

Superintendent/President Nullifies ASO Election

On Thursday May 2nd, Southwestern College Superintendent/President Dr. Kindred Murillo declared this year's Associated Student Organization election null and void because the process has been compromised. The issues include multiple alleged violations of college policies and procedures; additionally, there are allegations of potential violations of Governing Board policies, as well as federal and state statutes.

The decision was made on the final day of student voting and ended nearly a week of emotional public student grievance hearings and a student protest. The situation began when members of the Team Elite slate of officers filed a formal grievance regarding a statement of anti-blackness against a member of the Team Green slate of officers.

Throughout the week as the student election board gathered information, district leadership received additional information that alleged potential violations of Governing Board policies, as well as state and federal statutes may have occurred. As a result, the district launched a formal investigation.

"I do not make this decision lightly, nor do I negate the processes undertaken by the student election board," Murillo said. "Students will be able to engage in a new election in the fall semester after the completion of the formal district investigation.

"We are making this decision because we owe it to our students to have confidence in the integrity of the election," Murillo said.

Governing Board President Roberto Alcantar concurred.

"Fair, honest and ethical elections—local, state and federal—must be our expectation," Alcantar said. "As a learning community, it is our obligation to demonstrate our commitment to following all aspects of the electoral process."

The college provided multiple opportunities for facilitated sessions for students to debrief. Additionally, the college provided facilitated opportunities for faculty, staff and administrators.

"This is an opportunity for us to grow as individuals and as a college community as we work with our students to create an environment that supports and empowers their development," Murillo said.

The investigation has concluded and a report of the findings will be released shortly. Meanwhile, the students who ran for positions are currently working together as a temporary Coalition Government in an effort to get some aspects of the business done while continuing to work on healing the emotional wounds and re-igniting the ASO to make it better than before.

