

VIEWPOINTS

Editorials • Opinions • Letters to the Editor



The mission of the Southwestern College Sun is to serve its campuses and their communities by providing information, insights and stimulating discussions of news, activities and topics relevant to our readers. The staff strives to produce a newspaper that is timely, accurate, fair, interesting, visual and accessible to readers. Though The Sun is a student publication, staff members ascribe to the ethical and moral guidelines of professional journalists.

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Inducted 2018 | California College Media Association Outstanding College/University Newspaper |
| ACP Pacemaker 100
An Outstanding Student Publication of the Century
2022 | San Diego County Multicultural Heritage Award |
| Student Press Law Center National College Press Freedom Award
2011, 2018 | California Newspaper Publishers Association California College Newspaper of the Year
2013, 2016, 2020, 2021, 2023 |
| National Newspaper Association National College Newspaper of the Year
2004-2024 | Society of Professional Journalists National Mark of Excellence
2001-24
First Amendment Award
2002, 2005 |
| Associated Collegiate Press Pacemaker Awards
2003-06, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012-2017, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 | San Diego Press Club Excellence in Journalism
1999-2024
Directors Award for Defense of Free Speech
2012 |
| General Excellence
2001-24
Best of Show
2001-24 | Journalism Association of Community Colleges Pacesetter Award
2001-18, 2022-24
Newspaper General Excellence
2000-2024 |
| Columbia University Scholastic Press Association Gold Medal for Journalism Excellence
2001-23 | American Scholastic Press Association Community College Newspaper of the Year |
| College Media Association National College Newspaper of the Year
2020, 22, 24 | |



ILLUSTRATION BY CARLA LABTO / STAFF

LAX OVERSIGHT MAY COST STUDENTS DEARLY

In high school they used to tell us not to cut class because it would affect our grades. What happens when our own administration is making the cuts?

Southwestern College senior leadership dropped a Yuletide bombshell on students when it announced the cancellation of the winter and summer intersessions and a swath of spring 2025 classes. Faculty pushed back hard and embarrassed senior administrators promised to reconsider the plan and try to repopulate “some” winter and summer classes.

Specifics? None. Stressed students? Thousands. Legions of students already enrolled in winter classes got an email saying their classes were cancelled due to “unforeseen circumstances.”

Four days later stunned students received another email from the college administration.

“We apologize for the inconvenience and confusion this has caused. We heard SWC students’ concerns and were able to open this section for the 2025 Intersession term.”

It did not say all classes were reopened. It did not say students were automatically re-enrolled, which meant students had to start over. Many lost their priority registration. Many had already registered at other San Diego County colleges and will stay there.

This is professional malpractice. (Read the article on A-1 for details.) People being paid between \$225,000 and \$325,000 annually are expected to know how to manage enrollment. It is not rocket science.

A November town hall meeting starring college president Dr. Mark Sanchez, finance VP Omar Gutierrez and VP of Academic Affairs Sam Agdasi was embarrassing to watch. Blame was flung in every direction. Agdasi blamed deans and faculty for his inept communication. Sanchez blamed the state and a defunct college committee

he never bothered to reconstitute. Gutierrez blamed everyone watching for not being as smart as him and gave not one useful answer. Rarely has a trio of men earning \$800,000 between them been so defensive, so full of excuses and so devoid of answers. It felt like no one was flying the plane.

Some faculty insist the enrollment management crisis is the result of manipulation to give off the impression that Southwestern was bursting at the seams in the weeks prior to the \$800 million November bond measure.

We will never know his intentions, but we do know Sanchez called a press conference the first week of school to boast that Southwestern was back from the depths of the pandemic. We all wanted badly to believe him. He told TV crews our enrollment was a record 22,000.

We now know that was not true. Thousands of those “students” were FAFSA-stealing bots that squeezed real students from online classes. Those same flesh-and-blood students are now desperately trying to catch up by enrolling in winter, spring and summer classes that may not exist. Administration knew about the bots last spring but did nothing and allowed summer classes to be decimated. After the election the bots situation started to get real attention.

This is a turning point for Sanchez and his VPs. They need to fix this steaming hot mess.

Dr. Sanchez took his eye off the ball. He is so enamored of the high-profile but low-benefit border exchange programs, European, African and Asian junkets to “recruit” students from foreign lands and hobnobbing with elected officials he has lost sight of us. We have plenty of eager students right here in the South Bay. The issue is whether or not there are classes for them.

Our bickering, dysfunctional governing board shares responsibility. The lowlight of the December trustees meeting was Kris Galicia-Brown’s self-righteous demand that unpopular gadfly Corina Soto resign. Perhaps Ms. Galicia-Brown (or whoever wrote her script) forgot that Chula Vista voters elected Soto. Voters can remove Soto from office, not other trustees. Our trustees have bigger fish to fry right now and no time for such pettiness. They are glibly presiding over an epic fail. Job one of a community college is to host classes. Everything else is secondary.

We hear all the rosy rhetoric about students being Southwestern’s top priority.

Were it only true.

