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# NO MORE WHITMORE

# Resignation leaves void in presidency

Ryan Fernandez

Copy Editor

As its 153rd year comes to a close, SJSU will prepare to search for a new president.

Jon Whitmore, the 27th person to lead the university, announced his resignation in a Thursday e-mail to faculty and staff mem-

"I was offered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to head an organization that has as its mission helping people to be successful in their education and workforce development," he said in an impromptu May 13 news conference with student media. "And it has a national and international presence and so it touches millions of people's lives. When you're given that kind of opportunity, you don't pass it up."

Whitmore wrote in the e-mail that he will be taking over as chief executive officer for ACT Inc., the corporation responsible for creating and administering the ACT examination for high school students.

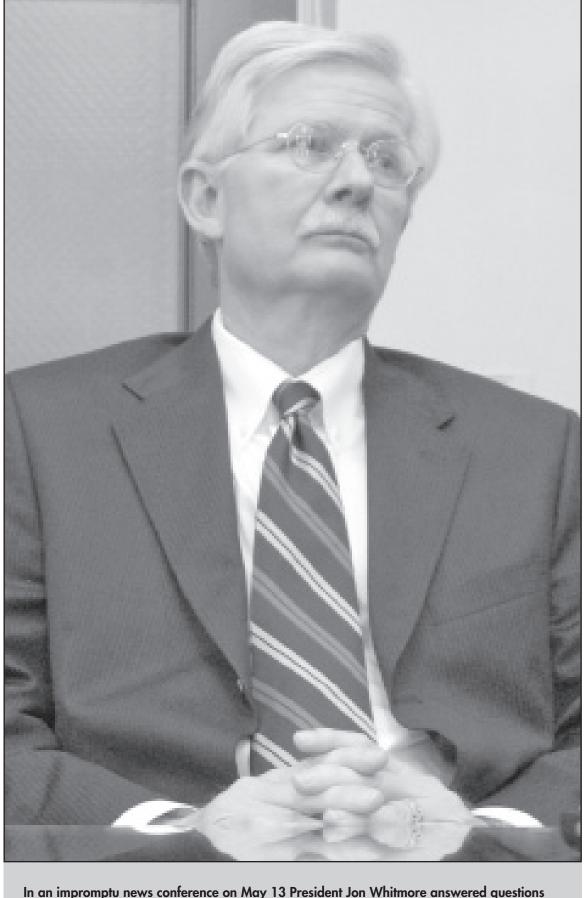
Provost Gerry Selter said Whitmore's departure will be a significant loss for the university, but that "Under President Whitmore's leadership, the university has carefully planned out its operations through the coming fiscal (2010-11) year, so I think we are in good shape."

Whitmore confirmed that he will be assuming his duties as CEO beginning Sept. 1, and said he would remain at SJSU in the interim to aid in the transition.

"My goal is to make sure we are organized for our new budget, which we hope will come in July," Whitmore said. "Once we have our budget set up, then the year can roll forward from there, starting from the fall semester."

The process of selecting Whitmore's successor will begin with Charles Reed, chancellor for the California State University, but Whitmore said he could not predict actions

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from student media regarding his resignation. JOE PROUDMAN / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

# Turnover at top position becomes a trend

**Joey Akeley** 

Executive Editor

To move forward, SJSU needs stability at the position of president, said a San Jose community leader and SJSU alumnus.

"The turnover causes an interruption in the leadership focus of the institution and makes it more difficult for us to retain excellence," Rod Diridon said.

In the last seven years, SJSU has had five men serve as president - Bob Caret (1995-2003), Joseph Crowley (2003), Paul Yu (2004), Don Kassing (2004-2008) and Jon Whitmore (current). Diridon, who is often called the father of transit in Silicon Valley, said all state universities have struggled keeping their top executives.

"It relates to all of state government where we are underpaying our executives consistently," he said. "It can't compete with other positions at comparable jobs across the United

Fernando Zazueta, an SJSU alumnus and longtime San Jose attorney, said a big reason for the turnover at the position of president is the pressure of dealing with California's economic crisis.

"It's not that we aren't getting the right person," Zazueta said. "Any person that you are going to find is going to find a major challenge trying to run the university with their hands tied behind their backs. It's not so much that the search committee hasn't found the right person, it's that the economic circumstances have pushed people out."

Zazueta, who has served as a presidential search committee member, said Whitmore's decision to resign was a no-brainer because he was presented with a "dream job offer."

"If somebody comes over and gives you a \$250,000 increase in salary and puts you in

See TREND, Page 2

#### WHITMORE'S TIME AT SJSU BY AMBER SIMONS

2008-09 academic year

- August 2008, Whitmore arrives at SJSU.
- Whitmore raised tuition 9 percent from \$2,772 to \$3,048.
- Whitmore signed the Taillores Declaration, a ten-point action plan for incorporating sustainability and environmental literacy in teaching, research, operations and outreach at colleges and universities internationally.
- March 2008, the Sustainability Task Force was established.
- Fall 2008, Whitmore formed Wellness

details were finalized.

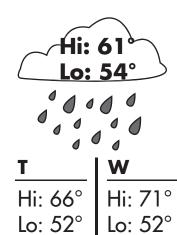
Challenge.

- On Aug. 18, 2009, SJSU's Inclusive Excellence/Diversity Master Plan's implementation
- Summer 2009, Whitmore appointed Associate Professor Katherine Cushing as special assistant to the president and director of campus sustainability.

2009-10 academic year

- Whitmore raised tuition 32 percent from \$3,048 to \$4,026.
- Whitmore announced four initiatives student retention & graduation, sustainability, information technology and diversity.
- SJSU launched the Ecological Footprint Challenge, an initiative to reduce the ecological footprint of its campus by 10 percent.
- Whitmore hired William Maguire as vice president/chief information officer to lead and develop a strategic direction in advancing information technology on campus.
- SJSU ranks sixth in terms of ethnic diversity among colleges and universities.
- Fall 2009, furlough days, which resulted in a 10 percent reduction in compensation for faculty and staff, were implemented, as well as hiring freezes and a halt of salary adjustments.
- Fall 2009, enrollment of new students was severely restricted, resulting in roughly 3,000 fewer students on campus.
- December 2009, Whitmore appointed Gerry Selter as provost.
- Spring 2010, Whitmore announced layoffs for 76 employees.
- May 13, 2010, Whitmore formally resigned.

#### Weather



#### SPARTANDAILY.COM

Video: Students react to President Jon Whitmore's resignation.

**Video:** President Jon Whitmore comments on his early resignation.

> Spartan Daily will return in Fall 2010 on Aug. 25.



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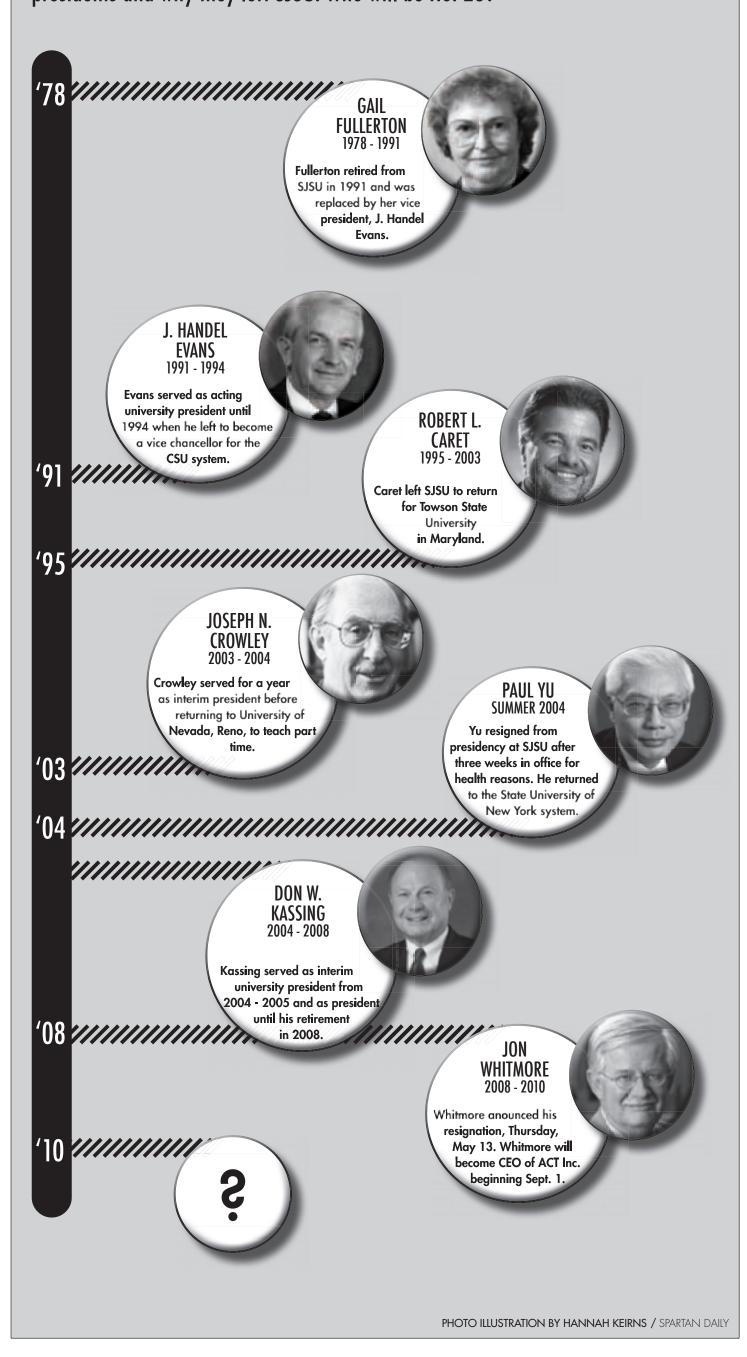
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#### SJSU'S REVOLVING PRESIDENTIAL DOOR

Of all 23 California State University campuses, SJSU has had the most presidents. Twenty-seven to be exact. Take a look at the seven most recent presidents and why they left SJSU. Who will be No. 28?



#### TREND

From Page 1

the Midwest, where there is no educational crisis like there is California, and you've got your kids and your grandkids there, and it's a small-town college community, that's a good offer from any way you look at it," Zazueta

Whitmore's annual salary was \$328,209 as SJSU president in 2008-09 with a \$25,000 annual supplement from foundation sources, according to the 2008-09 Executive Compensation Summary. ACT Inc. reportedly pays its CEO \$554,000, according to the San Jose Mercury News, based on 2008 ACT tax documents.

Leigh Weimers, an SJSU alumnus and

former San Jose Mercury News columnist, said he hoped that Whitmore was going to provide stability and stay as SJSU president for a longer time period.

"I just hope that the next president will stay longer and be more of an activist president, a person whose name all of Silicon Valley might know," said Weimers, who was the 2003 Tower Award winner, which recognizes service for SJSU.

#### The next president

Weimers said the next SJSU president should spread his or her influence throughout the San Jose community.

"I would like an activist president," he said. "That's exactly what Caret and Kassing were. This has been kind of a two-year low. I acknowledge that Whitmore has had financial problems. The state's budget has been a real problem for everybody. But, I just didn't see him that often."

Diridon said SJSU needs a dynamic leader.

"We need someone who will not only lead the institution in the toughest of times in terms of budget and rapport within the university, but also be a leader in the community, and we'll just have to go out and find that person," he said.

Zazueta said SJSU needs a businessman who will convince the big companies in Silicon Valley to give the university endowments.

"I think we have to face the fact that what we need is a guy who knows how to shake the money tree with these corporations more than we need a guy with the best American novel or something," Zazueta said. "We've got enough brainy people in the university to run it as a first-rate university. But you need somebody to bring that

## Students react to Whitmore's decision to step down

**Angelo Lanham** 

Copy Editor

According to an SJSU news release, President Jon Whitmore is leaving the university in the summer.

In the news release, Whitmore, who was hired on in 2008, called his departure a very tough decision. He said that, while there is an unfinished agenda at SJSU, he feels he has helped construct a good plan for combating the budget issues that have arisen during his time as presi-

Some students felt President Whitmore's resignation came a bit too soon.

"I don't think that's enough time to really grasp what is necessary for the job," said junior nursing major Josh Chow. "To be in a school system, you have to be more committed."

Brittiny Terry, a junior accounting major who also works at the SJSU call center, said she still feels they are talking about Whitmore as a new president at the call

"You don't get into something you can't finish," she said.

Terry said she doesn't consider Whitmore to be a bad president, but feels his efforts haven't had a chance to show.

Other students were more sympathetic to Whitmore's decision.

"Considering the budget cuts, I don't really blame him for jumping ship," said Ben Smith, a junior behavioral

science and sociology double major. "His dedication level might be questionable for leaving, but I can understand why he'd leave."

Monday, May 17, 2010

Junior communications major Duke Ihenacho said he understood Whitmore's reasoning.

"It's always fair - you've got to try for something better," he said, adding that most people in Whitmore's position would probably do the same thing.

According to the news release, Whitmore will begin work on Sept. 1, as CEO of ACT Inc., a company that administers college entrance

"I think he's going to be making beaucoup cash," Smith said.

In May 2008, the Spartan Daily reported that, while Louisiana State University had offered Whitmore an opening as chancellor, he called it "a dead issue. I'm coming to San Jose State for the next several years," adding that he usually works a job for at least five years, but typically six or seven.

"I guess it was smart of him to do it," said junior psychology major Jessica Reed. "I mean, it was in the best interest of him. I don't see why not."

Terry said she would have liked more of a chance to see what Whitmore had to offer.

"I don't feel like we even got a chance to see his efforts," she said. "I'm not sure if he did anything, but I didn't get a chance to feel it."

**NUMBER OF** CSU PRESIDENTS

27
19
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The number of presidents at each California State University campus since its opening. ALthough SJSU is the oldest CSU campus it has had a large amount of recent presidents. Information on CSU, Frenso was not available and does not appear on the chart.



#### SELECTING A SUCCESSOR

An interim SJSU President will be appointed, Erik Fallis, CSU media relations specialist, stated in an e-mail.

"The chancellor in consultation with several individuals (including President Whitmore) will ask someone to be the interim president until a search for the new president can be completed," Fallis stated. "The CSU will conduct a national search for this position."

SJSU Provost Gerry Selter stated in an email that the first step in the hiring process of a new president in the California State University is selecting a committee.

"In the CSU, presidential searches are organized and conducted by the board of trustees and the chancellor," Selter stated.

SJSU alumnus Rod Diridon said the committee should have a combination of university and community leaders.

"The community has a lot at stake here too, so we need both aspects represented," he said.

The committee must focus on hiring a president who is and will be visible in the community, said Leigh Weimers, an SJSU alumnus and former columnist for the San Jose Mercury

"Whoever was on the search committee that hired Bob Caret and Don Kassing, they should bring those people back and let them go to work again because they did a good job on those two,"

The committee consists of a few members and the chairman of the board of trustees and the chancellor. Once the committee is chosen, the members start the search by determining the attributes they want in a new president.

They then need to approve the final campus and job descriptions and advertising copy, review and interview the candidates, accompany semifinalists to campus visits and recommend a minimum of three of them to the board.

Another group called the advisory committee provides advice to the trustee committee for the selection of the president and campus descriptions and advertisements.

To bring a new perspective, the chairman and the chancellor may choose a second panel to meet the candidates confidentially and provide advice regarding the semifinalists.

The slate of final candidates comes to the campus for visits that are preannounced. Candidates meet with groups and clubs and work with them to determine how they might improve the campus.

Finally, the committee keeps the personal information of the candidates in strict confidentiality, and a selection is finally made.

This information was obtained from the CSU Board of Trustees Policy for the Selection of Presidents.

COMPILED BY KRISTEN PEARSON / SPARTAN DAILY

# SJSU loses wellness advocate, Jennifer Whitmore, with resignation

**Eric Van Susteren** 

Staff Writer

President Whitmore's wife, Jennifer, said she has always been a part of her husband's work and will accompany him to his new job in Iowa.

"One of the things that President Whitmore was proud of or excited about was that he and his wife were a team," said Cheryl Vargas, executive director of Associated Students. "Mrs. Whitmore was very involved on campus as well, and the loss of her will be felt in a number of different areas on campus."

Jennifer Whitmore has been an advocate for the cheer team, Spartan Squad, athletics and the wellness movement on campus, Vargas said.

"From my standpoint (losing Jennifer Whitmore is) probably the biggest loss to campus," said Terry Gregory, associate director of the Student Union. "He and his wife seem to be very popular in the short time that they've been here."

Jennifer Whitmore said she's a supporter of the Whitmore Wellness Challenge, a six-week program that encourages participants to develop healthy habits in life.

"Well, we started when we were at Texas Tech doing wellness for not only faculty and students, but staff," she said. "When we came here they kind of continued that with the Whitmore Wellness Challenge."

Jennifer Whitmore said she's been a supporter of each including the Spartans.

"Since we're leaving ... we're not going to be affiliated with a university anymore, I decided I'm just going to stay a Spartan forever," she said. "That's going to be my last one and I'm going to hang on to it."

Jennifer Whitmore said she also worked to recognize and communicate with members of each of the colleges on campus by hosting dinners for them at her home.

Since we're leaving ... we're not going to be affiliated with a university anymore, I decided I'm just going to stay a Spartan forever ... I'm going to hang on to it.

Jennifer Whitmore

She said she does her best to let staff and faculty members know they're important.

"I think that would be one of the things that we'd look for, try to get just a president and a president's family, if you will,

athletics team she's been near, that would continue to fulfill that same supportive role for the campus in general," Gregory said.

> Jennifer Whitmore said her feelings are mixed about moving back to Iowa, where she and her family lived for seven

> "It's kind of bittersweet actually," she said. "Both of my kids are in college there, so the good news is I will get to be in the same city with my kids and we're very close, so I love that part of it."

She said this will be the first time since she and President Whitmore have been married that he hasn't worked in a university setting.

"I don't know if there will be a way that I can help support the people who work at the ACT organization or if I'll become more of a community volunteer, which I did a lot of when I was in Iowa City before," she said.

Jennifer Whitmore said she and her husband are confident in SJSU's future.

"You know, we've been in this business a long time and we know that presidents come and go, so we know that someone else will come along that will be very good, or we hope, and will continue the trend," she said.

She said she will miss SJSU, its faculty, staff and students.

"We have loved every minute of being here," she said. "We've discovered that San Jose State is just a jewel. It has so many great and wonderful professors and dedicated staff and terrific students."

#### <u>OPINION</u>



When former President Don Kassing left SJSU in 2008, nearly 2,500 people packed into the Event Center for "Kassing Appreciation Night" during a men's basketball game. He received a standing ovation from the crowd at halftime and student athletes thanked him for his support.

President Jon Whitmore will not get the same warm send-off that SJSU gave to Kassing.

He resigned less than month after announcing that the university will be laying off 76 employees. The layoffs are part of an \$18 million budget reduction SJSU is currently fac-

Whitmore is the fifth person to serve as SJSU president in seven years and he is keeping the revolving door at the president's office in order.

Kassing brought stability, despite serving as an acting and interim president before becoming the president. Kassing left a legacy of promoting equality and supporting student athletics. He banned blood drives at SJSU because of the Food and Drug Administration's discriminatory policy against gays donating blood.

During "Kassing Appreciation Night," former SJSU quarterback Adam Tafralis talked to the crowd and said that Kassing helped save SJSU football.

"He revived the football program that was almost gone completely by putting full support into it," Tafralis said. "We'd never had that before. We had administrators who didn't want us around, and teachers ... that were petitioning to get us out. And he told them, 'Listen, we're going to have a football team. So you better support them, and they're going to be good."

# **Leaving a legacy: How will President** Whitmore be remembered?

It is unclear what Whitmore's legacy will be. He didn't make many changes to what Kassing had done before him. He kept the blood drive ban in place and supported SJSU athletics like his predecessor.

Whitmore said that he didn't have the chance to accomplish what he wanted to during his two years at SJSU. He said that he focused on the budget and over-enrollment rather than working on something positive.

Whitmore knew the budget would be the main issue for years to come when he arrived, so it can't be used as an excuse for not getting things done. That being said, he did make an effort to promote sustainability at SJSU, help students graduate despite budget cuts and keep SJSU diverse.

When the Spartan Daily editorial staff looked at presidential candidates to make an endorsement, the main concern with Whitmore was whether he would stay long enough at SJSU to weather the budget storm. He resigned from Texas Tech University while it was on probation by a regional accreditor. While he was a finalist for the job at SJSU, his name had also been linked to Louisiana State University's chancellor position and he was also a finalist for the Portland State University presidency, but he withdrew his name from consideration at Portland State shortly before being named a finalist at SJSU.

After he was named president at SJSU, Whitmore said that he typically commits to a new job for five years, and normally stays for six or seven

His stay at SJSU will end up lasting only about two years.

Pat Lopes Harris, director of media relations for SJSU, said that people at the university, including herself, will miss Whitmore. She added that his departure can be seen as a positive as the university goes into another presidential search.

"It's good to know when you are looking at a job that the guy who just left it moved on to something bigger and better, so we're in pretty good shape," Harris said.

Even if this is the case, it doesn't help the school if the position is just a jumping-off point for something bigger and better.

Even though Kassing brought stability, it was known that he wasn't going to be in the position for an extended period. Before being named as the permanent president, Kassing was quoted in the Spartan Daily saying he planned on leaving in 2007. He ended up staying until Aug. 1, 2008, helping to smooth the transition by not leaving until Whitmore was officially

When Whitmore took

president.

over, there was hope that he would stay true to his word and stay at SJSU for several years. Instead, he left when the university needed a strong leader as much as ever. When evaluating Whitmore's presidency at SJSU, the most appropriate grade to give him is an incomplete.





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#### **RESIGN**

From Page 1

Reed would take.

"It would be normal that someone would be appointed for an interim time and then a full search would get started in the CSUs — a national search, with a large community that would include students, and that process can take several months," he said. "So, it's conceivable someone new could be in place second semester of next year, although that would be a pretty speedy time frame to find someone."

Junior finance major Shalin Bhandari said she was worried about an interim president's ability to aid students while attempting to perform Whitmore's duties.

"How is he going to help the students if he needs help himself learning all of the things he needs to?" she said.

Whitmore is the fifth person to serve as president in seven years, beginning with the end of Robert Caret's term in 2003.

"It's not that San Jose State cannot hold onto the president, it's that the economy has made it very difficult for presidents to stay here if somebody else offers a superior opportunity," said Fernando Zazueta, an SJSU alumnus and San Jose attorney who has served as a presidential search committee member.

Whitmore said presidents at CSUs have contracts that are negotiated from year to year, not on a long-term basis, and according to a 2008-09 CSU executive compensation summary, Whitmore was paid a salary of \$328,209, with a \$25,000 annual supplement from foundation sources.

Whitmore's new position as CEO reportedly pays \$554,000,

according to an article from the San Jose Mercury News, based on 2008 ACT tax documents.

"I can't think of one person that would not have taken the job Whitmore took, given the facts," Zazueta said. "His two kids are there, it's a smaller college town, he's going to get paid 200,000 more — please. You don't have to have the budget problems, you don't have to have all the hassles that Whitmore or any administrator in California State University system has been facing."

Alumnus Rod Diridon said he thought Whitmore did well in difficult circumstances and hoped he would stay at SJSU for a long time.

"The problem is, how can we compete with a position that is offered almost twice the salary?" he said. "The issue isn't not getting the right person. We got the right person. It's a matter of having enough resources to compete with other positions across the United States to retain that right person."

Considering the offer Whitmore was given, counseling services Professor Wiggsy Sivertsen said she understood his decision to leave and doesn't think the university will suffer adverse effects from his departure.

"There are so many people at the university that know a lot," she said. "It's not like we're losing anyone who will leave a large hole in leadership ... The president was trying to keep the ship together, and I don't think he's leaving the sinking ship. He got an incredible offer. We can step up to the plate. We are tough old birds, us university people."

While he was unable to accomplish everything he wanted to do in the two years he has spent at SJSU, Whitmore noted the ongoing projects that began during his administration.

"We do have four initiatives that are continuing to go

forward: higher retention and graduation rates, an emphasis on developing advantages to the diversity of the institution, our IT (information technology) initiative to improve and upgrade our information technology in teaching and business services and communications, and ... expanding our commitment to sustainability," he said.

Sophomore accounting major Vaidheeswarkasyap Varadha said he liked what Whitmore was doing for the university and was shocked by his announcement

"From my point of view, if I was in his position, it's probably out of frustration that he's doing this," Varadha said. "He might go down there and implement some of the policies that he's trying to put into the universities."

Whitmore said much of his time and energy, along with that of the university administration, was spent dealing with enrollment and budget issues.

"We've had two primary issues that have taken my time, and the deans' time, and the vice president's time, and that is dealing with over-enrollment and dealing with a \$44 million loss in the budget," he said. "The greatest energy went to a negative, or two negatives ... neither of which were things we wanted to do, but both of which were things we had to do and took an enormous amount of time."

Whitmore said he believes he has served SJSU to the best of his ability.

"I believe what I owed to San Jose State was my very best effort during the two years that I was here, and I believe I feel very comfortable with myself having done everything I have under very difficult circumstances," he said.

**Contributors:** Salman Haqqi, Kristen Pearson, Jenn Elias, Joey Akeley and Donovan Farnham.



President Jon Whitmore walks out of an impromptu news conference on May 13. JOE PROUDMAN / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

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