

# MISSION, HISTORY, ACCREDITATION

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## Our Mission

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The SSU mission is to prepare students to be learned men and women who:

- Have a foundation for lifelong learning,
- Have a broad cultural perspective,
- Have a keen appreciation of intellectual and aesthetic achievements,
- Will be leaders and active citizens,
- Are capable of pursuing fulfilling careers in a changing world, and
- Are concerned with contributing to the health and well-being of the world at large.

To achieve its mission, Sonoma State University recognizes that its first obligation is to develop and maintain excellent programs of undergraduate instruction grounded in the liberal arts and sciences. Instructional programs are designed to challenge students not only to acquire knowledge but also to develop the skills of critical analysis, careful reasoning, creativity, and self-expression. Excellence in undergraduate education requires students to participate in a well-planned program that provides both a liberal education and opportunities for specific career preparation.

The University offers a wide range of traditional disciplines, as well as interdisciplinary programs, so that students are able to explore diverse modes of inquiry, the understanding gained within the various disciplines, and a global spectrum of ideas, institutions, values, and artistic expressions.

The University offers selected professional and graduate programs leading to master's degrees, teaching credentials, and certificates in various career fields. These programs respond to regional and state needs within the academic, business, education, and professional communities.

The quality of the educational experience relies on close human and intellectual relationships among students and faculty to foster the open exchange of ideas. The University is committed to creating a learning community in which people from diverse backgrounds and cultures are valued for the breadth of their perspectives and are encouraged in their intellectual pursuits. The University's special character within California education emerges from its small size; its commitment to high standards of scholarship and ongoing professional development; and its promotion of diversity in the faculty, staff, and student populations.

The University also recognizes its obligation to serve as an educational and cultural resource for people in the surrounding communities. It offers courses, lectures, workshops, and programs that are open to the public. Special events in the arts, the sciences, and athletics contribute to the intellectual and cultural life of students and the community.

## Our History

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The California State Legislature established Sonoma State College in 1960.

The college opened in temporary quarters in Rohnert Park in fall 1961 under the leadership of founding president Ambrose R. Nichols, Jr., with an enrollment of 265 upper-division students. Most of the faculty and administrators of the Santa Rosa Center of San Francisco State College, which had served the region since 1956, joined the new college. The center's elementary education, psychology, and counseling programs were the principal offerings.

The college grew steadily, developing academic programs based in the traditional liberal arts and sciences, as well as in career and professional programs, all the while emphasizing close student-faculty interaction. The college moved to its present 274-acre site in 1966, upon completion of Stevenson and Darwin halls. Excellent new facilities have been constructed, and the grounds have been extensively landscaped, creating one of the most attractive, modern, and well-equipped campuses in the state. In 1978, University status was granted, and the name was changed to Sonoma State University.

The University now enrolls more than 7,500 students and offers 43 bachelor's degrees, 14 master's degrees, and 9 teaching, specialist, and service credentials.

## Accreditation

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Sonoma State University is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. In addition, individual program accreditations have been granted by the American Chemical Society, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the National Association of Schools of Music, the National League for Nursing, the National Association for Schools of Art and Design, and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. The School of Education is accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, and its programs are approved by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

The University is also a member of the prestigious Council of Public Liberal Arts and Colleges (COPLAC), an association of public colleges and universities whose primary mission is ensuring that fine undergraduate liberal arts and sciences education is available to students in the public systems of higher education. SSU is the only California member of COPLAC.

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