

# Community mourns victim's death

By Lauren Sieh  
Staff reporter



On Wed., Dec. 18, students, faculty and staff awoke to a BuilderAlert text message at 2:12 a.m.

about a shooting on campus that occurred an hour prior.

Five days later, Brad Andrews, president, sent out an email identifying a single gunshot victim, Gabriel "Gabe" Luna, business administration and sports management sophomore, and informing the Southwestern community about Luna's death.

Luna was born on Feb. 3, 1987, and died at the age of 32 on Dec. 20, 2019. According to

his obituary, his funeral was a private ceremony on Dec. 27 at 12:30 p.m.

Luna's children, Alexa Luna, Giovanni Luna, Adrian Luna, Armani Luna and Kamirynn Fowlkes, survive him, as well as his parents, Rosie and Randy Engelbrecht and Julian and Gloria Luna and siblings Noe Rizo, Mario Luna, Reuben Luna, Julio Luna, Degoberto Luna, Alex Luna and Christian Luna.

Luna came to Southwestern to get a college education and start a brand new life. In the past, Luna had some run-ins with the law, but seemed to be turning his life around.

Jackson Lashier, associate professor of religion, said, "He was very hopeful that this was kind of a new start. Being at Southwestern, he was originally on the golf team. I think he was

hopeful for that this would help him."

Lashier met Luna before he decided to come to Southwestern. Luna showed up one day at the Sunday school Lashier teaches at Winfield First United Methodist Church. "He became a regular attendee. We also do a Sunday evening service that he became a regular at," said Lashier.

Rachelle Speer, associate pastor of Winfield First United Methodist Church, met Luna when he started to come to a free community dinner called Tuesday's Table, hosted at the church.

Speer said, "He always had a smile on his face. He always seemed to be cheerful or in a good mood. He seemed too really like being involved with everybody and getting to know people."

Upon hearing about his death, Lashier felt very saddened and

disturbed.

Lashier said, "I knew that he had a past that was very difficult. I was very hopeful for him as he started to become a regular church attendee and was a part of the college. As I saw him around, I was just really hopeful that this would be a turnaround for him. Then, hearing about some of circumstances of it that I heard from Dan Falk, it just seems like he wasn't able to exorcise himself from some of his past."

Speer said, "It was tragic. As a pastor, my heart went out to him and his family. I knew him as someone who had a lot of challenges in his life and a lot of struggles that he had been fighting to overcome. There had been some setbacks but then trying again and it seemed like he wanted to have a successful life. I hate that his opportunity to try and continue reaching for

that was taken away."

Speer shared her thoughts on how she wants others to remember Luna.

"I want to people to remember him exactly how they knew him," said Speer. "I don't want to sugar coat any of the flaws that he had. I would want more than people having a particular memory of who he was, but rather have people remember that even someone who had made many mistakes or as many struggles as Gabriel, we're all redeemable, regardless of our past or our present."

Southwestern will host a moment of remembrance for Luna on Feb. 7 at 5:30 p.m. in Winfield First United Methodist Church.

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# KBI continues to investigate fatal shooting

By Emily Berry  
Staff reporter

At 1 a.m. on Wed., Dec. 18, Gabriel Luna was a victim to a targeted shooting in Honor Apartments. He passed away on Dec. 23.

Students were informed of the accident as soon as it took place through a BuilderAlert.

The first text students received through BuilderAlerts said, "Please be advised, a shooting occurred at 1:00 a.m. at Honors Apartments. A single gunshot victim is being treated. Law enforcement is on the scene and is actively investigating. While it appears to be an isolated incident, individuals on campus are encouraged to remain vigilant."

The text messages students received did not state the victim's name until he was transported to Wesley Medical Center.

Students continuously received text alerts and updates as the investigation progressed. The last notification and update students had received was an email from Brad Andrews, president, on Dec. 23.

The email said, "The Winfield Police Department announced this afternoon that SC student, Gabriel Luna, succumbed to injuries he suffered last Tuesday night and passed away at a Wichita area hospital.

Our Builder Family mourns Gabriel's loss. We pray for his family, friends, and his church community."

The Luna family were the last to be notified of the incident and were called when he was sent to Wesley Medical Center in Wichita.

Dan Falk, vice president of student affairs and dean of students, was one of the first faculty members to be informed of the situation. He is in contact with the Winfield Police Department as the investigation continues.

Falk said, "Security was tight at the hospital because they didn't know who the shooter was. So, I didn't get a lot of information, but once I knew where he was and what was going on, I called his mom and dad and let them know what was going on."

Before coming to Southwestern, Luna was arrested in 2012 and discharged in 2015. The Kansas Department of Corrections states he was arrested for aggravated battery. There is no evidence that connects Luna's criminal history with the December shooting.

"This was a targeted event," said Falk. "It wasn't random. It looked like it was just a murder that had happened, that seemed quick."

The college has cooperated with the Winfield Police Department.

Keith McLaughlin, director of safety and security, said, "We assisted in various

tasks, but it's their investigation. We are providing information that we can and we will continue if needed."

Aside from this, the college has not been involved in the investigation.

Falk said, "We had minor involvement. There was a bullet hole in the door, so we replaced the door, but the police then wanted the door so we gave them the door."

The accident happened quickly. Luna called the police right after he was shot and security first heard what happened over the police scanner.

McLaughlin said, "I heard the sirens then heard on the scanner and went there to assist around 1 a.m. I was the first to respond."

Falk's involvement with the incident began when the security director called him around 1:15 a.m.

Falk said EMS arrived on the scene and had to break into Luna's apartment to reach him. The ambulance took Luna to William Newton Hospital.

"He was at William Newton for maybe an hour," said Falk. "I went down there talked to the emergency room doctors. They got him stabilized, because he was not in a good condition to get to Wichita."

Wesley Medical Center sent their helicopter around 2:30 a.m. and flew Luna to Wichita. He went into surgery immediately and was in surgery for five or six

hours.

After this occurrence, the college has not done much with security as they cannot change a lot due to the number of security staff.

McLaughlin said, "We only have one officer on at a time, so they can't be everywhere."

Falk said, "I don't know if it will change. I feel that the security officers do a good job. Officers are there 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I think we have a pretty good response time, a good relationship with the PD. I think we did the best probably any security department or police department would do."

The college has not received more information on the status of the investigation, but know that it is still being investigated.

"The last I heard was about a week ago, it sounded like it was moving along pretty well according to the Winfield Police Department," said Falk. "The Kansas Bureau of Investigation is now involved. They were here for a couple days two weeks ago to provide technical support."

It has been five weeks since the passing of Luna. There have been no known arrests of the individual who committed the crime.

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