

**SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY
ONE WASHINGTON SQUARE
SAN JOSÉ, CA 95192**

**S17-13, University Policy, Undergraduate Student Honors at
SJSU**

Legislative History:

In 1996, F96-5 codified several previous Senate policies on honors, replaced previous University Policies S65-24, F86-5, S93-6, S66-7, F85-9, S86-7, and used forgotten information from supposedly superseded policies F65-12 and F67-10.

On May 15, 2017, the Academic Senate approved AS 1650 (sent to the President for signature as University Policy S17-13) presented by Senator Kaufman for the Instruction and Student Affairs Committee. This policy recommendation was returned unsigned by President Papazian with a request to revisit the GPA level for Summa Cum Laude.

At its meeting of September 18, 2017, the Academic Senate approved an amendment to AS 1650, presented by Senator Sullivan-Green for the Instruction and Student Affairs Committee. This amendment restored the GPA level for Summa Cum Laude to 3.85.

On October 4, 2017, President Mary A. Papazian approved and signed University Policy S17-13.

On April 30, 2018, the Academic Senate approved Amendment A to University Policy S17-13 presented by Senator Khan for the Instruction and Student Affairs Committee. Amendment A to University Policy S17-13 was approved and signed by President Mary A. Papazian on May 9, 2018. Amendment A changed section 2.7.1 and added section 2.7.3.

On November 16, 2020, the Academic Senate approved Amendment B to University Policy S17-13 presented by Senator Sullivan-Green for the Instruction and Student Affairs Committee. Amendment B was signed and approved by President Mary A. Papazian on March 18, 2021. Amendment B changed section 3.0 from Department Honors to Honors in the Major.

On March 17, 2025, the Academic Senate approved Amendment C to University Policy S17-13, Undergraduate Student Honors at SJSU, presented by Senator Sullivan-Green for the Instruction and Student Affairs Committee. Amendment C was signed and approved by President Cynthia Teniente-Matson on April 1, 2025.

Amendments A, B, and C are incorporated into the policy below.

Rescinds and Replaces: F96-5

UNIVERSITY POLICY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT HONORS AT SJSU

Whereas, San Jose 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 Jose State University."

Rationale: This final reading addresses the issue raised by the President and returns the GPA level for Summa Cum Laude to 3.85. All other components of this policy recommendation were previously (spring 2017) approved by the Senate.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT HONORS AT SJSU

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 [Honors in the Major](#)

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.¹

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. An undergraduate student must complete a minimum of 12 units during a semester to qualify for consideration. Of those 12 minimum units, at least 8 units must be letter-graded. Any “No Credit” (NC) grades disqualify a student from consideration for semester honors.

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

¹ To understand how a GPA is calculated, please refer to the following policies and procedures:

University Policy [F18-5: University Grading System Policy](#)

University Policy [S09-7: Grading Symbols, Drop, and Withdrawal; Retroactive Drop and Retroactive Withdrawal; Assignments of Grades and Grade Appeals; Change of Grade; and Integrity of the Academic Record](#)

Registrar's Website on [Grade Changes](#)

Catalog Description of [Grades](#)

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 by the Office of the Provost.

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.

2.7.3 The University shall host an Honors Convocation (at least yearly) overseen by the Office of the Provost.

3.0 Honors in the Major

3.1 Qualifications: Honors in the major 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.

3.1.1 Honors in the major 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.

3.1.2 Approved Honors in the Major are then filed with the Office of Undergraduate Education which then notifies the appropriate campus agencies to begin implementation.

3.2 Criteria for honors in the major programs: honors should be earned by specific honors level work as contrasted to work only in regular classes.

3.2.1 Honors in the major should be awarded strictly for academic achievement (GPA and specified coursework).

3.2.2 Honors in the major will be given only to students who distinguish themselves 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 major courses

3.2.3 There must be a component of academic work that is unique to the Honors in the major (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 Honors in the major 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 Honors in the major status will be shown on the transcript, together with a notation explaining what the designation means.

3.3.2 Honors in the major 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 3.85 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 3.85, 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.

I&SA vote on original policy:

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.

I&SA vote on amendment:

Approved: September 11, 2017
Vote: 14-0-1
Present: Bullen, Busick, Gill, Hill, Khan, Nash, Ng, Sen, Simpson, Sofish, Sullivan-Green, Trousdale, Walters, Wilson, Yao
Absent: Grindstaff, Hospidales, Kinney, Manzo
Financial impact: None expected
Workload impact: No change from current situation