

Potrero Hill Democratic Club  
Questionnaire for Community College Board candidates  
General Election, November 4, 2008

Candidate/Campaign Information:

Candidate name: Dr. Natalie Berg

Office sought: Community College Board

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Anticipated Budget: \$50,000

Funds raised to date: \$40,000

Percentage of donations under \$50: Approx. 10%

**General Questions:** Please write a brief response (less than 150 words) to each question. Please return this questionnaire electronically to [contactus@phdemclub.org](mailto:contactus@phdemclub.org) We will make these questionnaires available to our members before the endorsement meeting.

1. Why are you running? Why should we vote for you? I am the most qualified candidate running for the College Board. I was a teacher, administrator and dean at City College, and have served 3 terms as a Trustee. I bring a unique perspective to the Board which no other Board member has. Additionally, I hold a doctorate in Community College Education/Administration.

2. What sets you apart from your opponents? See #1

3. What are the top three issues facing San Francisco's community college? What will you do about those issues?

- a. Completion of the Chinatown/Northbeach Campus. Though we are currently being sued, we have faith that we will prevail and will move forward. We will need to pass another bond measure to get enough money to complete the project.
- b. Equalization of credit and non-credit funding. The State gives a higher re-imburement rate for credit students than non-credit students. This is patently unfair; the amount of work performed by the faculty is equal, and the education received is

equal. We have been lobbying Sacramento to equalize the funding, and almost had agreement of the legislature this year until the budget crisis broke. We will continue to lobby.

c. Dealing with the issue of high school graduates who are unprepared for college work. The highest number of “at risk” students at City College comes from the high school graduates. They arrive at the College unprepared in reading, writing and math skills. I am advocating that we increase our “bridge” program in the high schools, and extend into the junior high schools. We send faculty and counselors into the classroom and also to work with the teachers and counselors to help prepare the students for college-level work.

4. Would you describe yourself as fiscally responsible? Please give an example to support your answer.

Yes. During this budget crisis and in previous crises, I have always urged prudence in our spending. I advocated for a reserve of money to be set aside for times like these. I believe in creative solutions to the budget crises; e.g. reducing the work week slightly when we can't afford to offer higher wages.

5. Would you describe yourself as socially progressive? Please give an example to support your answer.

Yes. I have been in the forefront of human rights issues my entire life. I am a very strong advocate for civil rights issues, and have a strong record of advocacy for civil rights issues. I have been in the forefront of LGBTQ issues for more than 20 years, have worked for gender and racial equity all my life.

## Issue Questions:

1. Given the very real probability of reduced state funding for CCSF in the coming years, what combination of budget cuts and tax increases would you suggest to address budgetary shortfalls? Regarding staffing, we will probably have to institute a freeze for the time being. I do not advocate layoffs of staff under any circumstances. Increasing fees for our students is not an option. Most of them struggle just to get enough to attend college.

2. While eleven community colleges in California offer student housing, CCSF does not. Given that housing in San Francisco is in high demand and hugely expensive, what would you propose to solve the problem for CCSF students who need housing?

The issue of student housing remains a problem. While it is true that most of our students live at home or with other family members, we still need to solve the affordability issues. We did at one time look at building student/faculty housing, but couldn't get the City to back our plans. Now, with the budget crisis, this will have to wait awhile.

3. How can CCSF address the needs of disadvantaged students – those with lower grades and educational inadequacies? How would you propose to increase opportunities for them to catch up to the other students?

We have some wonderful programs at City College for at risk students. (APASS for Asian students, African American Achievement Program, Latino Service Program, EOPS which includes a study program for financially strapped students who qualify, and individual tutoring program. As I mentioned previously, I think we need to look at expanding our outreach programs to the high schools and junior high schools. We need to work jointly with them to re-design the curriculum to help students prepare for college.

4. What measures should CCSF take to improve its fiscal responsibility and public financial accountability, especially with its spending of bond money?

The College has put in place some very stringent requirements regarding the expenditure of bond money. A performance audit of bond money expenditures will now be conducted regularly, the Board adopted a stringent policy of whom can give contributions, and under what circumstances. I think on the whole, our bond funds have been spent on what was presented to the public and there has been very little concern about adequate oversight.

5. Do you support a voluntary system of Clean Elections – full public financing – of candidates for citywide offices? Would you participate in such a system if it were available?

Yes. I did accept the cap in this current election.

6. Do you support or oppose the following propositions on the November ballot? Please explain why or why not.

- Declaration of Policy of the people of San Francisco that its elected representatives in the US Senate and House should vote against any further funding for deployment of US Armed Forces in Iraq, except funds specifically earmarked for their safe withdrawal

I will not take a position on this. I have always opposed the war in Iraq, but I am reluctant to harm those troops that are there.

Support \_\_\_\_ Oppose \_\_\_\_ Reason:

- CA Proposition 4: Amends California Constitution to prohibit abortion for an unemancipated minor until 48 hours after physician notifies minor's parent, legal guardian or, if parental abuse reported, an adult family member

Support \_\_\_\_ Oppose \_\_\_\_ Reason:

I strongly oppose and have worked on the state level (I am on the State Party Resolutions Committee) to defeat this every time it comes forward.

- CA Proposition 5: Provides rehabilitation as an alternative to prison for nonviolent drug offenders

Support \_\_\_\_ Oppose \_\_\_\_ Reason:

I support this. I feel these people need help, not prison. City College runs some good programs to assist offenders in getting an education.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.