WINNER OF 2023 ASSOCIATED COLLEGIATE PRESS PACEMAKER AWARD, NEWSPAPER/NEWSMAGAZINE
NAMED BEST CAMPUS NEWSPAPER IN CALIFORNIA FOR 2022 BY THE CALIFORNIA COLLEGE MEDIA ASSOCIATION AND CALIFORNIA NEWS PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Thursday, November 30, 2023

Spartan Daily

SERVING SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY SINCE 1934

WWW.SJSUNEWS.COM/SPARTAN_DAILY

Volume 161 No. 42

SJSU offers resources to students

The Accessible Education Center gives services to neurodivergent students

By Nikita Bankar
STAFF WRITER

San José State University is a place of not only education and community, but a place of inclusivity regarding students of various learning disabilities.

Some students who often experience differences in mental function, learning styles, sensory processing, communication styles and behaviors are referred to as neurodivergent individuals, according to Forbes.

They may struggle with soft skills such as emotional intelligence, social interactions or the ability to work effectively in a group, according to the same website.

The word neurodiversity refers to the diversity of all people, but it is also used to acknowledge autism spectrum disorder (ASD), other neurological or developmental conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or learning disabilities, according to Harvard Medical School.

The Accessible Education Center (AEC) at SJSU provides comprehensive services in support of the educational development and success of students, according to its website.

Ignacia Villavelazquez-Hill, director of AEC, said the primary mission of the center is to prescribe academic accommodations for students.

"We provide disability management, offer workshops for students and support recruiting events for the university," Villavelazquez-Hill said. "First and foremost, our goal is to address students' needs in a timely fashion."

Villavelazquez-Hill also said something that has kept her involved and active in the center, and in her field, is because she enjoys facing new challenges every day.



GRAPHIC BY NIKITA BANKAR

She said it is very rewarding to provide services to students who are always facing an uphill battle.

"It's great to know that the support that our office is providing is enabling them to accomplish that degree," she said. The AEC offers alternative testing, a computer lab, study rooms, real-time captioning, note taking support, alternative formats (braille, e-text and large print materials) and ASL interpreters, according to the SJSU website.

Pre-nursing junior Jude Anderson said she knew she had dyslexia before starting kindergarten.

Dyslexia is a language-based learning disability that causes difficulties with word recognition, spelling and reading comprehension, according to Psychology Today.

People with dyslexia often have trouble matching letters they see on a page with the sounds those letters and combinations of the letters make, according to the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity.

"It really held me back, because everyone was reading normally and I would take years to read, because words would just start flying off the pages," Anderson said. "I also had a green see-through film strip to help me read, which was embarrassing because everyone would laugh at me."

Anderson said she also struggles with ADHD, making it difficult to pay attention to what teachers are saying in class.

People with ADHD may have trouble paying attention, controlling impulsive behaviors or be overly active, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Anderson said it is frustrating because she knows she can do the work, but her brain tells her not to despite having the resources available.

"Luckily, my professors have been very accommodating to all of my disabilities," Anderson said. "I think SJSU is doing a great job when it comes to helping people who need the support."

Psychology junior Simone Gandy said when she was younger, she had trouble with reading and literature, but was not officially diagnosed with dyslexia until her junior year of highschool.

Gandy said she was worried about coming into college because she knew the standards for deadlines and for presentations would be stricter.

"I was nervous because it's embarrassing being at a college level and struggling to read out loud," Gandy said.

She said she got the accommodations she needed and that the process for getting help was not too complicated.

Gandy also said gathering her AEC paperwork wasn't too bad, though it did take a little bit of time to go through the process.

"I also had to do an interview with a woman from the center who was really understanding," Gandy said. "I wasn't sure what accommodations I could still use from high school, but she was very supportive."

Gandy said if she was more willing to accept that she needed help earlier, she would have been surprised by how much they could do for her.

She also said the school made it really easy to get the accommodations she needed and took away the stress she initially felt.

"A big part of having a learning disability is self-advocating, and I have a bit of a hard time doing that," Gandy said.

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Students talk harassment at work

By Aaliyah Roman
STAFF WRITER

Trigger warning: This story refers to sexual harassment.

The workplace is assumed to be a place for solely gaining income, but it can also be a place of discomfort due to conflict or harassment for some San José State students.

Sociology junior Joseph Namba said his manager inappropriately touched his bottom when working at his previous job as a barback in July 2019.

"No woman should grab a guy's junk like that," Namba said.

Namba said his manager moved past behind him to reach for something and grabbed his bottom in the process.

He said the customer sitting right in front of them at the time made the situation more uncomfortable.

"He (the customer) was disgusted by the fact she was doing that," Namba said. "He's like, 'Dude, that's not cool' (and) I'm just giving him a look like 'I know.' "

He said there is a stigma of men not speaking up about harassment because being touched by a woman is usually praised in society.

Namba said if a man gets harrassed, society responds as,

> "Honestly, I try not to give them a reaction, I try to just keep myself composed and calm."
>
> **Xiana Hanhan**
> marketing junior

"Good for you", but if a woman has the same experience, it's a bigger issue.

"That's bullshit," Namba said. "It's complete nonsense like, girls should speak up about it, but guys (should) as well. They have the full on obligation to speak up about incidents like that."

He said because of that stigma, he did not feel it was a big enough deal to report it or to confront his manager about it.

Namba said he did not decide to bring it up until years after the incident when that same manager did not work there anymore.

"I didn't have the courage to speak up about it," Namba said. "I kind of gaslit myself thinking it wasn't that big of a deal."

He said because his manager treated him well at work, he viewed her as a "cool manager" at first.

Namba said his manager paid him more than other employees and gave him opportunities to work private events.

"She pays me good," Namba said. "I gotta get paid."

Marketing junior Xiana Hanhan said she has had conflicts with both customers and coworkers at work.

Hanhan said she would often get hit-on by male guests at Maggiano's, a restaurant she

HARASSMENT | Page 2

MOVIE NIGHT for the Holidays: HOME ALONE
Tues, 12/5, 6–9pm
Student Union Meeting Room 4

HARASSMENT

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currently works at as a host.

Maggiano's is a restaurant in Santana Row that specializes in "lavish" Southern Italian cuisine, according to the Santana Row website.

She said she would mostly get hit- on when she puts more effort into her appearance.

"I wouldn't really know how to take it because I'm at work," Hanhan said. "It's not really harassment but it's just more uncomfortable."

Hanhan also said her coworkers found her phone number and asked her out on dates.

"I'm like, 'Why are you texting me,' " Hanhan said. "It was just so weird."

Hanhan said she feels pressure to look put together at work because she works at a nice restaurant.

"When you walk in I'm the first person that you see, so that makes me want to get ready because I want to give an impression to other people that I'm put together," Hanhan said.

Aleen Phimpha, a business management information systems junior, said she works as an associate at the Lego store in Valley Fair.

Phimpha said she once had a customer yell at her during a phone call for 10 minutes straight.

She said the customer called to return a product they purchased at her store, but because Legoland is a separate company from the Lego store, Phimpha was unable to return the product.

Phimpha said the customer continued asking her why they could not return the product.

"It was 3 p.m. during the day (and they were) yelling at me,' " Phimpha said. "I think they're just having a bad day," Phimpha said.

Phimpha said she usually resorts to telling her manager about upset customers, but her manager encouraged her to handle the conflict in this situation.

She said managers or supervisors have more authoritative power and experience handling angry customers.

"I didn't take it (the customer) too personally," Phimpha said. "I did get maybe a little mad about it."



AALIYAH ROMAN | SPARTAN DAILY

A Starbucks barista takes a customer's coffee order at San José State University's Student Union location on Wednesday afternoon.

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>
> **Joseph Namba**
> sociology junior

Hanhan said she experienced customers taking their anger out on her while they were waiting for a table at the restaurant.

She said a drunk customer started a fight with her manager after being upset about a two hour long wait for a table at the restaurant.

She said the restaurant staff called security to escort the customer out the door.

"I've seen people get upset over the wait time, but not like that," Hanhan said.

Hanhan said people expect to get seated immediately and get impatient when being told there is a wait.

Phimpha said she recommends that anyone working in customer service to remain calm and contact the higher ups if customers act out-of-hand.

"Honestly, I try not to give them a reaction," Hanhan said. "I try to just keep myself composed and calm."

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