

## COLLEGE HOUR WAS GOOD IDEA THAT BACKFIRED, TIME TO MOVE IT TO AFTERNOON

BY LUIS ZAVALA

### A Perspective

College Hour is the killer of clubs and the bane of classes.

A well-intentioned idea to turn over the time from 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. to the ASO and clubs has not worked out and needs to be changed.

A few years ago Southwestern College condensed its schedule from 18 weeks to 16 weeks and needed to change start and finish times for classes. Former President Kindred Murillo got talked into an idea by the former ASO leadership that was to clear the deck of all classes at midday on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

That was a good-hearted bad idea from the start. The most popular time for classes at SC are the hours between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. Many students work in the afternoon and need to leave by noon or 1:30 p.m. Morning classes, research shows, are also the best time for students to focus and learn.

Most of the T-TH classes start times were switched from noon to 1:30 p.m. Theoretically the ASO and clubs were supposed to have "college hour" from noon – 1:15 p.m. on T-TH for meetings and activities. By clearing out all classes Murillo and the students of the ASO thought they would see an increase in students participating in student government, clubs and campus activities.

The move backfired.

Dozens of classes, for a variety of reasons, could not abandon the midday and moved to the 11:45 a.m. – 1:10 p.m. slot. Others moved there later when students complained that they could not take classes that kept them on campus until after 3 p.m. New classes were also moved into that slot.

So now almost no one is happy.

ASO activities are conducted during a time when about half the students cannot participate because they are in class. Some students sit around for more than an hour and a half waiting for the 1:30 p.m. classes to start. Other students take fewer units and stay at Southwestern a year or more longer because they need to work in the afternoon.

What are the options? Moving College Hour to 8 a.m. would avoid prime time for classes, but would also avoid students. Students who use public transportation (and there are a lot of us) may find it difficult and exhausting to slog to school early for a club or ASO meeting.

The best option is to move College Hour to 1:30 p.m. on T-TH and resume teaching classes during the 11:45 a.m. – 1:10 p.m. slot. That way students would be able to take a full 15-unit load if they wanted to and still be able to devote the early afternoon to club and ASO activities.

Student government and clubs are important and deserve the full support of our college leaders. These clubs can be social or academic-based and enriching for students. ASO and clubs develop leadership skills, create networks, encourage socialization and help students build a connection to the college. Research consistently shows that students who feel connected to their schools do better and are happier.

Southwestern has a rich array of clubs like the Arts Club, Environmental Biology Club, Pagkakaisa and many others that nourish students academically, socially and spiritually. Clubs are well-resourced and have energetic, idealistic faculty advising them. Our ASO is well-funded and has the authority to make meaningful decisions about student life.

We need to do a better job of aligning our schedule and system of classes to allow more students to participate. College Hour a little later in the day would end the confusion and stop the slow motion collision between clubs and classes that no one wants to see. Focusing on academics in the morning and letting your hair down a little in the afternoon makes more sense than the current system which serves no one. A 1:30 p.m. college hour would increase enrollment in morning classes and increase participation in student government and club activities.

Timing is everything and the time to act is now, during the summer. Let's reorganize our schedule into a less-chaotic, more logical system that ends of conflicts and difficult choices between classes and clubs. We ought to be about to do both.

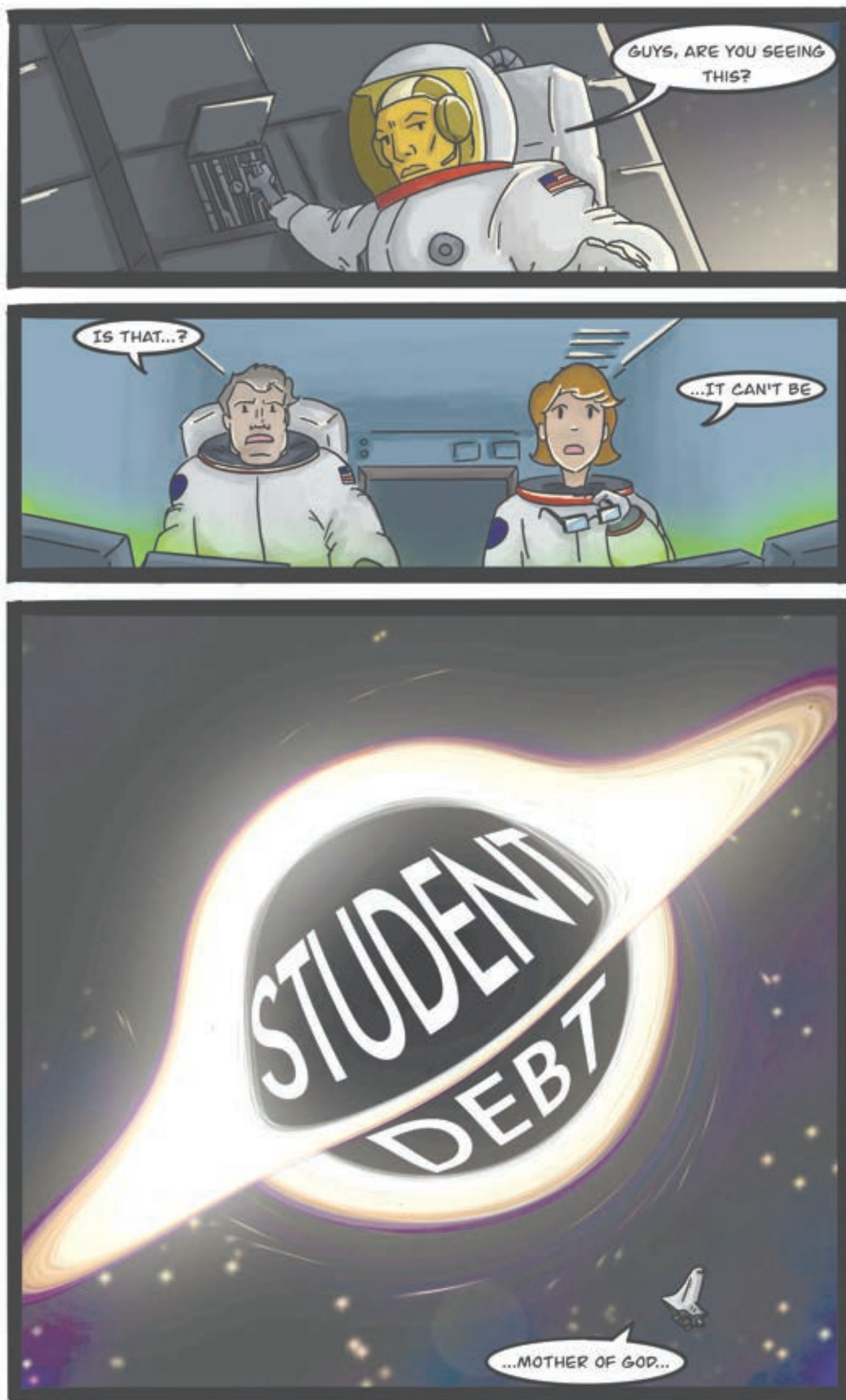


ILLUSTRATION BY EDMUNDO GODINEZ / STAFF

## PREDATORY STUDENT LOANS STRANGLE A GENERATION, BIDEN MUST PROVIDE RELIEF

BY JULIO RODRIGUEZ

### A Perspective

Student debt hangs over the heads of millions of young Americans like the Sword of Damocles. It prevents us from buying homes, opening businesses, saving for retirement and even getting married.

It is a 10-30 year sentence in debtor's prison.

Last year the Biden Administration and U.S. Department of Education announced a three-part plan to forgive up to \$20,000 in individual debt for millions of borrowers.

A dream come true.

A nightmare followed.

Our rightwing Supreme Court has decided to weigh in.

Why on earth does the Supreme Court need to be involve itself in something that can elevate the lives of millions of Americans?

Republicans. Specifically, loud-mouthed Republicans.

Five Republican-dominated states (Nebraska, Missouri, Arkansas, Iowa and South Carolina) filed a lawsuit in September to block the forgiveness program. Its reasons are specious, but with our politicized

court, debt holders fear the worst.

GOP governors argue it violates the Separation of Power Act and Administrative Procedures Act. Separation of power is a constitutional doctrine that separates the executive, legislative and judicial. It is designed to maintain a balance of power. The Administrative Procedures Act determines the process by which federal agencies develop and issue regulations.

These clearly have nothing to do with student loans.

The fearless five states argue they have standing to sue due to The American Rescue Plan, passed in 2021 for COVID relief. They insist the relief should be taxed, which is consistent with the Republican Party's war on poor people.

Then there is Maniacal Missouri, the Florida of the Midwest. Missouri has MOHELA, the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority, an alleged nonprofit loan servicing agency that has made a lot of GOP donors wealthy on the backs of students. Missouri argued in the suit that if the loans were discharged, the nonprofit might not make a profit. Seriously.

In a moment of clarity and logic,

Missouri District Judge Henry Autrey dismissed the case outright. Unfortunately, this eventually passed the case up to the Supreme Court.

Student debt relief has other foes. At least 126 House Republicans filed a "friends of the court" brief with the Supreme Court urging justices to strike down Biden's plan. They claim Biden "overreached" and lacks authority to forgive loans.

While these Republican states remain focused on helping rich supporters who make campaign contributions, they threaten the enormous good this plan can do.

Canceling loans would help with deficit reduction. The \$300 billion put into the hands of millions of college graduates would be a boon to the economy. Borrowers could put that money toward starting businesses, purchasing a home and paying off other debts.

Canceling the debt would ease financial hardship for vulnerable Americans. Most Americans support debt relief and support its young people. Let's hope the Supremes sing the right notes this time and allow debt relief. Maybe it's not great for Missouri GOP donors, but it is good for America.

## THINKING OUT LOUD

COMPILED BY EMILY INGCO

**Were you aware of mental health resources provided by Southwestern College? Would you be comfortable using them?**



MICHAEL BRADSTREET  
(Theater Arts)

**"Yes. I started with Conflict Resolution, and (learned of) the Grief and Loss Workshop. I would be very comfortable utilizing these resources because it feels like they listen to me."**



NATHAN TRAN  
(Computer Science)

**"No, I was not. I would be comfortable because they're free resources, so that's cool."**



NEFERTARI DESCHAMPS  
(Psychology)

**"I knew about them because I got an email. I'd be comfortable utilizing them because I know it would help with my progression mentally, physically and emotionally, and I'm not opposed to any type of growth."**



SARAH BRAITHWAITE  
(Philosophy)

**"I saw a campus flyer about Personal Wellness things on the college website. I'd be interested in pursuing the resources because it gets stressful."**