



**Candidate questionnaire for
San Francisco City College Board of Trustees
General Election, November 4, 2014**

Please return this questionnaire electronically to contact_us@phdemclub.org **no later than Saturday, August 30**. Candidates who do not return the questionnaire by the due date will not be invited to participate in the September 9th forum. Questionnaires will be made available to our members online.

Candidate name: John Rizzo

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Please write a brief response (≤ 200 words) to each question.

1. Please describe your qualifications for this office.

I have been a leader in fighting for accreditation of City College, fighting an out-of-control accrediting agency, as well as the lead in cleaning up the aftermath of the 2007 corruption scandal at City College. We need continued strong leadership and skill to battle

I voted to approve City College's "roadmap" to accreditation, which is now 95% complete, yet the accrediting agency has yet to look at any of the work done in the past 18 months. I have worked with Sacramento legislators to bring these facts to light. I have worked with Assemblyman Tom Ammiano on AB 2087 "Local Community College Board Authority", which would ensure that voters are represented by elected Boards of Trustees.

Under my leadership as President, City College has outperformed most California community colleges in student success, with higher rates of completion in both college preparation and remedial programs. My work has saved the school tens of millions of dollars through financial reform and streamlined management – further strengthening City College's future.

I led the effort in fighting corruption in the City College administration, and led the effort to overhaul the construction management to introduce efficiencies that were completely successful.

The last two buildings were on budget, a first for City College.

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 by creating the city's first local hiring program for construction projects.

2. What are the top three issues facing CCSF, and what will you do about those issues?

1. Accreditation.

Despite City College having completed 95% of the required fiscal and planning reforms, the accrediting agency still threatens the College with closure. The ACCJC has refused to recognize the progress, and has not visited the college in 16 months.

Representative Jackie Speier said of the accrediting agency, "The ACCJC has run amok, they have lost their vision -- if they ever had one."

We must put pressure on the administration to make sure that 100% of the tasks are completed. But we must also continue to pressure ACCJC by continuing to work with our state legislators and local elected officials to guarantee fair treatment of City College. I strongly support legislation that would enable community colleges to select other accrediting agencies. I believe we may attempt along these lines next year. There will be an opportunity after the City's lawsuit against ACCJC in October for further legislative initiatives in Sacramento. I will be ready to work with legislators.

The stakes are high. The innovative job training programs I helped create enable students to share in San Francisco's economic growth. I will continue to prioritize resources for classes and counseling over administrative overhead in order to provide students what they need to succeed.

2. The over 25% drop in enrollment – caused by the continuing accreditation threat – is a desperate problem that needs to be fixed, as it threatens the loss of tens of millions of dollars in state funding. Senator Mark Leno stabilized funding for the short term. But the administration must significantly boost recruitment efforts for the long-term health of the institution.

3. The third priority is making sure City College continues to serve the diverse needs of our students. Getting students to 4-year college is only part of what City College does. We need to protect our programs that provide workforce training, education for the formerly incarcerated, counseling for special-needs students, English as a second language, retraining people who already have degrees, lifelong learning, as well many other programs that benefit our students.

3. How do you envision your role as Trustee if the board you serve on doesn't meet?

During the time the Board has not been meeting, I have been busy using my position as a Trustee to fight for City College here in San Francisco and in Sacramento. I will continue to do so. As the situation develops, there will be more opportunities for me to expand my efforts.

I will continue to work with Sacramento legislators, and will push for for a new law that would enable City College, and other community colleges, to select other accrediting agencies.

Once the City's lawsuit against the accreditation agency is over, I will work to recruit students to City College to stem the dangerous drop in student enrollment that is threatening City College's class offerings and funding. I will do this by meeting with members of School Boards not just in San Francisco, but also around the Bay Area. I will also meet with Trustees of other Bay Area Community Colleges.

4. Why did you choose in particular to run for a 4-year term and not a 2-year term?

I had been planning to run for the 4-year term, when two days before the filing date, the Department of Elections informed me that there was a separate election for two-year term only two days before the filing deadline. Before that, it had only said there were 4-year terms available.

I decided to stay with the decision because I want to make sure to see the accreditation issue through to its completion.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to public service. We look forward to seeing you at the Potrero Hill Neighborhood House on September 9th.

FYI, here are some of my endorsements:

Assemblyman Tom Ammiano
Assemblyman Phil Ting
Public Defender Jeff Adachi
Former Mayor Art Agnos
Supervisor Eric Mar
Supervisor David Campos
Former State Senator Carol Migden
Former Supervisor Jake McGoldrick
Louise Renne, former City Attorney
Petra De Jesus, Police Commissioner
Vince Courtney Jr., President, SF Public Utilities Commission
Joshua Arce, President, Environment Commission
Jane Morison, former Woman's Chair, California Democratic Party
Jeanine Cotter, CEO Luminalt Solar Energy

Organizations

Sierra Club
San Francisco Tenants Union
San Francisco Building Trades Council
Laborers Union Local 261
San Francisco Women's Political Committee
District 5 Democratic Club