

SDSU SENATE OFFICER STATEMENT
FALL 2022

The SDSU University has affirmed its ongoing commitment to creating a more welcoming environment for all of our students, faculty, staff, and administrators through resolutions focused on Pell Grant, African American, Native American, LGBTQIAA+, Jewish people, Women of Color and other diverse students and community members. The University has established the Division of Student Affairs and Campus Diversity and adopted the 5-year Campus Strategic Plan We Rise We Defy: Transcending Borders, Transforming Lives that most recently produced campus Principles of Community. In addition, each college and now each department has developed diversity plans with the aim of guiding their work and practices as academic units.

University Senate Officers condemn the behavior of faculty members (most recently Dr. J. Angelo Corlett) who exert their power and privilege over students in their classrooms by using derogatory, racist epithets, including the “n-word” repeatedly in their classes, or telling students that faculty members cannot be fired “unless they kill or rape a student.”

Based on our reading of the SDSU University Policy File, we believe any instructor, regardless of rank, who provides instruction without regard to the potential for harm to students is not meeting the expectations for faculty codified in the Policy File. Furthermore, when students report they do not feel safe in a learning environment, and the faculty member refuses to address student concerns, the university should take action, which may include, removing the faculty member from their teaching any course.

While Senate Officers support the Freedom of Speech, we reject the misuse of Freedom of Speech/Expression laws to silence students and excuse harm caused. The use of these laws to intimidate anyone who would speak out against dysfunctional uses of derogatory racist words, or the creation of a harmful educational environment, is unethical.

We support the African Student Union and other campus organizations that are calling for actions to address these concerns.

The SDSU University Policy File related to “Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion: Criteria,” section 3.1, provides that faculty “skill in organizing and presenting material in ways that engage and motivate diverse student populations to participate in their own learning.” Furthermore, the SDSU University Policy File also states that “The faculty of San Diego State University shall subscribe to the Statement on Professional Ethics (2009) by the American Association of University Professors (<http://www.aaup.org/>),” which states faculty should “hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Professors demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors,” and that faculty “avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students.” Additionally, the section on Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity(3.8) states a commitment “To ensure that the work environment for faculty, staff, and students is free from both prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment.” Also, the section Written Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (5.0, pg. 151) states, “SDSU is committed to the values of equity, diversity, and

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inclusion. Please describe whether the instructor created an inclusive learning environment where diverse students, particularly those from marginalized communities, were supported and welcomed.” Finally, the Policies section (1.0, pg. 184) states, “ Faculty, staff, and administration shall complement each other in the mission of the university to provide the best possible education for its students. Accordingly, San Diego State University shall strive to provide an environment where people demonstrate mutual respect regardless of rank or role.”