

## Chapter 6: Re-Establishment of the Equal Opportunity Program (EOP)



### Historical Background:

The Equal Opportunity Program (EOP) was founded at San José State in 1969 with the goal of helping marginalized communities achieve a four-year degree. As stated in Chapter 3, the Chicano student walkout helped push the university to create the EOP. The program began with 200 students, but in two distinct parts, with the “Black EOP” serving African American students and the “Brown EOP” serving Chicano students.

By the early 1970s, the two programs were merged, and by the 1980s, EOP was flourishing, with more EOP students admitted to San José State University—the campus changed its name again in 1974—and with EOP becoming a comprehensive program, which included recruiting, pre-admission advising, a summer bridge program for incoming students, tutoring, grants, and career counseling.

Yet, in late 1990s, California changed the way it funded higher education, moving away from line-item funding to providing the campus with a block grant, which gave each CSU campus the ability to choose where to spend its money. Some CSUs decided to maintain EOP funding at current rates, while other CSUs increased EOP funding. This was not the case at SJSU, where EOP funding was continually cut, and by 2002, there was no funding for EOP. In 2004, there were 2,000 EOP students but only one part-time staff member to support them.<sup>1</sup>

## The Events



In 2008, Students for EOP and faculty led a campaign to re-instate the program at SJSU. The main student leaders were Chris “Timbo” Temblador and Diana Victa. The students held marches and rallies, and presented their case to the Associated Student (AS) Board of Directors. As part of their campaign, Timbo decided to take a bold action before the student government voted on whether to support the demand asking the university president re-establish the Equal Opportunity Program. The night before the meeting, Timbo shaved his head (he had had very long, black hair) and phoned his friends to see if they had any handcuffs. The following day at school, Timbo walked around campus with his head shaved and hands cuffed, with tape covering his mouth. His t-shirt read, “Budget Cuts, Fee Hikes, No Student Services, No EOP, No Education”. As he walked around campus, people were stunned to see Timbo this way. When students took interest, Timbo didn’t speak—he couldn’t as his mouth was taped shut—rather, he passed out a note asking students to attend that day’s AS Board of Directors meeting to support the demand of Students for EOP.<sup>ii</sup>

Many students were so moved by Timbo’s individual act of courage that the AS Board of Directors meeting was packed, which most likely helped the board to support the resolution unanimously. The faculty union passed a similar resolution, and together the students and faculty formed a task force, which demanded a director, an EOP Council that had representatives from the students and faculty, and a designated space. After meeting with the students and faculty, President Kassing agreed to the demands. In 2010, the restoration of EOP began, and today, EOP serves 2,000 first generation, low-income students by providing five academic advisors, a tutoring center, a summer bridge program, workshops and professional development, a Guardian Scholar program for foster youth, and an EOP graduation ceremony and honors luncheon.<sup>iii</sup>

### Resources:

- Lanham, “Protest Yields Support for Student Equality”, Spartan Daily, April 24, 2008, <https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=10473&context=spartandaily>
- “EOP Program at San Jose State”, Filmtwist Productions, October 9, 2013, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sDrei9653M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sDrei9653M) (accessed February 4, 2018).

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### References

- <sup>i</sup> “EOP History,” *SJSU.edu*, [www.sjsu.edu/eop/about-eop/eop-history/index.html](http://www.sjsu.edu/eop/about-eop/eop-history/index.html) (accessed November 10, 2017); Jesse Kimbrel, “Protestors: No More Budget Cuts”, *Spartan Daily*, April 23, 2008 (PDF).
- <sup>ii</sup> Angelo Lanham, “Protest Yields Support for Student Equality,” *Spartan Daily*, April 24, 2008 (PDF).
- <sup>ii</sup> Lanham, “Protest Yields Support for Student Equality”; California Faculty Association Assembly, “Resolution to Re-establish the EOP at San Jose State University”, October 18, 2008, [www.calfac.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/Resolution%20to%20re-establish%20EOP%20at%20San%20Jose%20State%20University.pdf](http://www.calfac.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/Resolution%20to%20re-establish%20EOP%20at%20San%20Jose%20State%20University.pdf) (accessed November 10, 2017).