

Good afternoon @SWC Colleagues,

Just a short time ago the leaders of the ASO Coalition Student Government and I finished hosting a forum where we talked about the findings of the investigation into the bias allegations related to the Spring 2019 ASO election. We are grateful that so many of the members of our College community attended.

Before I recap the events around the election and the findings of the investigation, I want to acknowledge and thank a strong, inclusive and positive group on this campus that has led by example—the ASO Coalition Student Government. Their support and frankly, their tough questions and their determination to carry on, helped me enormously.

At the forum, we had an open and at times painful, dialogue. I will repeat what I said at the meeting, that after reading the investigator's report, I cannot escape the fact that I did not effectively manage and lead the Associated Student Organization, and our campus has moved further away from the inclusive College we must be. I promise this will change.

Our ASO Coalition Government members demonstrated incredible leadership at today's forum. They spoke truth to power and told us they are going to hold administration, faculty and classified professionals accountable to the equity and inclusion work needed. Other students who spoke up were bold and courageous in their challenge for us to lean in to this difficult work. They also inspired us to embrace "radical positivity in the middle of radical negativity," which permeates beyond Southwestern College campuses. I am so proud of our students and how they are leading us. We must not let their pain, hard work and unity be in vain. We must step up our commitment to inclusion and to ensure all our students know that they belong.

I would like to share a summary of the events around the election, which I suspended in June after several tumultuous days during which a number of bias incidents were alleged.

The Southwestern Community College District hired Kelly R. Minnehan, with Erickson Law Firm, to investigate the multiple allegations, which ranged from complaints of biased language, preferential treatment for Team Green and Team Elite by school officials, violation of elections rules and claims that funding and scholarship decisions were made in a discriminatory and/or biased manner.

During the investigation, 37 faculty, staff and student witnesses were interviewed to determine the merit of each allegation. The investigator also reviewed video, audio and written materials.

The investigator found several allegations to have merit, but she characterized the majority as having no merit, including the allegation that scholarship decisions were handled in a biased manner.

You may access the [218-page report of the investigation and the 19-page summary of the findings](#) by clicking on the hyperlink. As you read this report, please remember it is a tool to help us all improve as a community, it is not meant to place responsibility on any single person. Our hope is that this report will allow us to learn from the past mistakes and create a more inclusive environment.

Prior to the public release of the report, I met with each person who was interviewed during the investigation. I also met with members of the Coalition government to let them know the results of the investigation and the results of the voting in the suspended spring election.

We have started the hard work of self-examination and we must continue on this journey together. It is time to ensure this College is a place where all employees thrive, and every student believes they belong, and can achieve their goals to live a better life.

Many of you will have questions, and I urge you to bring them forward. We must pledge to keep working, listening and being kind to one another. We must never let bias and racism gain traction here.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kindred Murillo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K'.

Kindred Murillo, Ed.D.
Superintendent/President
Southwestern College