teniente-Matson serves as the 31st president of San José State University. An internationally recognized Latina leader, President Teniente-Matson is a champion of student success initiatives; diversity, equity and inclusion; civic engagement; and experiential learning.

Throughout her career that spans more than 30 years in higher education, President Teniente-Matson has always put students first, engaging in strategic partnerships and serving on numerous national educational-governing and civic boards geared toward enhancing the student experience. This is a return to the California State University system for President Teniente-Matson, who served as Vice President for Administration and Chief Financial Officer at California State University, Fresno from 2004 to 2015.

Prior to her appointment at SJSU in January 2023, President Teniente-Matson led Texas A&M University-San Antonio from 2015 to 2022. As the second president in the university's history, President Teniente-Matson spearheaded the growth of the campus into a comprehensive master's university while earning the U.S. Department of Education Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) designation and the Seal of Excelencia, awarded to 24 universities nationwide. She established several key initiatives for the university, including the Mays Center for Experiential Learning and Community Engagement, Cisneros Institute for Emerging Leaders, Institute of Water Resource Science and Technology, Cyber Engineering Technology & Cyber Security Research Center, the NSA Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Education and the sole Texas Facebook CyberSecurity University Program.

President Teniente-Matson is a renowned public speaker and has delivered keynotes at national conferences regarding contemporary issues in higher education, risk management, women's leadership and Latina/Latino leadership. In 2022, the White House Office of Presidential Personnel appointed her as Commissioner to the

Japan U.S. Friendship Commission and a panelist to CULCON, a State Department Japan-U.S. Binational Governance Commission. Currently, she serves as past chair of the Board of Directors for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), a university presidents and chancellors membership association; is a board member of the American Council on Education and the Girl Scouts USA National Board; and is a member of the HSI-Educational Testing Service (ETS) Steering Committee and LiftFund.

President Teniente-Matson earned her Bachelor of Arts in Management from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, her Master of Business Administration from the University of Alaska Anchorage and a doctorate in Educational Leadership from California State University, Fresno. She and her husband Mike have two sons: Phillip and Wyatt. She enjoys writing, traveling, and outdoor activities such as biking and boating.

Dr. Mari Fuentes-Martin, Vice President for Student Affairs



Mari Fuentes-Martin, Ed.D., was appointed Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) in January 2024 after serving as the interim VPSA, bringing 33 years of progressive leadership in student affairs and fostering vibrant and inclusive campus communities and student-centric environments. She has a reputation as a positive driver of change, resulting in inclusive and collaborative teams. She has a deep understanding of, and expertise in, leading student affairs at Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) while developing sustainable and scalable student-centric infrastructures in retention, Title IX, public safety, bilingual communications, career centers, and community partnerships.

Prior to SJSU, Mari served as Vice President of Student Success and Engagement at Texas A&M University-San Antonio and has held other student affairs leadership roles at Louisiana State University-Baton Rouge, University of Texas (UT)-Brownsville, and Texas A&M Corpus-Christi. Mari also led several initiatives to impact first-generation students, many of which received national recognition — including Texas A&M-San Antonio's selection as one of 10 exemplary institutions to earn the 2021 *Seal of Excelencia* from Excelencia in Education, the nation's premier authority on efforts to accelerate Latino student success in higher education.



San José, California

Founded in 1777 as Pueblo de San José, San José was built with an innovative spirit. It is the economic, cultural and political center of Silicon Valley and the largest city in Northern California. With a population of over one million, it is the third most populous city in California (after Los Angeles and San Diego) and the twelfth most populous in the United States.

San José is cradled by the beautiful Santa Cruz Mountains and the southern shore of San Francisco Bay. It is located in Santa Clara County, the most affluent county in California and one of the most affluent counties in the United States. You can feel the city's rich past by taking a walking tour through its charming downtown or meandering through its rich History Park. There is much more to San José than technology and history; it is also a unique cultural hub with the largest Vietnamese population outside of Vietnam and one of the three remaining Japantowns in the United States.

Santa Clara County has been a valued partner in fostering equity and belonging. Over 50 leaders throughout the county affirmed their commitment to serving all residents in a [special statement](#) issued after the 2024 presidential election, which underscored a shared commitment to the safety and well-being of all residents, including historically targeted groups.

For additional information about this vibrant and progressive city, see www.sanjoseca.gov and www.SanJose.org.



Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting San José State University in this important search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by January 29, 2025.

The salary for the role is anticipated to be between \$175,000-\$195,000. The final hiring salary is commensurate with experience.

Nominations, inquiries, and application materials can be directed to:

Shelley Arakawa, J.D., Corin Edwards, M.Ed, Jen Meyers Pickard, Ph.D., and Bronwen Bares Pelaez, Ph.D.

SJSU-AVP-SEB@wittkieffer.com

San José State University (SJSU) is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of age, ancestry, citizenship status, color, creed, disability, ethnicity, gender, genetic information, marital status, medical condition, national origin, race, religion or lack thereof, sex, sexual orientation, transgender, or protected veteran status consistent with applicable federal and state laws. This policy applies to all SJSU students, faculty and staff programs and activities. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and certain other federal and state laws, prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in all education programs and activities operated by the university (both on and off campus).