




HOPE SMITH

S T U D E N T J O U R N A L I S T

 (817) 301-8203

 hopeabbysmith@gmail.com

 1602 Tealwood Ct. Keller, TX 76248

PROFILE

Determined and passionate student journalist with experience in writing and publishing stories for a college paper. Proficient in social skills, curious, adaptive and quick to learn. Eager to pursue growth in skills and gain experience for a career in journalism.

SKILLS

- News writing
- Feature writing
- Column writing
- Copy editing
- Communication
- Networking
- Research
- Leadership

EXPERIENCE

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The Collegian August 2023 - May 2024

- Lead each department of a weekly student newspaper to successfully publish content that represents the community.
- Uplift staff with guidance and weekly meetings to maximize success.
- Write and report on board members and their decision-making, ensuring accuracy and accountability.

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT - INTERNSHIP

People Newspapers - D Magazine June - August 2023

- Report for the two north Dallas communities of Park Cities and Preston Hollow.
- Attend city council meetings and report on them as well as organizations, SMU professors and local high schools.
- Network with Dallas, PC and PH community members and attend community events.
- Strengthen reporting skills by working with editors.

MANAGING EDITOR

The Collegian January - May 2023

- Assist in leading a staff of reporters, providing guidance and support.
- Lead development of the weekly content meeting with staff as a group.
- Handle line-by-line editing with the reporters on their stories.
- Work alongside reporters in developing and writing stories.

CAMPUS EDITOR

The Collegian September - December 2022

- Research my assigned campus beat by connecting with students, staff and faculty.
- Report on stories for the community based on ethics, fairness and representation.
- Develop news writing skills by working with fellow reporters.

EDUCATION

Tarrant County College 2022 - Current *Hurst, TX*

Keller High School 2019-2022 *Keller, TX*

INTERESTS

- Hiking and trail running
- Glass collecting
- Acoustic guitar

THE COLLEGIAN

SERVING THE TARRANT COUNTY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Wednesday, November 15, 2023 - Volume 37 • Issue 10

@tccthecollegian • collegian.tccd.edu

College fires NE president

Source: Appeals to board, EEOC have been filed

HOPE SMITH
editor-in-chief
hope.smith393@my.tccd.edu

Kenya Ayers-Palmore said she was fired from her job as former NE Campus president and is fighting back.

"I am in the process of addressing the actions taken to remove me from leadership and cannot say more at this time," Ayers-Palmore said in a statement to The Collegian.

A source familiar with the situation explained the former president's termination Oct. 27 did not follow due process. Ayers-Palmore filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, received Nov. 4 and filed an appeal with the board of trustees Nov. 9, the source said.

"She will defend her right, she will engage legal counsel because she has to have it for the formal appeal that the [college] offers," the source said. "And then for any litigation, she will exhaust all of her administrative remedies."

Reginald Gates, vice chancellor of communications and external affairs, said the college cannot comment on personnel matters.

In June, Ayers-Palmore was evaluated and received a positive rating, the source said. In the termination letter served to her, however, the source said it detailed Ayers-Palmore's failure to follow the chancellor's orders, though this was not mentioned in the evaluation.

At the time of her dismissal, Ayers-Palmore did not have a contract with the



File photo/The Collegian

Kenya Ayers-Palmore talks to a faculty member during the Welcome Week event on NE Campus in August. Ayers-Palmore was fired as NE president Oct. 27.

“

My mission as an educator is to build the next generation of leaders who lead authentically and guide our organization to greater peace, wisdom and justice.”

- Kenya Ayers-Palmore

college, even though she repeatedly asked for one, according to the source. This was used against her in the termination letter.

"She kept asking for it and was told and assured she would get one," the source said. "There was no reason why she would think she wouldn't get one, but she never got one."

In Ayers-Palmore's statement, she explains that she hoped to lead NE Campus to success for not just the employees, but

students as well.

"I looked forward to doing so much longer to grow our beloved NE Campus in alignment with the greater College goals," she said. "Unfortunately, that work has now been cut short."

Ayers-Palmore started as president in July 2019. Prior to TCC, she was the vice president and chair of the board for Northwest Educational Council for Student

Success in Arlington Heights, Illinois.

NE Campus employees were notified at 11:33 a.m. Oct. 30 through an email from Chancellor Elva LeBlanc that Ayers-Palmore was no longer serving as president.

Jan Clayton, who had been NW vice president of student affairs, was named interim president.

Students did not receive notification of her leave, however, and some found out that same day attending the Student Empowerment Forum with the President event at 12:30 p.m. They were confused to find she was not there.

The announcement email explained that the search for the NE Campus president is to happen immediately. Listings for the position were put out on The Chronicle of Higher Education and TCC's job listing website Nov. 3.

"I am confident that with your support and that of all the faculty and staff, we will continue to move forward in service to our students and community," LeBlanc said in the email.

Ayers-Palmore said that she was honored to serve the college despite her abrupt exit and encouraged the campus community to persevere.

"I will learn and grow from this experience," she said in the statement. "My mission as an educator is to build the next generation of leaders who lead authentically and guide our organization to greater peace, wisdom and justice. I trust that you will pick up the mantle from here."

ONLINE

Read Ayers-Palmore's full letter to The Collegian at:

collegian.tccd.edu

THE COLLEGIAN

SERVING THE TARRANT COUNTY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Wednesday, October 4, 2023 - Volume 37 • Issue 7

@tccthecollegian • collegian.tccd.edu

NORTHWEST

Student experiences accessibility issues

District responds to concerns over doors, elevators

HOPE SMITH
editor-in-chief
hope.smith393@my.tccd.edu

In increments, NW Campus has begun to rebuild itself with re-development. One of the newest buildings, NW05, was a promise of something more, an example of the future. For NW student Jimmy Chestnut, a wheelchair user, it became something else.

He has run into various accessibility issues like limited access to outside entry ways, bathrooms, classrooms and hallways.

The building's overcrowding, has increasingly set back his ability to navigate the halls among student traffic, too.

"They were supposed to make it better," he said. "Maybe you have a lot of bugs to work out, I understand. But it should have been taken care of before the grand opening."

Before NW05 was built, Chestnut said Student Accessibility Resources reached out to him to discuss with contractors what could be improved to make it more accessible for students.

These recent issues made him disappointed because he always felt heard at TCC before this semester.

"I just want everything to be fair for everybody, not just because I'm disabled," he said. "Say, if you were to hurt your ankle or something and you're on one of those scooters, the doors are still not ac-

“
...If you're not
in a chair, you're
not gonna get my
point of view.

Jimmy Chestnut
NW student

cessible.”

John Posch, the program director for TCC's \$825 million 2019 bond program including NW Campus redevelopment, said that NW05 is fully ADA compliant.

In an email response shared from Reginald Gates, vice chancellor of communications and exter-



Buttons like these can be found outside entryways. These gives ease of access to people.

nal affairs, on Sept. 21, Posch addressed the issue of elevator maintenance. He stated four of the five elevators currently work, and he expects the fifth elevator to be repaired soon.

He also said the overcrowding will subside once other NW Campus departments move to the

NW01 building, expected to open this month.

He added that push buttons to open entry ways are not an ADA Texas requirement, though a problem was identified with the opening force of the doors. The problem was expected to be fixed once parts arrived.

Chestnut was not made aware of these corrections and said he has not noticed a difference.

Chestnut was invited to meet with NW Campus SAR Director Deborah Schall after sending a letter to her about the issues he had been having since the start of the semester. He said they discussed making accommodations in his classes and looking at the facility's elevator complications. He was also told an additional push button would be implemented to NW05 on

See Access, page 2

Access

(continued from page 1)

the south side.

Jan Clayton, NW vice president of student affairs, was able to confirm this as well. She explained that one of her and the college's top priorities is listening to the needs of the students and taking ADA concerns seriously.

"Always as a college, we should be looking for opportunities to increase access for students and support and resources, and

so hearing that feedback lets us know that we have to really prioritize and hear that and respond to that," she said.

She advises students to go to their SAR director with accessibility issues that need to be address.

"If we need to develop a specific accommodation plan for that student, we will do that, and if we need to develop a specific accommodation plan for an employee,

we will do that," she said. "And if there's something for a guest to the building or a community member that we can address in the immediate, we will do that as well."

Chestnut said what he wants is for people to listen to him and others with accessibility needs. He believes it is important to be able to that space to express concerns and be heard.

"I mean, you gotta open somebody's

eyes to get change to happen," he said.

He invites those in charge of the building development to spend a day navigating the building in a wheelchair or on crutches because they may come to realize how many problems he encounters in a day.

"I'm sure they've gone through everything with a fine-tooth comb," Chestnut said. "But if you're not in a chair, you're not gonna get my point of view."

THE COLLEGIAN

SERVING THE TARRANT COUNTY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Wednesday, January 24, 2024 - Volume 37 • Issue 12

@tccthecollegian • collegian

CRIME

Looking for answers



Alex Hoben/The Collegian

TR ESOL instructor Lourdes Laguna holds the graduation photo of her son Luis Carlos Laguna Jr. The TCC student was murdered after a ranch party on November 18 in Fort Worth.

Family of murdered student seeks justice

HOPE SMITH
editor-in-chief
 hope.smith393@my.tccd.edu

It was a knock at Lourdes Laguna’s door around 4 a.m. that told her something was not right.

When she opened the door, her son’s best friend told her that he was not responding to his messages. Her fears were confirmed when they found him in the hospital in critical condition.

“Nobody comes to knock on a door with good news,” she said.

TCC student Luis Carlos Laguna Jr., who went by Carlos, was at a ranch party on Northwest 35th Street, in Fort Worth on Nov. 18 with two friends to see the band Nivel Codiciado. At 2 a.m., an altercation occurred involving a group of Hispanic males and females that led to Carlos being shot in his truck while attempting to leave the parking lot. He later died in the ICU.

More than two months later, no arrest has been made and the family is still seeking justice.

According to Fort Worth Police Department Detective John Sullivan, there was no clear motive but multiple witnesses at the altercation.

“Somebody in that group witnessed this, and I think that what I’m trying to get across is they need to come forward and tell me,” he said.

Carlos was studying to get his Associate of Arts degree and join the

Navy. He was respectful and independent, and fiercely loving of his family and siblings. Lourdes Laguna, an ESOL instructor at TR Campus, explained that he loved to dance and did not need a dance floor to do it.



**He lit up the room.
 Anywhere he went, he
 made a friend**

Lourdes Laguna
 TR ESOL instructor



“He lit up the room,” Laguna said. “Anywhere he went, he made a friend.”

He had a truck that he loved, a black 2008 single cab Silverado that he used to work on with his father. She explained that he had his truck lowered, while his best friend had his own truck lifted. They often spent time working on their trucks together.

“They just had a good working relationship,” she said. “They were like brothers.”

She explained that Carlos would want to be remembered for his smile, his love of music and his truck.

“He wanted to learn more about his Hispanic roots, which is why he listened to all this music,” she said. “His goal was to learn more about his heritage. He was very much into that. And that’s why he went to the concert.”

Laguna has had to stay strong for her family and ensure that her children are supported during this time.

“My family comes from a long line of traditional people,” she said. “We don’t believe in seeking help or getting counseling, but this one was hard. This one, we’re definitely getting help for.”

Carlos’ older sister, Kathi Perez, said she always saw him as strong-minded.

“He has always been very blunt – very honest – so he’ll tell you the truth,” she said. “He’s very upfront about how he feels. He’s always been about doing the right thing.”

Her favorite memory with him was the day she took his high school graduation pictures. She said they didn’t often get to hang out together, but that day they had been able to have fun and laugh together.

She explained that the bracelets he had on his wrist were significant to him and his family. He had a red bracelet he always wore that had St. Benedict on it, the saint he chose for his confirmation.

Perez said her father made replicas of the bracelet and gave them

See Carlos, Page 2

Carlos

(continued from page 1)

to the immediate family at Carlos' funeral.

"He said, 'If there's ever a point where you miss him, or you are thinking about him, just look at your bracelet,'" she said.

The day Carlos was shot, Perez explained she was at the Fort Worth Stockyards with friends. On her way back, the driver made a detour to check on a friend who had been in a car accident.

"Where the car accident happened ended up being just four minutes away from where my little brother was when he got shot," she said. "It was at the same time, the exact same time."

Perez said she is still grappling with the loss of her brother.

"To be honest, I feel like everyone tells

you it gets easier as time goes, but I feel like it doesn't get easier. You just learn to live with it," she said. "It's kind of like a survival thing after that."

Perez has gone over in her head the things she felt could have gone differently for her and her brother. Their relationship was complex, and she wishes they had been able to spend more time together.

She addressed these regrets in her final line of her speech at Carlos' funeral.

"Friends and family of Carlitos, I ask that you put aside any issues that are keeping your family apart," she said. "One day, they can be taken from you in the blink of an eye, and without reason. If you cannot do it for me, then do it for him."

THE COLLEGIAN

SERVING THE TARRANT COUNTY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Wednesday, August 30, 2023 - Volume 37 • Issue 2

@tccthecollegian • collegian.tccd.edu

NORTHWEST

NW students react to new NW05 building

HOPE SMITH
editor-in-chief

hope.smith393@my.tccd.edu

Three months after the opening of the NW05 building on NW campus, students have taken notice that the building has access limits, as well as space.

NW student Leander D’Costa and member of NW Intercultural Network is happy with the way the

building has turned out, but he believes it lacks ADA accessibility.

The only accessible door for someone in a wheelchair is the main door facing the North parking lot, he said. Paired with electrical outages and elevator malfunction that have previously occurred, he worries someone with a wheelchair will not be able to get past the first floor.

“Basically, if you’re in a wheelchair, you’re confined to the

lowest floor on the ground floor, because you can’t come up here unless you use the elevators right in the back,” he said. “But to get there, someone in a wheelchair would have to need assistance from another student to open the doors for them.”

On the first day of classes, one of the main NW05 elevators went out of order sometime in the day, NW student Kennedie Watkins said.

“The only reason I know about

it is because my friend and I went to go get food, and we came back and tried to use the elevator and it wouldn’t work,” she said.

She has heard, however, that other faculty have been working on addressing some accessibility problems by noting where ADA improvements need to be addressed.

“While it might be a process, and it’s not widespread yet, there are people who are talking about it, and who are trying to take steps

to make sure that we manage that problem and get it fixed. So, I do appreciate that,” she said.

Bill Lace, a former Vice Chancellor who is working on public relations for the college, recalled a meeting early this summer about an ADA access concern from a student who was unable to use the ADA button to the main door on the south side.

“They reported that [the com
See NW05, page 2

NW05

(continued from page 1)

plaint, and the guy said that had been taken care of,” he said.

Some students, like SGA president Celeste Pensado, worry that NW05 is becoming too full. NW05 houses three other buildings under construction: WSTU, WTLO and WFAB.

The library is currently in an NW05 “swing space,” or temporary quarter. Pensado said she was disappointed that the selection of books there was smaller, and she had trouble finding specific books. It is important to Watkins that the administration is listening to students when concerns are brought up, because in experience she has seen how hard it is to access help from higher administration.

Lace explained that right now the state of the building is like moving chess pieces.

With construction plans taking place, classrooms and offices like admissions and the bookstore are being shifted around to coordinate with the changing campus.

“It’s tight,” he said.

Recently, NW SGA has had more opportunities to meet with vice president of student affairs Jan Clayton, and Watkins said it is something she feels is going to be helpful.

“It is definitely nice that the faculty and everybody is trying to make themselves more accessible to the students,” she said.



Ariel DeSantiago/The Collegian

Students and faculty sit at the tables in the first floor hang out space in NW05. The building was opened earlier this year in May. The building serves as a swing space for both college and Early Collegiate High School students.