However during Fall 2013 the Black community and the campus were rocked by a blatant display of intolerance and racism as a member of the Black student community was bullied, harassed and hazed by his white roommates in the Campus Village living quarters. The situation was initially poorly handled by the administration at the time, and as result student morale and desire to be a (Black) student at SJSU was at an extreme low. In response, the African American/Black Task Force for Black Student Success broadened its focus and strategy towards closing the achievement gap to include as part of its mission "to become an active change agent in the facilitation of a change in campus climate and environment for Black students at SJSU" simultaneous with addressing academic issues related to Black student attrition from SJSU.

Strategic Campus Climate Environmental Intervention to Enhance Social Environment for Black Students: Sense of Belonging

IA. Establishment of communication conduit capable of reaching large numbers of Black

Harambee activities boast an attendance which is made up of members of the Academic Senate (AS) led by the Chair of the AS; general Faculty members ranging from tenured to part time lecturers; the Administration including but not limited to the President, Provost, Vice President of Student Affairs and members of the president's cabinet; staff members from various divisions and academic and student affairs support units; non-African American/ Black students; and of course African American/Black students as the largest critical mass of students. The significance of Harambee events to the Black community is in its attendance make up. Black students are roughly 2.5 percent of the campus population.

viewing in front of the combined campus and off campus communities which came together that evening. The event also honored 43 other area African American barbers and salon owners.

Black Student Union - Michael Randle

Black Campus Ministries - Valerie Chapman

Black Graduation Committee - Felicia McKee and Dr. Karisman Roberts-Douglass

Habesha - Michelle Randle

Gospel Choir - Dr. Michael Cheers

Additionally five Student Support Interns (SSIs) were hired and utilized to serve as liaisons between the African American/Black Task Force and the various Black student organizations. Through the SSIs Black student organizations which did not have Task Force advisers were able to communicate their issues to the Task Force and make known their needs known and more importantly how the Task Force may intervene to support them. The SSIs also served as extra people power on behalf of the Task Force to assist organizations with their events and activities.

#### C. Financial Support of Black Student Organizations' Activities:

The Task Force funded and supported several activities on behalf of the Black Student Union, Delta Sigma Theta sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, Black Campus Ministries, Black Grad, Habesha, the African American Business Club, Zeta Phi Beta sorority, the African American Gospel Choir and more.

#### Outcomes/Results (Fall 2014-Present)

- I. Increase in Activities produced by Black student organizations
- II. Increase in interest in Black student organizations by students as evidenced by increased membership
- III. Significant Increases in memberships of Black Student Union, Black Campus Ministries, Habesha, the Black Greek Organizations and the reconstituted gospel choir

# Phase 2: Leadership Development and Mentoring by Professional Faculty, Staff, Administrators, and Career Professionals

Leadership Development and Mentorship:

1. Barbershop Talk Series (which evolved into the "Black Male Collective")

The Barbershop talks began with funding from the Task Force and were the brainchild of two Task Force members. The idea centered around the concept of forming a community of Black men comprised of Black male students, faculty, staff, and external community leaders who would come together periodically to discuss issues relevant to Black male survival and success. These talks would alternate between the community barbershop and facilities on campus.

#### 2. Black Women's Leadership Consortium

The Black Women's Leadership Consortium (BWLC) of the Task Force host Fall and Spring semesters Black Women's Leadership Breakfast. The BWLC breakfast brings together SJSU

Black women students together with SJSU women faculty, staff, administrators and other women professionals representing various fields to discuss issues related to SJSU Black women ranging from current campus issues to "post-graduation" issues which range from career preparation mentoring to discussion about family career balance and future strategies for career preparation and advancement.

#### 3. BlackForward Leadership Retreat

The BlackForward Leadership retreat brings together SJSU staff, faculty and students for a weekend of leadership development. Issues are discussed with respect to what it means to be Black at SJSU at a time of police shootings of unarmed Blacks, living and classroom environments at SJSU which at times seem hostile to Black students and ways to stay encouraged and excel in spite of obstacles to success. Other leadership issues include the finding of one's voice and the development and planning of a "Black Agenda" for future semesters.

#### Outcomes/Results (Spring 2015-Present)

1. Students who have attended a combination of these events since Spring 2015 have gone on to become both campus and Black community leaders such as Presidents of student organizations: Black Student Union, Habesha, Black Campus Ministries, Delta Sigma Theta, Inc., Brother to Brother to name a few and held positions in Associated Student government and became coordinators of peer mentoring programs for the College of Science, the College of Applied

- I. Both the university and city police departments have been yearly featured guests of the freshman orientation course Science 2. Each Fall semester officers of both police departments speak to a class of 300+ frosh on topics of safety and "community to police" engagement. The class discussion is hosted by the Provost and one of the co-chairs of the Task Force.
- II. Both university and city police departments attend an annual faculty, staff and student mixer hosted by the Science 2, first year experience course for incoming freshmen. Officers mix with students, allow students to ask questions and take "selfies" with them.
- III. UPD offered a Saturday self-defense course for Black women students at the request of Task Force members
- IV. UPD did check-ins for nightly community study and maintained police presence during community study hours frequently checking in and even baking cookies.

various projects and activities. Most notable has been the Barbershop Diaries and the Barbershop Talks series.

#### Outcomes/Results (Fall 2014-Present)

- I. Barbershop Talk Series Barber's Inc. has served (since Spring 2015) and continues to serve as a venue for the SJSU Black males to gather and talk about issues of concerns to them with SJSU faculty, staff and San Jose city community leaders such as local pastors and SJPD officers and chiefs of police. Issues have ranged from male identity to Black community and police relationships following the plethora of shootings of unarmed Black males reported across the country as of late.
- II. Barbershop Diaries Documentary (see campus engagement:

that followed the story. SJSU Black Students during that time had very little to say which reflected a positive college-going experience as attendees of San Jose State. These various posts, whether on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, etc., lent themselves to becoming challenges to recruitment efforts of new Black students to SJSU. The BSU advisor often received phone calls from various pre-college programs stating that they "would not be bringing their students to San Jose State University." In an effort to improve the perception of San Jose State as a viable place for Black students to attend college through social media, the remedy seemed obvious to the Task Force - give Black students something positive to post.

Many of the activities and experiences created and facilitated by the African American/Black Task Force became social media postings. As the activities and programs multiplied so did the

campus and third to answer questions regarding Black student life which ranged from inquiries about Black student organizations to the types of academic and social support mechanisms available to Black students should the choose to enroll at SJSU.

Using Frosh First Year Retention to Gauge the Effectiveness of Task Force Campus Climate Intervention

During Spring semester 2015 the Task Force hosted its first BlackForward Leadership retreat.

gap has gone from 11.8% to 7.4% and between the campus and Black students the gap has closed significantly going from 6.1% first year retention gap for Fall 2014 to 2.0% for Fall 2015 frosh. With additional data procured from the campus Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics located at: http://www.iea.sjsu.edu/ (Retention/Graduation Tab - University Totals-

|          |   |                   | Figure3        |                |                 |               |
|----------|---|-------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
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Chart 1-First Year Retention Rates (Black Frosh vs Overall Campus F05-F15 (source SJSU Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics website)

| YEAR | BLK Frosh<br>FYR | Overall SJSU<br>Frosh FYR |
|------|------------------|---------------------------|
|      |                  |                           |
| FA05 | 73.0%            | 79.5%                     |
| FA06 | 73.4%            | 79.2%                     |
| FA07 | 69.4%            | 79.3%                     |
| FA08 | 74.0%            | 79.8%                     |
| FA09 | 71.2%            | 84.1%                     |
| FA10 | 81.4%            | 87.2%                     |
| FA11 | 77.8%            | 82.9%                     |
| FA12 | 83.9%            | 87.2%                     |
| FA13 | 82.9%            | 86.4%                     |
| FA14 | 80.0%            | 86.1%                     |
| FA15 | 84.8%            | 86.7%                     |

Further data from the campus' Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics located at: <a href="http://www.iea.sjsu.edu">http://www.iea.sjsu.edu</a> demonstrate that the 2nd year retention rate of the Fall 2014 Black freshmen was greater than that of its Fall 2013 frosh counterpart. The 2014 Black student cohort of frosh would have experienced much of the Fall 2014/Spring 2015 programming of the Task Force such as the Fall 2014 Soul Food Thanksgiving community event, the Spring 2015 Black talent showcase, the Spring 2015 Essence of Blackness, the end of Spring 2015 semester community BBQ, as well as the various events put on by Black student organizations funded by the task force and the multiple community study nights hosted by the combined task forces to prepare for midterms and final exams . Figure 4 below is a comparison graph of the 2nd year retention rates of both freshmen classes. It shows an increase of almost 5% in retention from class to class cohort for the same point in academic career.

AY 16-17. Below are descriptions of the interventions for both groups as implemented by the African American/Black Task Force. The data provided will be outcomes for both Black and Latino students.

#### Phase 1: Targeting Low Hanging Fruit First-Remediation

Intervening to facilitate students in remediation with remediating within their first year (creating a "repeat" option) with the Evergreen Valley College Partnership

Towards the end of the Fall 2013, the African American/Black Task Force suggested that the graduation achievement gap is actually made up of a series of gaps and holes in the system in which students hemorrhage out of the university, beginning with remediation. Students in remediation must remediate within one year after enrolling at SJSU. Prior to 2011 the university used to have a "repeat opportunity" in the form of a class for students that did not pass their first semester remedial English or Math course. Due to budget cuts the university ceased providing such opportunity to those who did not pass their first semester of remedial English or Math, leaving those students to fend for themselves. Since the African American/Black Task Force possesses a contingent of some of the best and senior academic advisors on campus, the academic advising "brain trust" met with the Provost of SJSU and the Provost of Evergreen to recommend that Evergreen provide the repeat opportunity for SJSU students at SJSU, and Dr. Junn worked with the Evergreen Provost to have the courses offered at the SJSU campus. The College of Science course, Science 90, was offered as a means to keep remedial students on track due to its weekly peer advising and study/study skill components, and thus an alternative repeat opportunity was born. Since this opportunity has been available, hundreds of students have had the opportunity to "repeat" their attempt at remediation.

Data supplied by the Developmental Studies Coordinator is below.

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Phase 2: Developing the Retention Services Center (RSC) within Academic Advising and Retention Services

One of the grant proposals submitted by the joint Task Forces was for base funds to be allocated to Academic Advising and Retention Services for the purpose of hiring staff advisors, administrative assistance and two graduate student staff personnel to work with Black, Latino and others deemed at risk on an ongoing basis. The idea behind the proposal was that a Retention Services Center would be established per the recommendation submitted by Presidential Commission on Racial Discrimination established in 2014 and that it be established as part of AARS due to its role as the campus General Education advising center and as having no specific college affiliation or political agenda driven by budget or allegiance to a particular set of faculty, dean or discipline. In other words it is a "neutral entity" on campus.

Once the funds were allocated, the second part of the strategy included the hiring of competent professional staff. Co-chairs of the Task Forces served on the selection committees and made recommendations to the Director of AARS regarding hire. Third, the co-chair of the African American Task Force requested funding for Student Support Interns as part of the Task Forces

staff contribution to the center. Once the pieces were assembled, the RSC was ready for operation. This brings us to:

Phase 3: Enacting Intrusive Intervention to facilitate a reduction in the number and percentage of Black and Latinx students academically disqualified from the university

#### Intervention for Students Placed on Academic Probation

#### I. Probation Workshops

The African American/Black Task Force Academic Success Team, the Under Represented Minority (URM) advising team of Academic Advising and Retention Services and advisors from the CASA Student Success Center teamed up to produce and participate in probation outreach to students on academic probation from the following demographics, regardless of college affiliation, as listed with the university as: Black, Hispanic, Hawaiian and Native American. Students were contacted via MySJSU and/or email to attend mandatory probation workshops in which the concepts of university probation and disqualification are introduced, probation holds which are to be placed are explained and probation protocols are discussed so that students understand what is required in order to have their probation hold suspended or lifted in order to register for the following semester. Additionally each student who attended a workshop was individually advised as their intended classes were reviewed by an advisor. Workshops were offered in person and online via WebEx.

#### II. Day-Time Study Hall

Partners include: African American Task Force for Student Success; Chicanx/Latinx Task Force for Student Success; Academic Advising and Retention Services; College of Applied Sciences and Arts

A joint team of task force Student Success Interns and Peer Advisors from both Academic Advising and Retention Services and the CASA Student Success Center form the network of a supervised "study hall" for Black and Latino students on probation (as well as Native American and Hawaiian students, Undeclared majors and recently those majoring in Engineering on probation). Both the Retention Services Center (RSC) and CASA Student Success Center are open for monitored student study: Monday through Thursday, 9:00am-6:00pm and Friday, 9:00am-3:00pm. Students 0 0.dT3ndralfy red o ommit 0 0.dT3 1 six r 0 0.dT3 1 week to onitored study hall while on probation.

#### III. Peer Mentoring

Partners include: Africmerican ask orce Student uccess Student uccess erns); Chicanx/Latinx Tk Force for Student Success (Student Success Interns); Academic Advising and Retention Services (Peer Advisors) 

#### Phase 4 Strategies: Intellectual Engagement (Faculty Led Programs)

A. Broadening horizons and motivations (Faculty Led Programs: Afam 196/180 and Alternative Spring Break 2017)

During the summer of 2016, the African American/Black Task Force partnered with the College of Social Sciences to develop a faculty led summer program to Cuba. The African American/Black Task Force took 10 Black and Latino students to Cuba for two weeks of academic study and research. For most it was their first travel abroad and their first study abroad experience. For one student, it was his first time on an airplane. The SJSU Gospel Choir ensemble also performed in Havana. Led by Dr. Cheers and Dr. Ruth Wilson, the students were put through the rigors of undergraduate research.

For Spring Break 2017, the African American/Black Task Force organized an "Alternative Educational Spring Break" to New York/Harlem and Washington, D.C., to visit historical sights, monuments and to tour the new National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. While there, students had the opportunity to meet and interact with congressman and civil rights icon, John Lewis, tour Howard University and have an information session on graduate school studies. Two other significant highlights included a community dinner in Harlem with 2012 SJSU graduate Bayo Junyor. Junyor, a former EOP student, recently received his master's degree in education from NYU. He currently is a middle school science teacher in Brooklyn. In D.C., the students shared a community meal with former SJSU/EOP student and 1983 alum, the Honorable Robert R. Rigsby, currently a judge in the District of Columbia Superior Court. Both Task Forces initiated educational experiences abroad were made possible because of the collaborative spirit and creative efforts of the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs and the Financial Aid Office. Their efforts facilitated travel, lodging and SJSU paraphernalia for students.

In January 2017, two of the students from the Cuba FLP were selected to present their Cuba research with Dr. Cheers at the 2017 Hawaii International Conference on Education. Their session was packed with students, professors and university administrators. During Alternative Spring Break, three of the Cuba students presented their research at Satellite Academy High School in Manhattan. They were invited to the alternative high school by principal Steve Zabadia. Zabadia was one of the administrators who attended the Hawaii Education Conference.

When the task force initially began its work in Fall 2013 data gleaned from the campus academic standing report issued by the Registrar's office showed that 34% of all students academically disqualified from SJSU were Undeclared. Further examination of the data revealed that 35% of all Black students being dismissed from the university were coming out of undeclared as were 31% of all Hispanic students dismissed from SJSU. In a meeting between the Task Force and



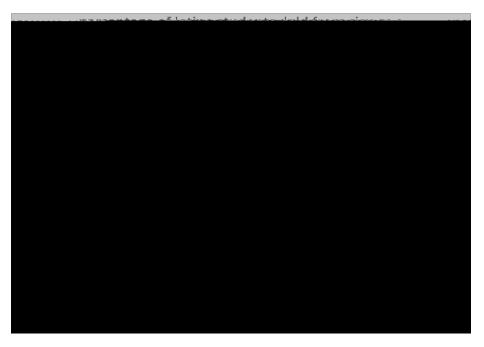
The graphs below (Figures 3a and 3b) demonstrate the progress made by the task force with respect to its intervention of Black and Hispanic students on probation of the undeclared population between Fall 2013 to Fall 2016. Figure 3a shows a definite trend downward as the percentage of Black students dismissed from the university within undeclared has fallen to 12% as of the Fall 2016 registrar's academic standing report.

Likewise the results are mirrored in Figure 3b for the Hispanic student population within undeclared as there has been definite trend downward as the percentage of Hispanic students



However as the African American/Black Task Force worked to reduce the number of those disqualified from the university that were undeclared, and as it had success within the undeclared cohort with both Black and Hispanic student populations; the campus Hispanic dismissal rate continued to rise university-wide in spite of the reduction of Hispanics dismissed that were undeclared. d. we

Figure 5



As the graph suggest the dismissal rate for Hispanics dropped significantly from Fall 2015 to 22% of all students dismissed as of Fall 2016.

Closing the Dismissal Gap: A step in the right direction toward closing the "Achievement Gap"

As previously stated the African American/Black Task Force argues that the "Achievement Gap" is actually made up of several smaller performance gaps and that in order to close the achievement gap you have to first begin with turning off the various spigots from which URM students are hemorrhaging out of the institution. One such spigot is the dismissal of students from the university due to poor academic performance or the DQ rate. As Figues 6a and 6b demonstrate the DQ rate gap of Fall 2015 between Hispanics and Asians has not only closed by Fall 2016 but Hispanics are as of Fall 2016 within striking distance (2% points) of closing the gap between them and their White counterparts. Another fact of note is that as we continue to employ the same strategies with Black students their percent of DQ'd has not gone up as the Hispanics students DQ rate has gone down unlike Asian and White student cohorts.

Figure 6a

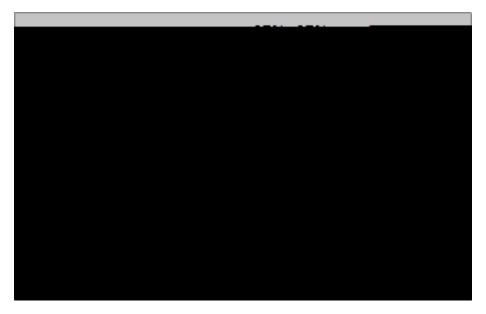
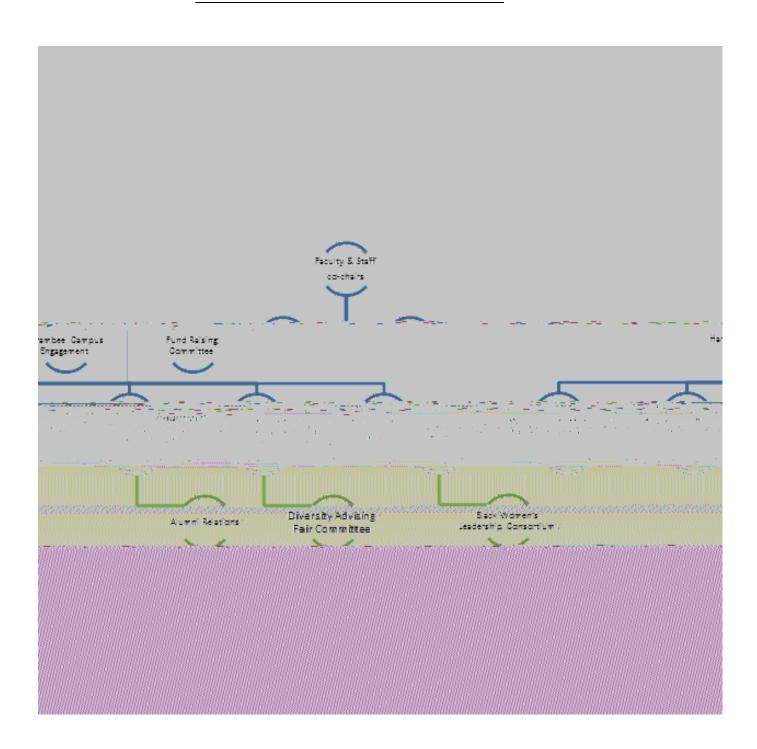


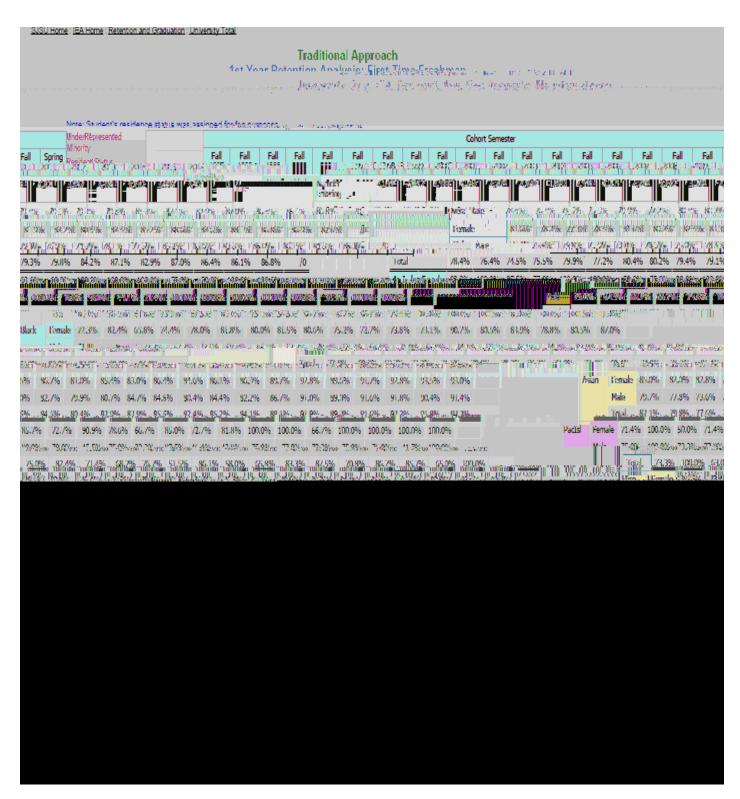
Figure 6b



For the Spring 2017 semester the team has employed the same strategy and we await the results. As the Task Force winds down we pass this part of the work to Academic Advising and Retention Services (AARS) to continue through its Retention Services Center and recommend that AARS be adequately resourced with funds specifically for this work.

# Appendix





African American/Black Task Force for Black Student Success Chairs

Dr. Michael Cheers

Michael Randle

#### Harambee Committee

Michelle Randle - Chair

Felicia McKee

Valerie Chapman - Academic Advising and Retention Services

Sharon Thompson - MLK Library

Coleeta McElroy - Financial Aid Office

Marian Yao - Registrar's Office

## Faculty Engagement Committee

Dr. Michael Kimbarow

Dr. Lynda Heiden

## Leadership Development Committee

Jahmal Williams - Chair

Dr. Walt Jacobs

Michelle Randle

Joshua Kas-Osoka

Christiana Cobb

Felicia McKee

Coleetta McElroy

Coleeta McElroy

Sharon Thompson

Valerie Chapman

Felicia McKee

# Community Outreach

Dr Michael Cheers

Michael Randle

Dr. William Armaline

Michael Randle

Cindy Kato

## Fund Raising Committee

Michael Randle

# African American/Black Task Force for Black Student Success Task Force Members

Dr. Michael Cheers - Faculty Chair

Michael Randle - Staff Chair

Dr. Monica Allen

Dr. Ruth Wilson

Joshua Kas-Osoka Christiana Cobb Felicia McKee Sharon Thompson Francis Howard Natina Gurley Deanna Peck Roger Elrod Hyon Chu Yi-Baker Romando Nash Karisman Roberts-Douglass Marian Yao Aaron Miller Special Thanks to our Collaborative Partners Administrative Partners President, San Jose State University - Dr. Mary Papazian Dr. Ellen Junn - Former Provost now President CSU Stanislaus Provost-Dr. Andy Feinstein Vice President, Student Affairs - Dr. Reginald Blaylock Chair, Academic Senate-Dr. Michael Kimbarow Bob Rucker, Associate Professor, School of Journalism and Mass Communications

Colleges/Academic and Student Affairs Support Units

AVP, Transition and Retention Services - Dr. Debra Griffith

AVP, Student Faculty Success (formerly SASS) - Dr. Stacy Gleixner

Student and Faculty Success (formerly Student Academic Success Services)

College of Science

College of Social Sciences

College of Applied Sciences and Arts

School of Journalism and Mass Communications

African American Studies Dept., SJSU

Academic Advising and Retention Services

**CASA Student Success Center** 

**ACCESS Student Success Center** 

Transition and Retention Services

Financial Aid Office

MOSAIC Cross Cultural Center

Administrative Support

Rika Hache, FSF

Anna Wisholek, EOP

Iris Smith, combined Task Forces

Melanie Schlitzkus, Provost Office

### Community Partners

Wanda Hendrix, Alumni

Milan Balinton, Alumni/Director, African American Community Service Agency

Rev. Jeff Moore, Leon Beauchman, Wilbur Jackson - Black Leadership Kitchen Cabinet

Virginia Roberts, Alumni/SJSJ Gospel Choir Director Emeritus

Shelene Huey-Booker, Gospel Choir Director

Virginia Jones, Wil Cason, Andre Chapman, Helen Curtis - Unity Care Group

Chief Peter Decena, University Police Department

Chief Edgardo Garcia, San Jose City Police Department