

**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: Jason Zeng  
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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](mailto: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.

Professionally, I'm a data engineer. I currently work as an energy analyst for PG&E in Energy Procurement. I ran for this position in 2015 during the accreditation crisis, and left San Francisco in 2016 for work and then graduate school in Montana. I've experienced severe poverty, including living half a year out of my car during the pandemic, and it's difficult to comprehend that predicament. The tools just aren't there for people to get out, and we have to give people an alternative than the streets of the Tenderloin.

I believe that education is a public good, but not when it's run by inept administration. It is inconceivable that with a \$160 million dollars budget, City College has an abysmal 19.3% graduation rate in 2019. That's the city failing 4 out of every 5 students.

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

Everyone has the right to their own body and a fair chance at a dignified life. Our country strives for equity, but many people do get left behind. That's why I believe City College should always be free for all San Franciscans, because it gives everyone in our city a chance to fight for a dignified life, no matter their background, age, or history. Removing barriers to education is the only way to help people out of the poverty trap.

To accomplish this, City College needs to meet its due diligence. City College isn't a destination, it's a stepping stone to the rest of your life. Investments in the fundamentals of academics and student services are key, but so is the growth of support staff such as academic advisors. Many people who first enter City College do not have an idea of what they want out of the experience, and having someone to guide them through will reduce the time spent at City College and more on enjoying a boundless life afterwards.

I intend to keep City College free for San Franciscans forever and always, streamline requirements for graduation, and increase access to physical and digital classrooms.

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

Because change doesn't come quickly; I would never have considered a 2-year term if Temprano isn't stepping down.

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

There are various aspects of Davila's regime that I agree with, however, I'd have focused more on regaining student population and driving revenue, than cutting expenses.

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

I used to work at Interpublic Group and managed the finances for programmatic bidding at a Big 4 advertising company, with similar budgets to City College in the low 9 digits. I'd start by cutting the salary of the board of trustees, and reduce general salary in leeway of higher benefits. I'd consolidate classes with low registration and shift how tenure works in favor of specialized lecturers with higher hourly pay, but lower time commitments. Next, I'd shift resources to research which will generate additional income in state and federal grants. Being a Junior College doesn't mean you can't be a research institution.

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?

City College is still an accessible venue for San Franciscans which provides an educational option for everyone irregardless of their background. I would strengthen this by codifying its accessibility for San Franciscans as a mandate.

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?

CCSF is poorly run. I believe that mass layoffs in any organization, whether business or education, is the fault of the administration. This can range from misguided forecasts, to the inability to take leadership during a crisis.

The budget crisis currently can be attributed to a mix of 1) reduced enrollment during the pandemic, 2) extended student tenures with no plans for their next step, and 3) inefficient administration in setting meaningless forward agendas followed by lopsided hiring up to the pandemic.

Point 1 and 2 can be ameliorated further with academic advisors,, which will drive enrollment for quality education and reduce excessive student tenures. In addition, City College needs to build new sources of revenue. For example, people pay 20k for a Hackreactor or AppAcademy course so they can get the correct skills to get hired by Google or Apple. Yet, City College can build recruitment pipelines and partnerships to both generate revenue and help the San Francisco Bay economy by providing skilled talent.

*Thank you for taking the time to fill this out, and thanks for running!*