



Questionnaire for candidates for the office of
Trustee, SF Community College Board
General Election, November 2, 2010

*Please return this questionnaire electronically to contact_us@phdemclub.org no later than **Monday, August 30**, to confirm your speaking slot.*

Candidate name: John Rizzo
Office sought: Trustee, San Francisco Community College Board
Contact person: John Rizzo
Mail address: 1621 Waller St. San Francisco CA 94117
Telephone: 415-751-1615
Email address: john@johnrizzoforcollegeboard.com
Web address: www.johnrizzoforcollegeboard.com

Please write a brief response (≤ 150 words) to each question. We will make these questionnaires available to our members before the endorsement meeting.

1. Why are you running for office?

I am running continue the work I have done in my first term. One area is fiscal oversight. I have passed new policies and procedures that have instituted strong fiscal oversight of public funds and increased public access and transparency to the College District. Under these new policies and procedures, the District has completed the new Multi-Use building that is on budget and on time. Previous projects of this size were millions of dollars over budget.

I hope to continue in this approach to streamline the operations of the District through continued use of audits and the implementation of audit findings.

I also hope to continue to build City College into a regional leader in green jobs training.

2. What are your qualifications for this position?

I currently serve as the Vice President of the Board of Trustees. During my first term I have worked to prioritize spending to maximize benefits to students, while seeking equitable ways to implement state budget cuts that are fair to faculty and other employees. I have made green jobs training a priority of the District and helped bring in several grants to fund new programs. I have also championed the hiring of economically disadvantaged San Francisco residents for the District's construction projects.

I chair the Facilities, Infrastructure and Technology Committee, which oversees the District's construction projects and technology initiatives, including green buildings and computer infrastructure. I also serve also serve on the Budget and Planning Committee and the Audit Committee.

I am a member of Board of Directors of the City College Foundation. This year, I helped negotiate a new master agreement between the Foundation and the Community College District.

Before I was elected, I served on the City College Citizen's Bond Oversight Committee, where I first called for the District's first performance audit of taxpayer-funded construction projects. I also served on the subcommittee that drafted the Oversight Committee's annual report to the public.

For ten years, I served on the Golden Gate Park Concourse Authority Board of Directors, a body that directed land use policy and public improvements. The Board of Directors oversaw a \$50 million capital project and fought for improvements to public safety and park amenities.

I have also taught adult education, authored on-line courses, and wrote a book used in teaching.

4. What are the top three challenges facing San Francisco City College?

1. Budget Crisis. *Drastic cuts in education by the Governor and Legislature, as well as declines in property tax and sales tax revenue, have created a budget crisis in the District that has persisted through the past two years. It will likely continue for another two years. This past year*

we had to eliminate 1500 classes at a time when student enrollment is up, which means more students can't get into required classes.

2. Capital Cost Overruns and Lack of Transparency.

When I first started working on the Board of Trustees, the District's bond-funded construction projects were \$200 million over budget. There was little oversight and access by the public was difficult. Because of this, there is no funding left to build several vitally needed buildings.

As described in Question 5, I have largely fixed this issue through audits and many policy changes and increased checks and balances.

3. The achievement gap: Improving student success rates.

Disadvantaged students have a drop-out rate much higher than other students, and a transfer rate to 4-year college that is low. An issue is that often students come in with lower skills and have more work to do to get to required levels.

5. What have you done during your term in office to address these challenges?

1. Budget Crises. *For the 2010-2011 school year, we have been able to restore some of the classes we cut last year. I have focused on a fair, collaborative approach:*

- Collaboration with employee bargaining units in seeking budget solutions. A cooperative approach has been productive.*
- I have supported the goal of no layoffs to full-time faculty and staff. Staff reductions so far have been with laying off part-time faculty, as well as a combination of hiring freezes and retirement incentives.*
- Reduction in the number of administrators and managers through retirement incentives*
- Shared give-backs by employees at all levels, including administrators and manager, in the form of salary freezes and cuts, furloughs, and other mechanisms.*
- Protecting student services, such as counseling and other programs for special-needs students that are important in keep students in the program.*
- Lobbying state legislators to increase education spending by creating new revenue.*

2. Capital Cost Overruns and Lack of Transparency.

During my first term, I created and passed several dozen new policies and procedures that have instituted strong fiscal oversight of public funds and increased public access and transparency to the College District. This has resulted in millions in cost savings.

I began with a resolution authorizing a performance audit of capital projects. I then authored a resolution authorizing an internal investigation into misappropriation of public funds; I lead the task force to hire an investigator. The findings lead the hiring of an internal auditor, who started investigations and audits of his own.

Under these new policies and procedures, the District has completed the new Multi-Use building that is on budget and on time. Previous projects of this size were each tens of millions of dollars over budget.

I also co-authored and passed the District's first Sunshine Policy, to give the public better access to the governance of the District. As a result, meetings are now held in a more transparent manner and information and internal documents are more accessible to the public.

3. The achievement gap: Improving student success rates.

I supported a "student equity resolution" that put this problem at the top of the Board's agenda.

Student services are vital to student success with struggling students. I have worked to support student services in the budget. Although the governor has cut funding to some student services by 60 percent, I supported cuts that were much less drastic.

I also helped begin a process of evaluating what is not working and what has been successful.

6. If reelected, how do you plan to continue and expand these efforts?

1. Budget Crisis.

Many of the tools we've used to balance the budget in the past two years are one-time measures. I will propose some new methods to address the crisis, including:

- Audits. Audits have worked well for construction projects. I will push for audits of the operations side of the District in a variety of areas. I believe there are costs savings that will result from this.*
- Seeking new sources of funding from grants and philanthropy.*
- Seeking to lower the cost of healthcare by seeking new providers.*
- Lowering utility costs by implementing energy-saving measures in buildings*

2. Capital Cost Overruns and Lack of Transparency.

This issue is largely under control. I will continue to provide strict oversight for the one remaining project, the Chinatown-North Beach campus, to make sure that it comes in on budget, in order to avoid cutting programs.

I will move to refinance the existing bond debt to take advantage of lower interest rates. This will lower property taxes for San Franciscans.

3. The achievement gap: Improving student success rates.

We need to redesign the way counseling is done to reduce the achievement gap. Better counseling can get the right services to the students who need them. It can also prevent students from wasting time taking the wrong classes and focus their efforts on what they need to succeed.

The academic programs themselves need to be reevaluated and probably changed. The Board of Trustees can also provide the framework to enable the development of new types of curriculum and changes to current curriculum. However, the Board must respect the principles of academic freedom that are required by law, and cannot impose changes to curriculum.

7. Please describe your other major accomplishments while in office.

Expanded Green Jobs Training and Brought in New Funding

I have made green jobs training a priority of the District and helped bring in several grants to fund new programs. The most recent program just started. I secured funding from SolarCity, and worked with community members and City College staff to craft a solar training program for economically disadvantaged Bayview residents.

I also put together a team of industry, government, and community-based organization representatives to go after grant funding. This resulted in several million dollars in state and federal grants to create new solar and hybrid car mechanics training programs.

Green buildings/Sustainability plan

I have pushed for high environmental standards, including the passage of environmental Sustainability Plan, and imposing green building standards on new construction. Our new building to open, the Multi-Use Building, is a LEED Gold standard building.

Local Hiring.

I have worked to employ more San Francisco residents in the District's construction projects by putting together a program.

Update the District's Technology

I've been chairing the Technology Committee, now the Facilities, Infrastructure and Technology Committee, to push for keeping the District's technology up-to-date and to see where technology could help. For instance, I lead an effort to get a document imaging system installed in the Financial Aid Department, in order to save an enormous amount of

paper and cut down the time in processing student applications. I also suggested that the District create a new position for an Information Technology Director, and participated in the interviews of the candidates.

Do you support or oppose the following Propositions on the November ballot?

Proposition 19 X support oppose

Proposition 23 support X oppose

Proposition 26 support X oppose

Thank you for your time, and your commitment to education. We look forward to seeing you on September 7th.