SPARTAN DAILY
Serving San José State University since 1934
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ACADEMICS

Fate of African-American studies department up for discussion

By Leeta-Rose Ballester
@leetarose

Uncertainty surrounding the status of the department of African-American studies is causing confusion among its current and former majors.

Pat Lopes Harris, SJSU's media relations director, said any changes to the African-American studies major are still in the proposal stage.

"The discussion is around combining the department with another department in social sciences," Harris said. "There's still a lot of time for discussion."

Harris said the university is considering combining African-American studies with sociology in part because of low enrollment but also to "raise visibility."

"The university wants to continue to offer the courses within the African-American studies department," Harris said. "And expose a larger group of students to the courses."

There are currently 10 students who have chosen African-American studies as a major, according to Harris.

Desiree Taylor, a junior African-American studies major, said she was originally an engineering major, but taking a class in the African-American studies department helped her figure out her true passion.

"I wanted to get more," Taylor said. "To get into something that I would want to teach and share with others."

Taylor said that she doesn't believe the university thinks that changes to the department are a "serious thing."

"I would be a sociology major with an emphasis in African-American studies," Taylor said. "It wouldn't be me indulging in the culture."

She said that there is deep value to what African-American studies courses offer as a whole.

"African-American history is American history," Taylor said. "There's so much more than an emphasis."

According to Taylor, a lack of communication regarding the fate of the department is what has been most frustrating.

"They're not really telling us how it will affect us," Taylor said. "I haven't got any documentation about a change."

She said students within the department are considering a letter writing campaign to make their voices heard.

"I feel like it's going to be a fight," Taylor said. "We're trying to make people aware and let the school know that we're not OK with this."

Ethel Walker, member of the retention and support task force for African-American students and chair of the Radio, Television and Film department, said African-American studies is needed on the SJSU campus.

"It has a historical legacy," Walker said. "It is necessary for providing an academic and social place for African-American students."

Walker said SJSU was one of the first colleges in the country to offer a major in African-American studies.

"The people that have gone through the department have made significant contributions," Walker said.

SEE **DECISION** ON PAGE 6

CAMPUS

Construction forces groups to relocate

By Allison Williams
@all3ybobally

Construction on campus has limited the use of the Student Union and, as a result, has displaced student life groups.

MOSAIC Cross Cultural Center is one of the student life groups who had to move because of the construction.

MOSAIC director Hyon Chu Yi-Baker described the center's mission as an effort to "create a safe place" by providing support and services to various groups on campus. Yi-Baker and the staff organize special events and programs for the community.

Previously housed on the third floor of the Student Union, Yi-Baker said the school had told them that they would need to move eventually to accommodate the continuing construction on the Student Union and she decided that the summer would be the easiest time.

The center is now located in Module A, one of the portable buildings between Hoover Hall and the A.S. Print Shop.

Yi-Baker said that in the search for a new location, the Career Center offered Module A, which housed their workshop.

According to Yi-Baker, Module A does not have the same visibility factor that the center had been accustomed to in the Student Union.

SEE **DISPLACEMENT** ON PAGE 3

COMMUNITY

Bacon Festival of America

Melissa Lewelling | Spartan Daily
A patron browses the menu of a local food truck at San Jose's first Bacon Festival of America at the Berryessa Flea Market on Saturday.

SEE STORY ON PAGE 4

BACK TO SCHOOL

Textbook solutions for overwhelmed students

By Tiffany Gerami
@TiffanyGerami

As a new school year begins, the urgency to find cheap textbooks once again pressures new and returning Spartans.

The Spartan Bookstore, located in the Student Union, is one of the students' choices when it comes to buying required reading.

"Our main goal is to support our university and its academic mission for its students," said Jesse Nelson, store manager of the Spartan Bookstore. "Our students now have more alternatives, such as digital books, rentals and used books alike."

According to Nelson, the bookstore is a one-stop shop for students to get what they need, when they need it.

Tiffany Gerami | Spartan Daily
Christian Vasquez, a sophomore undeclared major, browses the Spartan Bookstore for used textbooks on Saturday.

Because of the bookstore's convergence with Barnes & Noble, Nelson said it now offers a wider range of products and services for its consumers.

"With all the new cutting edge options that are out there for students, we make sure we progress forward and offer as much as we can to them at the lowest price possible," Nelson said.

For some, the new rental options are a great and easy way to save money, according to Nelson.

"As an engineering major, most of my books are only available at the bookstore," Son Nguyen, a junior engineering major said. "It's a rip-off because I have no other options available to me to compare prices and that can get really frustrating."

For other students, the bookstore is the only option when it comes to the specific books required for their major, according to Nguyen.

Amazon.com now focuses on offering discounted packages and free shipping when ordering as a college student, according to Olga Bykov, a junior justice studies major.

Bykov said Amazon is the cheapest way for students to purchase their books either as a hard copy or electronically.

"The only downside is that you don't know if your books will arrive on time, which is when I will then turn to the Spartan Bookstore to quickly purchase what else I may need," Bykov said.

Other popular online stores like Chegg.com are also keeping up with the technology advancements to stay in the game, according to Theresa Larrazabal, a junior psychology major.

SEE **BOOKSTORE** ON PAGE 3

MARTIAL ARTS

Tae Kwon Do ready to kick off the fall

Contributed by Angie Sham

Nico Lucchese (left) and Derrek Chu (right) practice Tae Kwon Do at a club workout during the 2012-2013 school year. The club is in the process of setting up workouts for the current school year.

By Jenny Bennett
@JennyDaily

The San Jose State Tae Kwon Do club is getting back into action with the start of the Fall semester.

Tae Kwon Do is a martial art form that originated in Korea for use by the Korean military, according to the club's faculty adviser Jennifer Schachner.

Schachner teaches beginning and intermediate Tae Kwon Do at SJSU.

"Nowadays it is more for exercise, discipline and self-defense," she said.

The club began in 2009 as a place for students taking Tae Kwon Do classes to workout more, said Derrek Chu, a senior nutrition packaging major.

Chu is the club president and has been involved with the club for three years.

San Jose State only offers beginning and intermediate activity classes for students, who can only take each activity class once.

"It's for the students who want to continue to train," Schachner said.

Senior photography major Angie Sham said she learned about the club from taking a class with Schachner.

"I'm a public transit commuter student," Sham said. "And after having a few unwanted male interactions on the street, I decided it was appropriate for me to learn some sort of martial art to protect myself."

Sham is one of about 20 members in the student run club. The club meets twice a week to workout, and any member of the club can suggest ideas for each day's workout.

"I like that we can get together, plan out ideas, and execute them," Chu said.

Schachner said she lets the students do what they want to do on most days. "It tends to be almost like a group sharing atmosphere" she said.

Many students in the club have taken the Tae Kwon Do activity classes through the kinesiology department, Schachner said.

She said members sometimes bring skills from other martial art forms to teach at the workouts too.

The club is not part of the Club Sports program on campus; members in the club do not participate in Tae Kwon Do competitions, Schachner said.

Students in the club practice Tae Kwon Do for the purpose of working out, but the club also does demonstrations at events on campus a few times each semester.

Schachner said the club participated in Associated Students' homecoming rally, "Fire on the Fountain" last October.

"We always do the Health and Wellness Fair (in) March," Schachner said. "It really just depends on what's going on."

Club members are working to find a time when most students can get together for workouts this semester.

Schachner said it is hard to get members together because the club is so small.

Chu hopes that they will be able to build up from the core 20 students and is excited to see more people coming to workouts.

The club works out in the Sport Club and is waiting to find out where they will be practicing this year.

The club has been practicing in the racquetball courts and the dance rooms in previous years. Chu says that the construction on campus is not affecting the club, but he hopes the construction will bring other places for the club to meet.

Jenny Bennett is a Spartan Daily staff writer.

COMMENTARY

Here's the football game for wanna-be Caraghers

By Jerry Salas
@popcrnchicken

Last week, it was reported by Mashable.com that a man took his laptop into a movie theater and used it during the previews.

Did he have important business that just couldn't wait until the movie was over?

He sure did, his fantasy football draft was taking place.

The NFL's regular season kicks off this week, but more importantly, the fantasy football season begins.

Fantasy football has always been loved by NFL fans, but with the creation of the scripted television show "The League," the game has become more popular than ever.

"The League" is entering its fifth season this month and follows a group of guys who take fantasy football as seriously as their livelihoods.

Fantasy football is a game within a game that takes die-hard NFL fans and turns them into would-be coaches of their very own virtual football team.

To play the game, fantasy coaches select active players from real NFL teams in a draft similar to how the real game selects athletes.

Your virtual team consists of running backs, quarterbacks and other positions that are used to gather points for your team.

For example: If one of your running backs runs for 10 yards, you will receive a point, and if he scores a touchdown, you will receive six points.

You are pitted head-to-head against other fantasy teams in your league each week and the person who scores the most points in that week wins.

This goes on for the majority of the NFL season until the fantasy playoffs begin in week 13.

In week 13, half of the league faces off in a single-elimination playoff format until a victor is crowned.

Fantasy Football Drafting Tips

- Watch for your players' bye weeks
- Check to see if a player is injured before you draft them
- Draft from different teams: More diversity usually results in more points
- Draft Running Backs early! They provide a major portion of your points from week to week
- While Tight Ends may be overlooked, some are good enough to outscore the best of Wide Receivers
- Be sure to add depth to each position

Infographic by Tommy McCormick

The half of the league that gets to the playoffs is the group of fantasy teams with the best records out of the 12 games they have played so far.

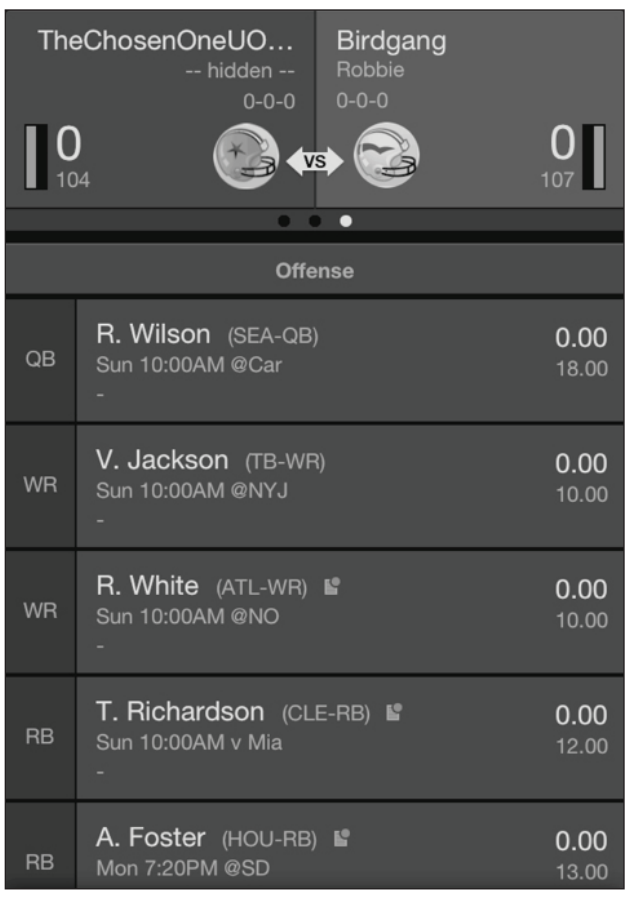
The league's "commissioner" is responsible for setting up each league and to oversee the day-to-day operations.

This is just one example of a single fantasy football format as there are many others that contain a plethora of rules and regulations.

It used to be that in order to play fantasy football, you needed to find a group of friends that were as nerdy as you, but with the addition of fantasy football online, you don't even have to put on clothes to find the said nerds.

I don't mean to bash fantasy players as I am a two-time, back-to-back fantasy football champion myself.

I am the terror that haunts my friends the night before a game, when they can't decide between playing Frank "the senior citizen" Gore or Darren "ankles-made-of-paper" McFadden.



Yahoo! Fantasy Football application screenshot

Online fantasy football has taken the game to the next level with software that requires minimal attention during the season.

Websites such as ESPN.com and Yahoo.com offer fantasy commissioners a place to host their fantasy football leagues for free.

There still are purists out there that choose to do their drafts in person, but even they will use the free online software to keep score and track progression.

Many fantasy hopefuls are hesitant to play online because of the thousands of people who sign up for a league and decide to quit halfway through the season.

For the dedicated fantasy coach, many fantasy football leagues offer incentives to join their club such as an old trophy that they found at a garage sale or cash prizes.

This gives fantasy coaches a reason to stick around so that the game stays competitive and fair.

Many fantasy coaches care more about their fantasy team than the actual NFL team they root for.

I know that I have found myself rooting against the amazing Dallas Cowboys when my fantasy all-star wide receiver Victor Cruz blows past the defense for 50+ yards and a touchdown.

Fantasy football is a fun way to get involved with the NFL season rather than just sitting on your couch inhaling chicken wings.

The virtual league makes every NFL game worth watching, at least the ones where your fantasy players are concerned.

After joining a fantasy football league, I promise you that watching the NFL will never be the same.

The NFL and fantasy football seasons begin this Thursday at 5:30 p.m. on the NFL Network.

Jerry Salas is a Spartan Daily staff writer.

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EDUCATION

President Obama's plan to rate universities affects student aid

By Melissa Lewelling
@melissadanae91

The amount of federal financial aid allocated to universities could change in coming years if Congress passes President Obama's plan to tie student aid to a college rating system he proposed in a speech.

The university ratings would be based on average student debt, graduation rates and post-graduation income as a way to ensure students get their money's worth out of college, Obama said in his speech at the University of Buffalo in Buffalo, N.Y. on Aug. 22.

"(Some) schools out there are a terrific value, but there are schools out there that have higher default rates (on student loans) than graduation rates," Obama said, "and taxpayers shouldn't be subsidizing students to go to schools where the kids aren't graduating."

Ellen Junn, provost and vice president of academic affairs at SJSU, said that if it's done carefully and includes other factors like diversity, Obama's proposed rating system could help raise the school's national ranking compared to the private lists compiled by U.S. News and World Report.

"I think the campus and maybe the entire CSU (system) would likely be more attractive using those kinds of measures because we are a state institution with a highly diverse student body," Junn said, "and if the new rankings include more consideration of those, then we're going to show up higher."

If implemented, the proposed plan would develop the new rating system by 2015, aimed at providing a better value to students while creating a different kind of competition between colleges in terms of affordability, Obama said in his speech.

According to Junn, although the variety of colleges and demographics around the country make creating one standard evaluation system difficult, a rating system that's aware of those differences and takes them into account is "probably a good thing" and thinks Obama's goal was to create a rating system that's "more inclusive and fair."

"It's hard to design a system that one size fits all, (it) doesn't really capture all of the nuances, so that's why the U.S. News and World Report is criticized, because it tends to favor only certain types of institutions," Junn said. "That's why the Harvards, the elites, the research (colleges), always show up there, but it doesn't take into account many other factors that all the other institutions have to cope with."

Alex Aleaf, a senior communicative disorders major, said she thinks private colleges will "definitely" have a greater advantage in the new rating system because they aren't as impacted, so students graduate faster.

"In order to graduate in four years you have to be on a four-year plan, you have to have everything figured out already," Aleaf said. "It's just harder to graduate out of here, it takes longer than it should."

Sandy Baum, a former economics professor at Skidmore College in New York and an independent higher education policy analyst and consultant to College Board, said that a school's resources will "affect the outcome" as far as graduation rates and other factors used in the rating system, but that it's "talking about comparing similar institutions."

> ***It's hard to design a system that one size fits all, (it) doesn't really capture all of the nuances ...***
>
> *Ellen Junn*
> *provost and vice president of academic affairs*

"The (Obama) administration knows that they can't compare Harvard's graduation rate to a broad-access public college because if you only accept very talented people, then your graduation rate will be much higher," Baum said. "The reality is whether a college is using all the resources it has."

While some people may be in favor of Obama's proposed college rating plan, they may not be in favor of connecting an institution's score to an individual's financial aid, according to Baum.

"There are many people who would support the idea (of rating colleges) if we had adequate data, but would not support using that information for financial aid," Baum said. "It would be one thing to come out with better information ... but to link it to student aid, I'm pretty sure that wouldn't happen and it would be a disaster if it did."

Maggie Balch, a senior health science major, said she thinks tying

SEE **SYSTEM** ON PAGE 6

Bookstore: Cheaper alternatives exist for overpriced school supplies

FROM PAGE 1

"Chegg offers me the lowest prices and a rental option so I don't have to worry about being penalized for writing in the books," Larrazabal said. "I also get rewarded for shopping with them by getting free gifts with my purchases, which is a great bonus."

Professor Viviana Sanchez-Chopitea of the anthropology department said she understands that students may struggle to afford books and does what she can to accommodate their needs.

"I am aware of the high cost of textbooks and make every effort consistent with the students' acquisition of the required knowledge to lessen the cost," Sanchez-Chopitea said. "Moving towards a digital version market will alleviate some of the current high costs and should utilize the renting and used books options."

Tiffany Gerami is a Spartan Daily staff writer.

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Displacement: MOSAIC's move leaves little room for students

FROM PAGE 1

She said that in the Student Union, much of the traffic had been curious passersby, while Module A is more of an intentional destination.

Yi-Baker also said she and the rest of the MOSAIC staff is excited to be close to other campus organizations, such as the LGBT Resource Center and Women's Resource Center, both located in the portables and their close proximity to campus housing and the print shop provides some foot traffic.

Though not completely hidden from students' eyes, Yi-Baker said MOSAIC advertised the move and printed new signs to keep visitors and attract new ones.

For others, the center catches their attention through word-of-mouth.

"(The Center) only caught my attention because my professor was talking about it," said Elizabeth Medina-Alvarez, a freshman business marketing major.

Yi-Baker said she has already noticed a decrease of Muslim students who visit their Center.

She said that in their previous location, they had a prayer room for students to use.

There is nowhere to put a prayer room in Module A, but Richard Kelley, director of student involvement, has created a place for prayer in a student involvement space.

While the location is different, Yi-Baker said the biggest adjustment for the staff has been the size of the building.

She said the MOSAIC room in the Student Union had high ceilings, couches as well as several offices and meeting rooms.

She also said Module A doesn't have any couches or high ceilings, but has wooden tables and metal framed, gray cloth-covered chairs instead.

She said the new location is about half the size of the Student Union room and resulted in them hiring one less person than usual because of space.

Although their new location is different and brings different issues, Yi-Baker said this was a positive move because the center will still allow student organizations use their space for meetings, but the meeting space is more intimate than before.

Michelle Pujol, a senior justice studies and philosophy double major, said she worries that the smaller meeting space will affect the number of groups who utilize the space. She said bigger rooms can physically fit more people for activities.

Yi-Baker is uncertain how the move will affect them in the long term, since it is so close to the beginning of the semester, but she said she is optimistic that the center will be just as successful as ever.

Allison Williams is a Spartan Daily staff writer.

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FOOD

San Jose celebrates first annual Bacon Festival

By Juan Reyes
@jmreyes831

A line of food trucks draws in crowds of hungry bacon lovers at the first annual San Jose Bacon Festival of America. **Juan Reyes | Spartan Daily**

Does bacon really make it all better? The folks inside the first annual San Jose Bacon Festival of America sure thought so as thousands of people flocked into the San Jose Flea Market on Saturday to help celebrate International Bacon Day.

Close to 30 food truck vendors lined up inside the parking lot of the flea market for people eager to indulge in an array of dishes, all featuring slices of mouth-watering bacon, or in some instances, bacon bits.

Inside the festival there was also a row of tents with local vendors selling hand-crafted jewelry and screen-printed t-shirts and an area for kids that had a giant inflatable slide, jump house, mechanical bull, life-size Jenga blocks and a train that went around in a big circle.

"It's cool man, not bad," Robert Martinez of Milpitas said about the festival. "They put bacon bits on everything so that's cool."

Martinez's son, Cole, said he also enjoyed the festival and thought the fish and calamari tacos topped with bacon, cabbage and tomatoes from Fish Taco Wabo were delicious.

The Grilled Cheese Bandits truck offered their specialty sandwich but with a touch of ham and bacon for flavor. On the other side of the parking lot was Taqueria Angelica, which served up a mean quesadilla with all of the fixings and added slices of bacon inside for crunch.

The popular Blast Off truck offered classic favorites like mac and cheese topped with bacon bits, panko crumbs, chopped almonds and Granny Smith apples and a pulled pork sandwich with slices of bacon, lettuce, tomatoes, pickles and mayo on a toasted bun.

For dessert they served up a scoop of French vanilla ice cream infused with bacon and topped with bacon-candied peanuts and a bacon-bourbon-butterscotch sauce. Like many others, Manuel Reyes of San Jose thought the ice cream was the best part of the festival.

"This is freakin' good," Reyes said. "There's nothing like bacon and vanilla ice cream together."

Another popular stop for guests was the Fairycakes truck thanks to the salted caramel bacon cupcakes, which were sold out within two hours.

The brown sugar cupcakes were surrounded by caramel buttercream, sprinkled with sea salt and topped with, of course, bacon.

According to Brian Vail of Fairycakes, he knew the sweet goodies would sell out quickly because of the low inventory and also another truck event that had been held the day before.

"We had back-to-back events and we can only bake so much," Vail said.

"We're limited by what we can bake beforehand because most trucks can actually create product in their trucks."

Filling up a truck full of cupcakes and baking them isn't an easy task. It can take hours for Vail and his crew of bakers to get everything ready for a single event.

"Unlike Cupcake Wars which says you can make a thousand in three hours, that's not true," Vail said.

"It takes us a full day to be ready for an event. So we'll be baking eight to nine hours for a thousand cupcakes."

Vail's truck wasn't the only one to close down early. Other vendors were also slowly shutting down shop one-by-one early in the evening. Unfortunately for Patrick Powell of San Leandro, the festival may have been a little too crowded for his comfort.

"The lines are just so long and it takes forever," Powell said. "Once you get up there it takes forever to get the food. We've been here a couple of hours and we've only eaten two things."

The long lines and shortage of food left several guests, like Powell, a little disappointed and he had a few words of advice for next year's festival if it comes around again.

"Some tables and some seating places would be good," Powell said.

"And maybe have the trucks have enough food to last them the whole time."

Juan Reyes is a Spartan Daily staff writer.

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UNIVERSAL Sudoku Puzzle

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

		8		7	2			
7					6	5		9
	2			9		7		
								2
	6	1		5		3	7	
4								
		3		6			5	
6		7	1					4
			5	4		9		

9/4

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

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SOLUTION:

9	3	6	8	4	7	1	5	2
5	2	7	6	9	1	3	8	4
1	4	8	2	3	5	9	7	6
3	8	5	1	2	4	7	6	9
7	6	4	3	8	9	5	2	1
2	1	9	7	5	6	8	4	3
4	7	2	9	1	8	6	3	5
8	9	3	5	6	2	4	1	7
6	5	1	4	7	3	2	9	8

8/28

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PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

A	B	A	S	H	■	B	A	S	S	I	■	D	A	B
B	O	W	I	E	■	U	P	T	O	N	■	I	L	L
C	A	N	D	L	E	S	T	I	C	K	■	D	O	E
■	■	■	E	L	M	■	■	N	I	B	■	T	H	E
B	A	D	D	E	B	T	■	G	A	L	A	H	A	D
A	D	O	■	N	E	W	S	■	L	O	B	E	■	■
L	E	U	■	E	R	I	C	H	■	T	E	T	R	A
E	L	B	A	■	S	N	O	U	T	■	T	R	E	Y
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L	O	Q	U	A	T	S	■	S	T	R	I	K	E	S
E	A	U	■	L	E	E	■	■	■	I	A	N	■	■
P	S	I	■	P	E	N	A	L	T	Y	K	I	C	K
T	I	C	■	I	V	O	R	Y	■	E	E	N	I	E
A	S	K	■	T	E	R	C	E	■	D	R	A	I	N

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Today's Crossword Puzzle
Universal Crossword

1	2	3	4	■	■	5	6	7	8	■	9	10	11	12
13				14	■	15				■	16			
17					■	18				19				
20					21			■	22			■	■	■
■	■	■	23					■	■	24		25	26	27
28	29	30		■	31			32	33					
34				35	■	■	36				■	37		
38					39	40	■	41			42			
43			■	44			45	■	■	46				
47			48					49	50	■	51			
52					■	■	53			54		■	■	■
■	■	■	55		56	■	57					58	59	60
61	62	63				64			■	65				
66				■	67				■	68				
69				■	70				■	■	71			

ACROSS
1 Sheep's kin
5 Jermaine and Michael's brother
9 From ___ (small step)
13 Certain woodwinds
15 Battalion or brigade
16 River through Russia and Kazakhstan
17 By oneself
18 She played identical cousins
20 Opposite of encouraged
22 Crew member's handful
23 Le Carre's Russian spymaster
24 Like intoxicating brews
28 Prefix for "final"
31 Type of payment relevant to this puzzle's theme
34 Jimmy Dorsey classic "Maria ___"
36 Socially awkward sort, in slang
37 Black, sticky stuff
38 Certain bar buddies
41 Steve Martin film
43 Superlative suffix
44 Bustles of activity
46 Country singer Steve
47 Epic poems adapted for recitation
51 Low-lying islands
52 Merchant's figures
53 Wet one's whistle
55 Church perch
57 Swamped
61 Frequent Sondheim collaborator
65 Tooth type
66 Yucca plant cousin
67 Caspian and Sargasso
68 Type of force
69 Tater
70 Line formed at a barbershop?
71 Lucy's Arnaz

DOWN
1 Laundry unit
2 Fit for the task
3 No longer worth discussing
4 "Stand By Me" singer
5 Elvis' Mississippi hometown
6 All-work link
7 ___ for tat
8 Camp Swampy pooch
9 One Hepburn of Hollywood
10 Capote, on Broadway
11 "Mighty" fine home for a squirrel?
12 Bab's or ara's attachment?
14 Fluids in shots
19 Dice-rolling game
21 Basic elementary school trio?
25 ___ fashion (to some extent)
26 Word before "beloved"
27 Wisconsin observatory
28 Offbeat Parisian tourist sites
29 Cuthbert of "Happy Endings"
30 Temporary lapse of memory
32 Well-suited
33 "Well, ___-di-dah"
35 One into collecting
39 Old name for Tokyo
40 Say "yes" without speaking
42 "Hawaii Five-O" actor
45 Site of a motorcycle's third wheel
48 ___ up (invigorated)
49 "Hey, Vern!" speaker
50 Lose tautness
54 Devoid of feeling
56 Will-o'-the-___
58 Chimney channel
59 Roadside diner sign
60 Three, in Germany
61 Partakes of
62 Mountain climber's challenge
63 Actor Ferrigno
64 Supporter of PBS

Correlation between movies and racism as entertainment

Follow Jeff on Twitter @Jeffvgonzalez

I never thought I would learn anything from a Transformers movie, but leave it to a misguided rodeo clown and a outraged public to prove me wrong.

Two weeks ago, Tuffy Gessling, a rodeo clown at the Missouri State Fair, donned a caricatural mask of Obama and, well, made a clown of himself while being chased by a bull cheered on by fans.

The incident made national news when the video of it went viral and public uproar deemed the act as racist and unacceptable.

Consequently, Gessling was fired and banned from the Missouri State Fair for life.

Yet, for as long as Hollywood has been making movies and studios have been pumping out TV shows, there have been thousands of films and series with latent racism that never gets as much attention as this rodeo clown did.

Blackface is thought to be a thing of the past, something we associate with the early days of cinema.

D.W. Griffith's 1915 film "Birth of a Nation" materialized essentially every black stereotype we have ever known, as created by white filmmakers: the Uncle Tom, the black Buck, the tragic Mulatto, the Mammy, the Pickaninny, and the Coon.

If any African-American wanted to become an actor, they had no choice but to adopt one of those personalities.

The release of films such as "A Raisin in the Sun" and "Carmen Jones" in the mid-20th century helped lift the status of African-American actors, but for all all the progress Sidney Poitier and Dorothy Dandridge did to kill the notion of African-American inferiority, the archetypes never died they only became more hidden

Which brings me to "Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen," a film that makes absolutely no attempt to hide the exploitation of black stereotypes.

Mudflap and Skids were two jive-talkin', bucktoothed transformers who served no purpose within the movie except to provide a token black presence and comedic relief.

Their appearance as a mockery, exaggeration and dehumanization of black culture is nothing out of the ordinary.

With movies like "Big Momma's House" and the Tyler Perry series making as much money as they do, Hollywood is sending a message.

"It's becoming OK to mock people's culture as long as it looks like they give us permission or it resembles a joke," says Hollywood.

"Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen" inadvertently taught us how receptive our culture is to this message.

> **Movies are one thing, but real-life performances cross a barrier no movie can, even if it is in 3D.**

Transformers are alien robots that learn about human culture through TV and radio.

Skids and Mudflaps, we are led to believe, just happened to tune into BET or a TNT showing of "Friday" when they learned about us.

Even though robot aliens don't have race classifications, it is unmistakable that Skids and Mudflap are "black transformers" they talk fast, they're vulgar, and they have sass.

And why wouldn't we automatically make the correlation with pop culture so saturated with these archetypes?

If something so far detached from our culture as a robot alien can pick up on the normality and approval of these types of jokes and personalities, surely it is understandable why a rodeo clown could think we live in an age where it is OK to do what they do in the movies.

To say that the Missouri rodeo clown was making a racist joke or an allusion to blackface by wearing that Obama mask is debatable.

Obama is a president and every president has been mocked, Obama just happens to be the first African-American president.

Blackface is one of the most despicable forms of entertainment to have ever been part of our civilization, and to see a white rodeo clown portray Obama the way Gessling did hit too close to home.

The reason this stunt has exploded as much as it has is because of the scary reminder it gives America of its disturbing past of racism and degradation of our fellow men.

Gessling might have done it without harmful intentions or without any ideas of minstrelsy in mind, but the overall effect of his performance was unsettling.

Many spectators described the event as being reminiscent of a Ku Klux Klan rally, an effect no "Transformers" film has ever had.

Message to any clowns out there, if your jokes remind people of a Klan rally, you are probably doing something wrong.

The case of the Obama rodeo clown may seem simple on the surface, but it does beg to question where America draws the line on racism and free speech.

I don't think it's right to silence someone just because what they say is disagreeable.

But when it comes to a rodeo clown borderline sporting blackface and creating a KKK atmosphere, something has to be done.

Personally, I am happy we live in a time when inappropriate, whether intentional or not, actions like this aren't just accepted as the norm.

Movies are one thing, but real-life performances cross a barrier no movie can, even if it is in 3D.

If we stopped supporting movies that perpetuate offensive stereotypes, this kind of incident wouldn't happen.

Maybe one day a rodeo clown will get it right and mock Obama in just the right way that will be hilarious and not completely offensive.

Today is not that day, though. And Tuffy Gessling is not that rodeo clown.

Jeff Gonzalez is a Spartan Daily staff writer. "Movie Knight" appears every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month.

Failure rate not an option for this minority student

Follow Jamie Ramirez on Twitter @jlreports

First-generation minority college students are less likely to graduate and more likely to drop out, according to a recent study conducted by Ohio State University researchers.

Authors of the study Marvin Titus and Laura Perna define a first-generation college student as someone whose parents did not go to college, typically a minority student.

As a minority woman, their observations showed that I have no business in college and I'm most likely to fail.

Their study examined the relationship between parental involvement in high school years and the ability of students in minority groups to go to college and stay there.

They found nearly a decade ago when the study began that 34 percent of students entering American universities were first-generation college students.

That number drastically increased to 43 percent in the last few years, according to the study.

Although the number of minority students applying and getting into college is growing, so is the statistic for dropping out.

After a year of attendance, more than half of those students who entered a university dropped out, according to Titus and Perna's observations.

After ten years of chasing my American Dream of being the first in my family to obtain a Bachelor's, it's finally happening in May.

I will be a college graduate.

Even as I say these words, my eyes begin to water, my throat feels tight and my whole body stiffens.

I will be a college graduate.

A lack of parental involvement in my high school and college years did not lead to my demise and it doesn't have to lead to yours either.

Utilize success programs and work hard to graduate.

The Spartan Success Portal is free to access online and has tons of great tips and information for San Jose State University students. (http://www.sjsu.edu/getinvolved/leadsuccess/spartan-success/)

For anyone who hasn't used it, I highly recommend clicking on the "personal management" links because those helped me out the most when I transferred to SJSU.

There are many other links for study tips, reading and writing strategies and even information about maintaining healthy relationships and sleep patterns, all of which helped my college experience.

Also consider building social capital, which the authors of the study define as networking and connecting, capital that minorities don't have access to.

Social capital means parents of minority children are not connecting with other parents or members of their community who have access to information that could build the road to success through college years.

I am one of five children and come from a traditional Filipino family, where higher education was a parental expectation since kindergarten.

My parents don't have the financial means to support five successful college careers, so although college was always part of our futures, there was never a discussion of how to make that happen.

They not only lack financial means, but lack the knowledge to help ensure I go to college and graduate.

> **Don't let the numbers define you; go beyond the challenges and create success for yourself, your family and your community.**

I could never turn to my parents and ask them to help fill out financial aid forms or where to start looking for college applications.

Too often, students of all races and ethnicities feel bombarded with the daily pressures of school, work, family and personal relationships.

As minority students with added pressures, the odds are against us, but they certainly should not define us.

Students ages 18 to 24 from a Latino family are less likely to enroll in college because of the lack of parental involvement in trying to get their child into a university, according to the study.

African-Americans are even less likely to enroll and Native Americans are nearly nonexistent on college campuses, the authors said they observed.

Leave your sob story at the door, pull up your boot straps and dedicate some honest, hard work into school and come out on top.

Graduating means you've created a new path for others like you, to follow and pave the way for a future of educated community members who could bring developed jobs to your community.

One person's educational success can benefit an entire community.

Don't let the numbers define you; go beyond the challenges and create success for yourself, your family and your community.

Four of the five children in my family have Associate of Arts degrees, my younger brother and I will graduate in May with our Bachelor's degrees and two of my other siblings are well on their way to receiving bachelor's degrees too.

Walk across that stage with me in May, it's possible.

Jamie Ramirez is a Spartan Daily staff writer.

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Decision: Students speak up about AFAM's uncertain future

FROM PAGE 1

Brea Watts, an SJSU alumna, said African-American studies courses helped her discover her "human identity" and changes made to the department would be a "bad move" for the university.

"Being in that class taught me about my culture," Watts said. "AFAM opened up a broader conversation."

Watts said there are about 30 or 40 students who are able to organize events and awareness for the approximately 900 African-American students on campus that they want to reach.

"You have a small group trying to move mountains," Watts said.

She said learning about the civil rights movement can serve as inspiration for all people.

"I think it's a class that everyone should experience," Watts said. "If more AFAM classes looked like a regular class, you could be helping both sides of the coin."

Watts said she understands the budget and enrollment issues that may have led to a proposal to combine the African-American studies major with sociology.

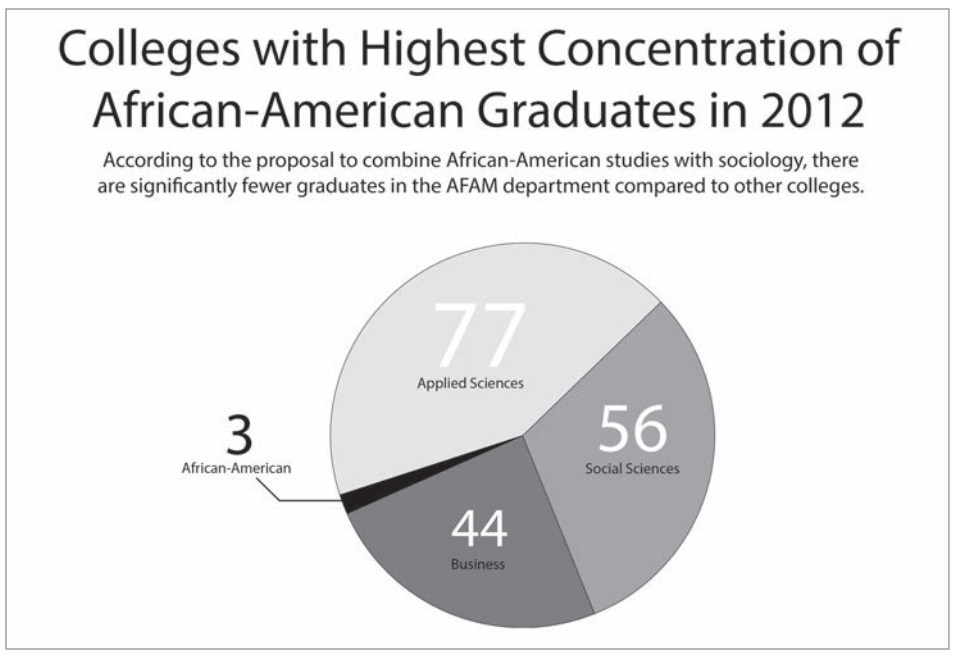
"If we had more funding, we could help more people," Watts said. "I hope there's a way we can work together."

Harris said meetings about changes to the department and African-American studies major have been limited to faculty and administrators thus far.

She said students will have an opportunity to share their thoughts when the issue reaches the Academic Senate.

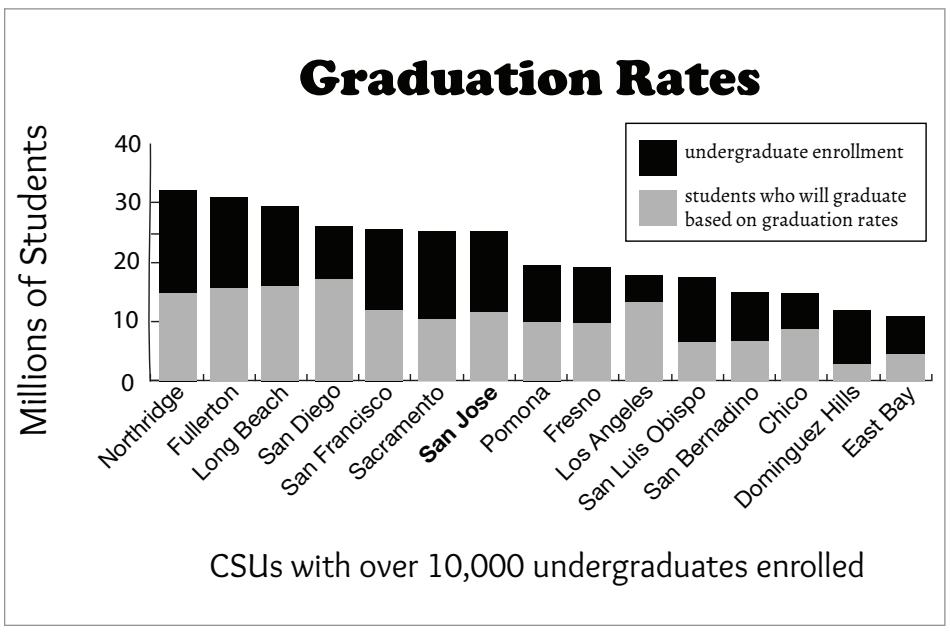
"I don't think any of us knew when we came to college that we'd have to save a department," Watts said.

Leeta-Rose Ballester is a Spartan Daily staff writer.



Infographic by Leeta-Rose Ballester

System: Colleges with higher graduation rates receive more funding under plan



Infographic by Vince Ei

FROM PAGE 3

a student's financial aid to their college's rating could create more disadvantages for lower socio-economic students.

"Because if you don't have the ability, the money or the grades to get into a prestigious university... that has a higher graduation rate than other colleges that have less funding or support," Balch said, "then those students might be at a disadvantage."

Andrew Collier, a junior materials engineering major, said he thinks SJSU will probably rate in the "middle of the pack" but that it might not be good to tie student aid to those ratings.

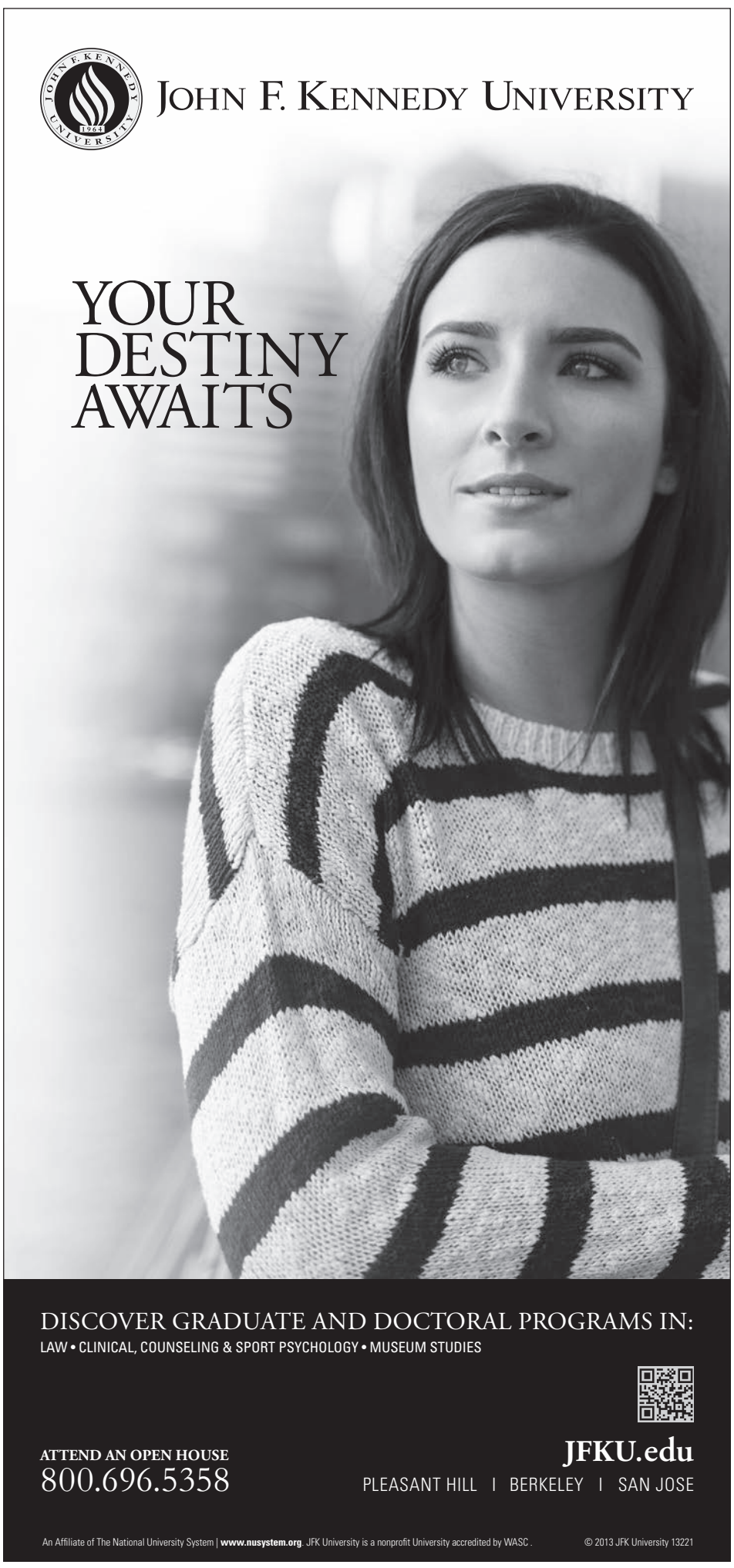
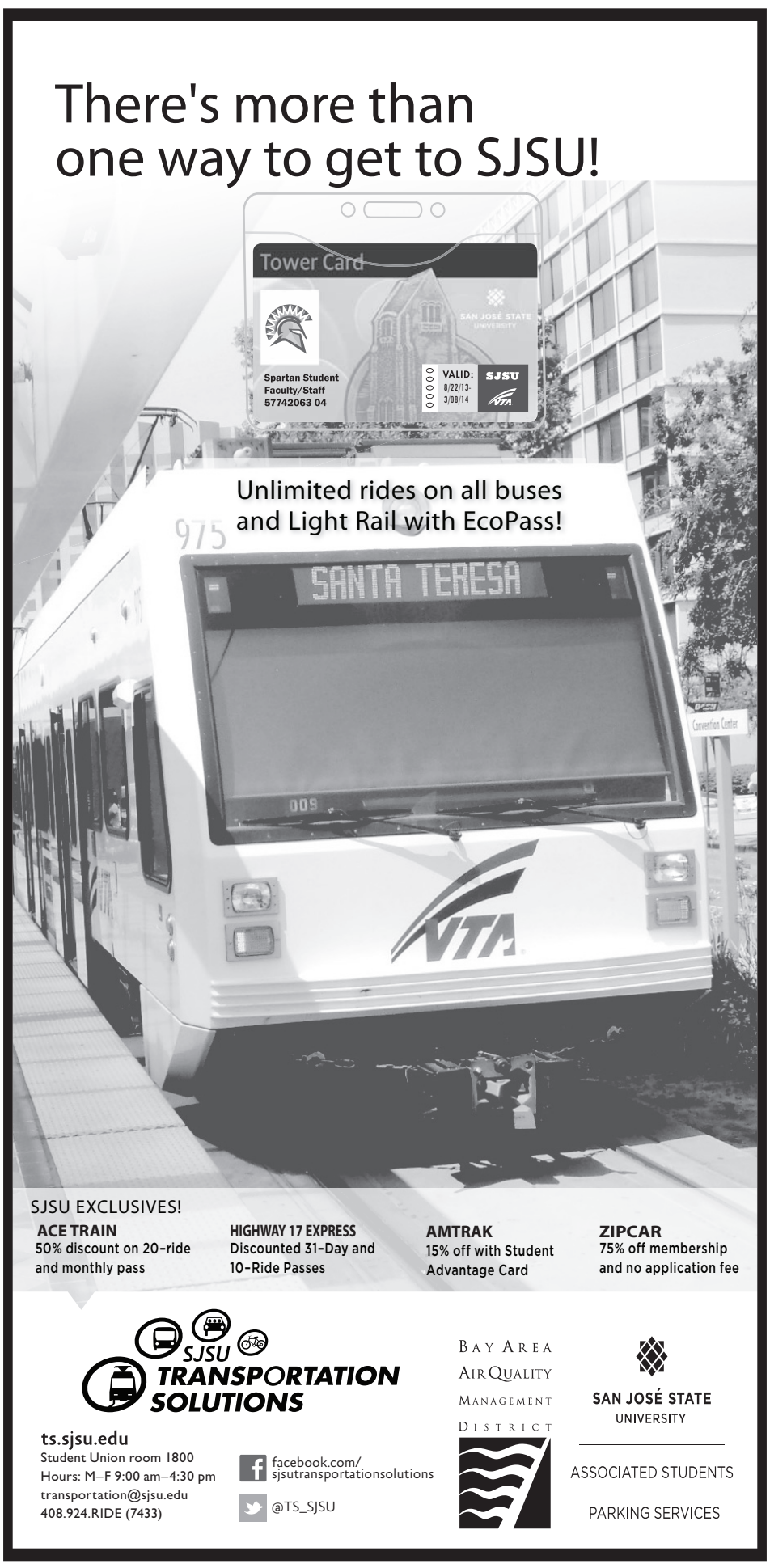
"I think tying money to it is kind of a bad idea though, because if you want to improve your school you need money," Collier said, "so you're going to give people [at schools] with bad grades less money, then they can't really improve their standing."

The jury's still out on whether the data proposed for use in the rating system is the best way to rate colleges for financial aid because it depends on the context, Junn said.

"That data is also highly, highly variable on the location of the university and the students' mobility, so collecting that data and using it without the context could be very problematic," Junn said. "A college in a rural place where there are very few jobs because of the economic downturn, those students and that college would look less attractive using those measures."

The proposed criteria of earnings after graduation and debt-to-income ratios also leaves out another important factor, according to Baum: the quality of the student's education.

"It would be really nice to know how much people learn and, presumably, that's why people go to college," Baum said. "I think they left that out because they don't know how to measure it."

While information regarding graduation rates and the number of students receiving federal financial aid are already available, one of the problems facing Obama's proposal is a lack of certain student information, according to Baum.

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