

Santa Monica Democratic Club
2024 College Board Candidate Questionnaire
Submitted by:
Dr. Margaret Quinones- Perez
Trustee and Board Chair
Santa Monica College Trustees

General Information

Candidate Name: Dr. Margaret Quinones Perez

Email Address: mquin1955@aol.com

Candidate's Occupation: Retired community college counselor and Trustee of SMC

Candidate's Employer: SMC Trustee

Campaign Contact Person

1. What qualifications do you have for this office?

I have been a board of education member for 8 years with SMMUSD and a Trustee of SMC for 24 years. I am still very much engaged in higher education and at the forefront of community college issues and innovations.

2. Why are you running?

I am passionate about the future of California Community Colleges, particularly SMC. There is still much work to do, and I am committed to doing the challenging work to make our students successful.

3. What are the top issues of your campaign? How do you plan to address those issues once elected?

The top issues in my campaign are the following:

First, I would support SMC's current Superintendent/President.

Ensure greater retention and success of student of color.

My top three goals are:

(1) Secure housing for low income and unhoused students

(2) Create selected strong workforce programs such as Cloud Computing and computer coding so that students can go directly into lucrative careers, and

(3) Support thriving transfers to four-year universities.

The foundation of these three goals is to ensure that SMC remains a gateway for underrepresented students. This requires the support of SMC's faculty, support staff, and administrative teams.

4. Please list all your individual and/or organizational endorsements.

- Senator Ben Allen
- Shelia Kuehl, Former L.A. County Supervisor
- Tony Vasquez, Board of Equalization
- Laurie Lieberman, SMMUSD Board of Education
- Maria Leon- Vasquez, SMMUSD Board of Education
- Barry Snell, Trustee SMC
- Dan Hall
- Nancy Greenstein, Trustee SMC
- Sion Roy, Trustee SMC
- Richard Tahvildaran-Jesswein, SMMUSD Board of Education
- Caroline Torosis, SM City Council
- Sharon Barovsky, Former Malibu City Council
- Tom Peters, Trustee SMC
- Luis Barrera Castanon

5. How long have you lived in Santa Monica or Malibu? Where else have you lived?

I have lived in the Westside all my life and in Santa Monica 50 yrs.

6. Will you pledge to serve on the College Board for your entire four-year term?

Absolutely Yes

Campaign Finance

1. How much money have you raised for your campaign to date?

\$12,000 pending

2. How much do you intend to raise by Election Day 2024?

\$30,000

3. Candidates for local office often choose not to take campaign contributions from types of organizations or industries. Are there any such sources from which you would decline donations? If so, which?

No donations or contributions from SMC vendors, developers and organizations or entities that invest in weapons of war and climate degradation.

Party / Activism

1. How long have you been a registered Democrat? Have you ever been registered as a member of another political party, or as Decline to State? If so, which party and why?

All my life I have been a democrat

2. What is your experience with political activism? Have you ever volunteered or worked for a political campaign other than your own, and if so, in what capacity were you involved?

I have worked on Tony Vasquez campaign for Board of Equalization, Congressman Schiff's past and present campaigns, and Hilary Clinton and President Obama's campaigns.

3. Which political candidates have you endorsed or supported publicly in the past? Please list as many as possible, especially where you endorsed during a contested primary.

I have endorsed the following candidates:

- Congressman Schiff

- Hilary Clinton
 - President Obama
 - Tony Vasquez
 - Maria Vasquez
 - Mary Figueroa
 - Governor Newsom
 - Mayor Karen Bass
 - Richard T.J
 - Jennifer
 - Barry Snell
 - Nancy Greenstein
 - Susan Aminoff
 - Rob Rader
 - Carol Tesoro
 - Sion Roy
 - Tom Peters
4. **Have you ever signed for or publicly supported efforts to recall a public official from office? If so, please list the name(s) of the officials and why you felt they should be recalled.**
- No
5. **Please list any organizations with which you are a member, including any leadership position you have held in each organization.**
- Former Board of Governors, California Community Colleges Board Member
 - Former National Hispana Leadership Institute, Board Member
 - Former El Camino College Faculty Association, Political Director, VP, and Negotiation Team Member
 - Treasurer, Latino Caucus, Community College League of California
 - Former Puente Advisory Board
6. **Please confirm that you have read the latest version of the California Democratic Party Platform, as found below. List any items in the CDP Platform with which you disagree.**

<https://cadem.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/FinalPlatform2024.pdf>

I confirm and agree with the CDP Platform

SMC

1. **What are your top priorities for SMC which you plan to address in this four-year term?**
- Making sure the budget is healthy
 - Ensuring safety and security on campus and the community
 - Building affordable student housing
 - Providing innovative professional development opportunities for faculty and staff
 - Implementing programs that will meet today's and future workforce demands
2. **Deficit-based framing like “achievement gap” can increase challenges students from marginalized backgrounds face in academic environments. More widely, deficit framing can influence how broader communities see foundational complexities of education inequity. As an SMC leader, how are you effectively shaping policy that helps students thrive and promotes healthy public debate?**

Deficit based framing is a disaster when it comes to making sure students learn and thrive in K-12 and higher education. I know this because as a community college counselor I witnessed many students considered to have huge deficits excel. They excelled because they had assets that were invaluable to their academic and social success. I am a believer of culturally responsive teaching and learning. Faculty and staff must recognize the strengths students bring to SMC and build upon those strengths. Faculty and staff must guide and teach them through culturally responsive lens. In that way students' assets blossom and they can overcome any obstacles that confront them. Students are resilient. They come to SMC working part time or full time, taking care of their siblings and parents, and have "run the gauntlet" in K-12 overcoming so many barriers and lack of support from schools. Yet, they attend SMC. We must not give them more gauntlets to go through, rather we must give them the pathways to achieve their goals.

I constantly remind faculty and staff of the need to approach our students in an asset-based model. I encourage professional development programs on campus to teach faculty and staff how to utilize asset-based pedagogy and student support services to lift their learning and social development. I also watch closely legislation that encourages culturally responsive teaching and learning such as ethnic studies and civic engagement policies and programs.

3. Should SMC prioritize investments in hybrid instruction or emphasize a return to in-person instruction?

It is my belief and with my conversations with students I have found that in-person instruction is best. However, students have spoken about the flexibility of hybrid learning, particularly as they work full or part time while parenting or taking care of their loved ones. I would not prioritize hybrid learning; however, we need to have the capacity to do b) when appropriate. Hybrid learning and support does not just happen with instruction. Hybrid student support services (e.g., counseling, tutoring, writing assistance, health and mental health offerings are needed as well.

4. Given current plans to build housing for SMC students, should priority be given to any groups of students (for example, unhoused students, international students, etc.)? Should there also be market rate housing for all SMC students, regardless of need?

The intention of Santa Monica voters was to provide affordable housing for students. Thus, we need to adhere to their wishes. We need to prioritize housing for unhoused students as a publicly higher education institution.

5. In what ways can SMC better collaborate directly with SMMUSD?

We can

- expand the dual enrollment program.
- provide more comprehensive services for special education students coming to SMC.
- work collaboratively with SMMUSD on literacy, ESL, mathematics proficiency, particularly for African American and Latino students
- work together on the use of AI for instruction and student support services
- collaborate on community schools' model they have established with LACOE

Social Justice

1. What can SMC do to better implement social justice instruction and otherwise address equity issues?

SMC established the public policy institute that is successful and affording students the opportunity to work on community, state, and global social justice issues. It should be noted that more than 60% of SMC students are Latino and people of color. Guest speakers and activists have provided our students with learning experiences that get them to volunteer and work on social justice issues. Beyond that our ethnic studies department provides students with historical, sociological, and economic knowledge to rectify past issues confronting our nation. Finally, SMC supports professional development programs for faculty and staff to gain the tools to guide students in their quest to “make a difference” and/or support efforts to create a better world.

2. How can SMC respond to potentially disruptive on-campus protests, balancing the free speech rights of students with the safety of others who feel targeted by their actions and rhetoric?

SMC, like many higher education institutions, are facing the challenges of so many global issues and conflicts. Today we are facing the Palestinian and Israel conflict. Citizens and students have the right to protest the war. They have the right to free speech and protest. SMC must respect this right and ensure that their expression is safe for all on campus.

Recently SMC experienced potentially volatile situations and has been able to bring peaceful resolutions. I will work hard to make sure the college continues to have constructive, meaningful, and peaceful dialogue through sponsoring a number of activities and initiatives. The activities and initiatives conducted by the Division of Equity, Pathways, and Inclusion Programs (DEPIP) include:

- Workshops
- Seminars
- Speakers
- listening sessions that support all points of view where people are heard and appreciated.

Some examples include:

Zack Ritter & Mohiuddin Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia Awareness workshop

Dr. Nina Flores: Where did you learn how to disagree? The role of listening and repair as we debate, discuss and dialogue.

Unconscious Bias and Microaggressions: Examples and Impact.

Thus, SMC will ensure their free speech rights are protected while ensuring that it is done in a safe and nonviolent manner. We will make this happen with the appropriate

level of oversight and enforcement if necessary. We will continue to allow free speech expression and emphasize the humanity we all share no matter our backgrounds, religious beliefs, or convictions.

3. How would you use your position on the College Board to assist systematically disadvantaged groups of residents of Santa Monica?

SMC has a history of serving disadvantaged students from disadvantaged communities. Our Equity Center is a testament to our commitment to fund this effort. We make sure our students from disadvantaged backgrounds get what they need to be successful. We have annual data on “disproportionate impact” on students from ethnic, gender, and lifestyles that are not graduating, completing, or being admitted compared to the general population. That data is used to increase funding and support for these disaggregated groups.

4. Considering anti-DEI practices across the nation and state, how is SMC encouraging opportunity based on place and promoting more equitable approaches to public education?

As stated in question 3 SMC reviews data annually on the progress of DEIA goals. We know where we need to provide additional support to improve the needle on diversity, inclusion, and equity on campus. This is a priority of the college and as the Trustee to SMC I am fully engaged in making sure we provide the support needed to address our shortfalls. SMC’s Division of Equity, Pathways, and Inclusion (DEIP) has sponsored a number of programs to encourage opportunity and increase equity. Some examples are below:

- National Science Foundation Hispanic Serving Institution/ STEM grant
- California Trustee Fellow Intersession, California Guided Pathways (Redesigning the Student Experience)
- Equitizing Gateway Courses
- Institutional Effectiveness Partnership
- Campus Wide Equity Audit
- Caring Campus Initiative
- The Center for Teaching Excellence, and Student Care Teams.

Ballot Measures

Do you support the Justice For Renters Act? (Yes)

Do you support the repeal of Article 34? (Yes)

Do you support the initiative to require new local taxes to pass by a two-thirds vote?

Do you support the potential measure to amend Prop 47? (I am conflicted)

Do you support the proposed amendments to Measure GS to exempt multifamily housing? (no)

Additional Questions

1. **What role do you believe the Santa Monica Democratic Club should have in our City?**

SMDC should fully participate in all discussions prior to decision making

2. **If elected, how would you attempt to interact with the Santa Monica Democratic Club and other political organizations to ensure community buy-in on new proposals?**

I will always be available to speak and educate our members on SMC's progress to better serve our students and the community.