Voice: Why delay on news of SDSU program?

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Why delay on news of SDSU program?

The effectiveness of the very successful Freshmen Program on the San Diego State University-Imperial Valley campus was documented in a five-year report prepared last May and submitted to the SDSU president to be forwarded to the California State University chancellor. The report was accompanied by endorsements from key community leaders including President Gould of Imperial Valley College.

So, there was some concern when it was proposed recently that the program be terminated and replaced by a “2+2” structure with students taking much of their coursework at IVC. Most of the debate will be carried out within the procedures and politics at SDSU but one issue should generate community-wide concern.

The issue centers on the choice to terminate and replace rather than systematically and carefully expand an already proven program. Two reasons for concern are: Higher education has a rich history of high-sounding proposals that end in failure and, given the budget cuts in our immediate future, the replacement may never be realized. One justification that has been offered for the termination and replacement strategy is that the current program is too costly. That is not true. The university receives funding based in part on enrollment and the Freshmen Program pays for itself.

A second answer to the question about terminating the existing program emerged during meetings with SDSU-IV faculty and staff last week. We learned that President Weber had forwarded the five-year report to the chancellor with a request to terminate the program after the fall 2011 cohort. The chancellor agreed to the request. That was in July 2010. SDSU-IV Dean Pearson stated that he learned of this decision only two weeks ago and that he was not given reasons for the decision. Why was there a seven-month delay in notifying the administration, faculty, and staff at SDSU-IV? Why would there be a delay in notifying high school students (and their parents) in the pipeline for the program? Why delay telling the community that the only four-year university program in the Imperial Valley would be terminated? And, how can a decision of such importance to the Valley be made without making the rationale available?

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