

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RECORD

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Open the Books investigation: More than 65,000 community college students are fake

HOT TOPICS

Rich | provided

By Juliette Fairley

May 11, 2022

When Pierce College professor Kim Rich in Woodland Hills discovered alleged illegitimate enrollment patterns, she immediately notified her administration.

“They didn't take it too seriously,” she said. “I kept trying to notify people at my school and I did some presentations to different groups and different departments letting them know what to keep an eye on.”

After an investigation by [Open the Books](#), it was determined that more than 65,000 fake individuals had allegedly enrolled in classes and taken seats away from actual students hoping to enroll in those same classes. Some 2.1 million students attend California Community Colleges statewide, according to the [Foundation for California Community Colleges](#).

“The system is broken and it is allowing all of these criminals and criminal organizations to infiltrate the system and just continues at every college from there,” Rich told the *Southern California Record*. “Why the state chancellor has not just shut down CCCApply until they can get it fixed, is a good question. You have to wonder why they wouldn't do that.”

California Community Colleges ([CCCApply](#)) is the website where students can submit just one admission application for consideration by 116 community colleges statewide. The average student collects \$5,000 in financial aid per semester, according to [media reports](#).

“They are absconding with probably billions of dollars that they will never have to give back and if the system is still allowing them to do it, there's no reason to stop,” Rich said.

The professor, who teaches administration of justice classes, is so concerned that she resigned from her role as department chair for political science, administration of justice, economics and Chicano studies six months before her three-year term was set to end.

“I resigned because I am concerned that criminals have access to students' data and to faculty data, which is a violation of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and the schools, the districts, the colleges are putting faculty in a bad position because we are supposed to report true enrollment,” she said. “Well, we can't report true enrollment when the schools are not authenticating the students they are allowing to enroll in our courses.”

Rich wants to see the website CCCApply shut down immediately.

“That appears to be the main access point to the issue and somebody needs to go in and investigate all of these schools to find out what they know, how long they've known it for, why they failed to report it, why they failed to stop it and criminally hold every single one of them accountable who violated any law,” she added.



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