

Potrero Hill Democratic Club
City College Board of Trustees Candidate Questionnaire
for meeting Tuesday, September 13, 2022, 6:30pm
Potrero Hill Neighborhood House
953 De Haro St

Candidate name: **Brigitte Davila**
Contact person: **same**
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*Please write a brief response (up to 200 words) to each question. **Please email the completed questionnaire to contact_us@phdemclub.org by Monday, September 5.** The questionnaires will be made available online to club members.*

Please describe your qualifications for this office.

I bring a unique skill set to the Board. I bring 27 years of higher education experience teaching at SFSU in the College of Ethnic Studies. I am also proud member of a faculty union (CFA) and can understand the view from the other side as a faculty member. My experience in a college classroom has helped to inform many policy decisions. With my union, I fought for equitable funding for higher education at the state and federal government levels.

I also bring a deep understanding of the issues and needs of the Latinx community to the Board. I have the lived experience of growing up in a working-class Chicana neighborhood in Los Angeles and experiencing life as a first-generation college student. I also have the theory and policy understanding from my work in the Latina/o Studies Department at San Francisco State University.

Last, I have a law degree from Berkeley Law which assists my understanding of and gives me the tools to impact the public, fiscal and education policy making which the Board handles. My life and professional experience give me the ability to be a truly unique asset to the Board and the CCSF community.

If elected, what are your top 3 goals for CCSF? Specifically, how do you plan to accomplish these goals?

ACCREDITATION is my #1 Policy Goal right now. What many people don't realize is that without accreditation there is no point for a community college's existence at least for equity students. Without accreditation, there is no State funding, no financial aid and no ability to transfer units. When critics charge that accreditation is corrupt or emphasizes the wrong metrics, all I can say is that is a fight for another day. Accreditation is too important to risk losing. I do not think

City College would survive another state takeover or accreditation debacle. Our Board has made sure the path is clear for our accreditation in 2023 and for the next seven years.

ENROLLMENT: Increasing enrollment is the lifeblood of the college and we have been hit hard by both the accreditation debacle in 2012/13 and the pandemic. We need to bring students back. We started doing this before the pandemic through marketing and Free City and we started seeing results - we need to go back to that. I see the new registration system as a part of the marketing to attract students back. By the way, this is not unique to City College, enrollments are down across the country and the state. We need to use everything we have to increase enrollments. We've done it before and we can do it again.

TRANSPARENCY: I think we can do much more to increase transparency. We now have a contract for an independent auditing consultant that reports directly to the Board. I also firmly support the process for review by all stakeholders including Academic Senate, Student leadership and the Participatory Governance Committee.

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

I am running for re-election to my third and final term on the City College Board of Trustees. I was re-elected to a 4 year term in 2018 and I am now running for the same seat again. I have a number of important projects I started and want to finish up. Accreditation for the next seven years.... I want to break ground and start construction on, at least, the first three projects and start using the \$845M of bond money we raised in 2020. I want to land an innovative HSI grant that helps faculty and students explore the relationship between Science, Math and Technology with the Arts. I want to get our dual enrollment program up and running so that HS students can get 2 years of college while in High School. I also am involved in lobbying at the state and federal level for more funding to support students - that never ends.

I work with the 2 year candidate Trustee Murrell Green and I have a great deal of respect for his experience and integrity. I am supporting him and I prefer to not run against him fo the one 2-year seat.

If you are an incumbent, please tell us what you are most proud of. If you are the challenger, describe something the incumbent(s) did that you would have done differently

I along with other members of my Board, including John Rizzo and Thea Selby had to make an extremely tough decision. We were warned 3 times by the state and most recently by the accreditation agency - that we needed to get our finances in order and develop a budget for the students that we actually have, not the students we hope to have. (A little history - CCSF never recovered enrollment losses from the last accreditation debacle in 2012, and the pandemic exacerbated

this enrollment problem. In addition, the state took over the college and relieved the Board of its duties in 2013 due to financial problems.)

Now in 2022, Salaries were 94% of our operating costs, and we could not afford other accreditation requirements. Although we had tried to adjust by offering incentivized retirement benefits - we had few takers. This left us with no other choice than to lay off faculty. This is the most difficult decision I have faced in my life, especially as a faculty member myself. I saw no choice, though, and I will not risk another state takeover for CCSF. Thanks to our action we do now have a balanced budget, no structural deficit and we have met all the other requirements for accreditation. As mentioned in a previous question Accreditation is everything for a community college

What allocations in the current budget are higher/lower than needed and why? Please describe your current or previous experience with budgetary oversight.

We do not have a reliable funding stream for important community oriented adult education The (2016 Prop W) Free City College revenue stream can be helpful, but there are a lot of requirements before we can use those funds. One thing the City can do is support adult education with non-credit classes like the Older Adult Program Last, overall, public higher education budgets have been cut to the bone - it is time that the state stopped funding community colleges like its 1982 and created a more realistic funding source.

In addition, how community colleges are funded generally is a problem. They are funded in the same manner as the CSU and UC systems but attract much more diverse students which requires different levels of support. If elected, I plan to work on this as I have a good relationship with our San Francisco state legislatures (Phil Ting, Matt Haney and Scott Weiner have all endorsed me) I also have relationships with other State Senators and Assembly members from across Souther California through NALEO. So this is entirely feasible working with community college trustees across the state who have the same issues.

In addition to what you might have cited in your goals, what is CCSF doing well that needs to be supported and maintained? How would you support these strengths as a trustee?

We raised an \$845 million bond to repair and rebuild our aging infrastructure. I am on the Facilities Committee and we have just received the green light from th estate architect to begin building - very exciting. We will be building a state of the art performance Center and a STEAM building right next door. In addition we will be building a much needed Student Center. This is the beginning of clean, energy efficient, fully modern buildings to support student academic and support activities. I have been working with architects, project managers and contractors as well as building stakeholders to plan and prioritize our buildings.

In addition to what you might have cited in your goals, what is CCSF not doing well and how would you bring about improvement or change as a trustee?

Our online registration system is a series of patches to an old system. For many years due t the structural deficit we could not do more than patch it. Now that the deficit has been eliminated and the budget balanced, we have just issued Request For Proposals for a new registration system. As a student myself, I'm very excited about seeing this through to completion next year.

Thank you for taking the time to fill this out, and thanks for running!
You are welcome - I believe in City College