

## **San Jose State University President Mary Papazian's Letter to the Community:**

Dear Campus Community,

In the wake of yesterday's disclosure of two swastikas and hateful language discovered in two of our residence halls, I left CSU meetings in Long Beach a day early and returned to San Jose late Wednesday night. I was back on campus this (Thursday) morning. While mindful of the need to preserve student confidentiality, I am determined to be as transparent as possible. Let me update you on the latest developments.

First, the University Police Department (UPD) has made enough progress in its investigation that we are able to share some details. One of the two swastikas discovered Tuesday was accompanied by undeniably hateful, anti-Semitic language ("Admit One Jew"). Police have identified the student responsible and determined that this act, while bias-based, targeted no one in particular and is not by definition a hate crime.

The second incident involved a swastika and language scribbled on a white board, in a residence hall suite. The white board was described to police by the student responsible as a "joke board." While this incident remains under investigation, police are confident that the two incidents are unrelated.

Meanwhile, we are focused on continuing to engage and support open dialogue with, and among, students, faculty and staff members, and community leaders. We all want to understand and make sense of these deeply disturbing acts. I've been reminded by several of you that symbols and words can carry different meaning and significance depending on one's age, ethnicity, race, gender, faith and other factors.

We must ensure as many opportunities for dialogue as are needed to ensure that your voices are heard. Last night, our chief diversity officer and professional housing staff members facilitated a dialogue with 150 students. I'm grateful to our residence life and counseling staff for their dedication to our students concerns and needs.

Earlier today, I met with more than 100 faculty members and with the executive director of the local chapter of Hillel; I also briefed the media. This evening, I'll meet informally with students in the Dining Commons at 8 pm.

A facilitated conversation on campus climate issues has been scheduled for next Thursday, September 29, and I will hold a town hall meeting with students on Wednesday, October 5. Details will follow soon.

While I remain disheartened and outraged by these profoundly hurtful acts, I am also encouraged by the response from our campus and broader community. Together, we can use this difficult moment to grow and learn how to be a fully inclusive and welcoming community.

Mary Papazian  
President