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January 22, 2024

To: Campus Community

From: Dr. Cynthia Teniente-Matson, President



Re: Presidential Directive (PD-2024-01) Day of Remembrance to Honor Japanese Americans

### OVERVIEW

Throughout history, there have been countless injustices based on bias and prejudice – including one particularly egregious one that occurred on our very own campus. At San José State University (SJSU), we reject any notion that forgetting is part of healing. When we participate in an injustice, we must remember it, face it and make our future actions better. It is in that spirit that I issue this Presidential Directive, which forever designates February 19 as a Day of Remembrance for the harm done to Americans of Japanese descent who were forcibly detained, incarcerated and stripped of their possessions under the misguided sense that they posed a security risk during World War II.

### BACKGROUND

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which gave the U.S. Army the authority to remove civilians from designated zones in Washington, Oregon, and California during World War II, and send them to processing centers to then be forcibly relocated. Our university, then known as San Jose State College, was used as one such center, with many of its employees and students having to process members of their own community (including 125 Japanese American students who were forced to abandon their studies at San Jose State).

Regrettably, our university took an active role in this campaign, implementing the executive order and taking on the responsibility of staffing the processing center on its site. University leaders showed intolerance to any resistance or criticism to the order, even going as far as censuring and dismissing faculty who spoke out against it.

On April 17, 2023, the Academic Senate approved a Sense of the Senate Resolution (SS-S23-4) titled Honoring and Recognizing a Day of Remembrance. The complete text of the resolution, which includes additional historical context, is made available [online](#) through the Academic Senate website.

This awful, painful history must not be forgotten or repeated in any form. Through this designation, we take one more step in facing up to [our history](#) in this process.

#### POLICY STATEMENT

Effective immediately, it is the policy of San José State University to institutionalize an annual Day of Remembrance on February 19 to:

- formally commemorate and condemn the injustice to the community caused by the forced removal and incarceration of local Japanese Americans, pursuant to Executive Order 9066.
- never forget this moment of history.
- draw lessons from the experiences of Japanese Americans on our campus.

Implementation of educational programming and activities should occur across the campus.

#### SCOPE

This presidential directive applies to all SJSU faculty, staff, students, and administrators, as well as visitors to campus.