

# Scholarship competitions emphasize academics

By Taylor Forrest  
Staff reporter

\$30,100. That is the national average of student loan debt per borrower in 2015. According to the Institute for College Access and Success, this number represented a four percent increase from 2014.

This increase sheds light on the daunting total that the average graduate faces after donning the traditional cap and gown. So it is no surprise that the cost of tuition plays a large part in the college choice process high school graduates. Luckily, for a few academic-oriented students that choose to attend Southwestern, the heavy burden of student debt will be significantly lower due to the college introducing five full tuition scholarships.

The Pillars scholarship competition was the first full tuition scholarship introduced to campus. Brad Andrews, president, said that the Pillars scholarship competition was started as an initiative to help recruit students that are academically engaged and passionate. He said “We have concerted efforts to recruit athletes, we have folks who are really focused on recruiting for student activities, the Pillars scholarship will help provide balance between Southwestern’s areas of strength, athletics, activities, and academic programs.”

The Pillars scholarship made its debut last spring with the first competition taking place at the beginning of February. Dean Clark, director of admissions,

said that the admissions office received more than 120 applicants and from that, 92 competitors were selected to come to campus and try to win the two available scholarships. The competitors and their families started the day in the auditorium where they were split into three groups. All prospective students were required to write an essay, do an interview with faculty and participate in a student panel. While only two full tuition scholarships were up for grabs, each competitor that attended was given a scholarship worth \$500 per year, renewable for four years if they chose to attend Southwestern.

Caitlin Koch, athletic training freshman, and Stephen Le, biology freshman, were the two individuals chosen as the first

Pillars Scholarship recipients. Koch said that winning the scholarship has encouraged her to work harder and it has aided her in pushing along her dreams, “After college I want to go to physical therapy school or chiropractic school. So the scholarship not only gave me something to add to my resume, but it took a big burden off of me because I won’t have to go into graduate school worrying about paying off my undergrad.”

Although, Le and Koch were not the only individuals that came out of the competition wanting to attend Southwestern College. Dean Clark, said that the scholarship competition was also successful in bringing in competitors that didn’t win as well, “92 competitors came

to campus and experienced everything that we as a campus had to offer. It’s easy for the two winners to choose Southwestern because they won, but we had over 50 students that came to the competition that actually enrolled for the fall semester.”

Despite having two full tuition scholarships available to incoming freshmen, President Andrews said that the college still saw a need to widen the net and draw in more students by adding two more full tuition scholarships. This addition was largely due to the overwhelming interest in the Pillars competition. Thus, the Moundbuilder Spirit Scholarship was tacked on in conjunction

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# Sunshine can help symptoms of common winter disorder

By Kylie Stamper  
Staff reporter

It’s no secret that the winter months can be dreary. Cold temperatures and cloudy skies can drain the joy out of an environment, which can ultimately lead to what is called Seasonal-Affective Disorder (SAD).

SAD is normally seen in the fall and winter months and is characterized by “symptoms of depression that can appear gradually or come on all at once,” according to a handout over Seasonal-Affective Disorder from the American Psychiatric Association. The signs of SAD usually disappear or regress as spring and summer arrive.

SAD is a somewhat common disorder, affecting more than three million people in the United States alone, and is most commonly caused by a smaller amount of exposure to sunlight during the day as the winter days are shorter and typically the skies are cloudier. Symptoms of this type of depression can stay in the mild to moderate range but are also known to become severe for some people.

Although the symptoms all point towards Seasonal Affective Disorder, it is still possible

to only have a small combination of a couple symptoms rather than experiencing everything on the symptom list.

Pertaining to college students, SAD can be a prevalent disorder that many students are not aware

## SYMPTOMS OF SAD (include but are not limited to:)

- fatigue
- lack of interest in normal activities
- social withdrawals
- craving foods high in carbohydrates
- weight gain

of or do not know much about.

Even students who do know about it might still need clarification on what its affect is on the body, especially during the college years. Mary Ann Smith, campus wellness coordinator, said, “It’s all about knowing your body and knowing what works, and what doesn’t, and sometimes that takes a while.

When you’re in

the college years you are learning and finding out new things and your body is changing anyway. You have a lot of changes going on during the college years.”

SAD can also occur in the summer months rather than the winter months, but the cases are rare. Summer-time SAD can be triggered by the high heat and humidity. Symptoms of this type of SAD include insomnia, decreased appetite, weight loss, and agitation or anxiety.

The handout states that SAD is linked to biochemical imbalances in the brain caused by a lack of direct sunlight and shorter days. The cause is also linked to melatonin, a hormone that is known to regulate sleep. Melatonin is sometimes grouped as a possible cause of certain types of depression, including SAD, because more melatonin is produced in the dark and higher melatonin levels

can lead to symptoms like fatigue and dreariness. This means that the shorter and darker the days, in other words—winter months, the more melatonin is produced.

January and February seem to be the hardest-hit months for SAD and it is usually seen between the ages of 18 and 30, although it can happen at any age and to any person.

A few ways SAD can be treated include something as simple as a long walk outside (sunlight is recommended, but fresh air can also help), and you can also arrange so that you are near a window during work or classes throughout the day if possible.

Severe cases of SAD can be treated with light therapy, which, as the handout states, is a “form of therapy [that] involves exposure to very bright light between 30 and 90 minutes a day during the winter months.”

Seasonal-Affective Disorder is a manageable condition but should still be addressed if it causes problems in everyday life.

Smith said, “There are a lot of people of all ages who really suffer from this. If you’re in college, you may not know how many people it affects. And I would wonder how many college students have ever heard of Seasonal-Affective Disorder. It sparks an interest, they will want to know ‘what is that’ and ‘what is it about?’”

SAD can be self-diagnosed and self-treated, but the best and most accurate way to diagnose SAD is to visit a doctor or medical professional.

The doctor will be able to diagnose the disorder and offer suggestions for therapy.

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