

Santa Monica Democratic Club

2026 College Board Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for your interest in the Santa Monica Democratic Club endorsement. Candidates seeking the endorsement of our Club must complete and return the following questionnaire. Only registered Democrats are eligible for our consideration. Submitting this questionnaire constitutes acknowledgment that its contents are now part of the public record and may be reproduced and distributed by the Santa Monica Democratic Club.

Please send the completed questionnaire to smdemocrats@gmail.com by 11:59pm on June 8, 2026. Interview appointment times with our Executive Committee will be scheduled on a first come first served basis for the weekend of June 20/21 as the questionnaires are returned.

None of these questions shall be construed as litmus tests. There are no questions that must be answered a certain way to be considered for our endorsement.

General Information

Candidate Name: Sion Roy

Email Address: sionroy2002@gmail.com

Candidate's Current Occupation: cardiologist

Candidate's Employer: Harbor UCLA Medical Center

Campaign Contact Person (if other than candidate): n/a

1. What qualifications do you bring to this office?

I have served as a Board Member since 2017, being re-elected in 2022, during which time I spearheaded multiple successful healthcare workforce programs at SMC. A longtime Santa Monica and Malibu resident, I have a vested interest in ensuring SMC's success as part of our community. I view the community college system as one of the most important and undervalued avenues of social mobility, and I intend to work with our Board and college leadership to see that our students have access to the very best services that SMC can provide.

2. Why are you running?

I am running to work to stabilize the college's finances for faculty, staff, and students amidst a difficult budget, and looking forward, I will continue to lead on expanding healthcare workforce programs and adding student housing to our Bundy campus.

3. What are the top issues of your campaign, and how do they differ from other candidates in this race? How do you plan to address those issues once elected?

As chair of the board, I am seeking re-election to:

1. Help our college find financial stability in the long term so that our students, faculty, and staff are able to succeed without threats of financial uncertainty
2. Expand healthcare and other workforce programs
3. Bring affordable student housing to our Bundy campus
4. Help our Malibu campus thrive after the effects of both the Palisades fire and the college's budgetary issues.

5. I will help to address these priorities by bringing experience to the table, having been the longest-serving SMC candidate/current trustee on the ballot this year. I can provide a deep lens on the healthcare priority by virtue of my long career in healthcare policy which makes me unique among some great running mates. We have a unique opportunity to welcome a new President and shape the college for the modern era, and that is the time to address my issue areas.

4. Please list all endorsements received to date (individual and organizational).

I recently finished running for state senate, and I am still compiling a list of endorsements for re-election to SMC board. However I am proud to have been endorsed by SMDC and dozens of Santa Monica elected officials just 4 years ago when I ran for re-election, including the full Board of Trustees of SMC.

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

Originally from Phoenix, I moved to Santa Monica in 2010. Kathy and I lived downtown, in Wilmont, and Ocean Park over the course of a decade before moving to Malibu in 2021. We currently live in the Sunset Park neighborhood of Santa Monica after losing our home in Malibu in the Palisades fire.

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

Yes.

7. What is your history of watching, attending, or speaking at SMC Board meetings? (If incumbent, prior to your own service.)

Prior to my own service on the Board, I was a frequent viewer and speaker at SMC Board meetings. I also taught at SMC and was on the Bond Oversight Committee.

Campaign Finance

1. How much money have you raised for your campaign to date? I have not begun raising money yet because I just finished running for the state senate primary. In that race I raised more than \$700,000 for the primary.

2. How much do you intend to raise by Election Day 2026? I intend to raise as much as needed to get the message out to the voters.

3. Candidates for local office often choose not to take campaign contributions from particular types of organizations or industries who are out of step with their own values. Are there any such sources from which you would decline donations? If so, which?

I would vet every donation and certainly would refuse money from the oil and tobacco industries.

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?
I'm a lifelong 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 long been involved in ADEMs and previously served on the California Democratic Party finance committee. I am the former President of the Santa Monica Democratic Club and served as the youngest president of the Los Angeles County Medical Association. I have been active in campaigns for capital improvements in our local schools, and I recently ran for the open Senate District 24 seat.

3. Which political candidates and/or ballot measures have you endorsed or supported publicly in the past? Please list as many as possible, especially where you endorsed during a contested primary. My record of endorsements is very public, including endorsing Adam Schiff during a contested primary. Of note to SMC and SMMUSD, I have always supported our educational bonds, as the public education system in our community is a gem, and I am grateful that the public is so committed to the health of our institutions.

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.
I am a former president of the Santa Monica Democratic Club, CADEM delegate, and a dues paying member of UAPD Local 206. Additionally, I have served in a leadership role in South Asians For America (SAFA) as co-chair of the California chapter. I am a former PTA President at Webster Elementary School in Malibu.

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/2026/02/CDP-Platform-2026-FINAL-Platform-Adopted-2.22.26.pdf>
Yes-- I confirm that I have read it.

SMC Governance & Finance

1. What are your top priorities for Santa Monica College over the next four years?
I will be focused on stabilizing our budget for our workforce as well as our students. This will include advocacy in Sacramento for a bigger budgetary commitment towards community

colleges that serve so many middle class and underserved California families in so many ways. I will also be focused on developing student housing that is affordable on our Bundy campus.

2. How do you assess the College's current financial and enrollment outlook, and what steps would you take to ensure long-term stability?

The college has been in a difficult financial situation and has taken difficult steps to improve the budget. The long term stability will be reliant on improving enrollment which has declined for multiple reasons, and also to get the state to make a bigger commitment to community college funding. With a new governor, there is an opportunity to get a bigger commitment to community colleges.

3. How would you approach working with the College administration to effectively implement Board policies and ensure accountability?

The main job of the board is to empower the President to successfully run the college. The major decision this upcoming year will be the decision on who the next President will be.

4. How do you assess Santa Monica College's current approach to transparency, public engagement, and community trust? What specific steps would you take to ensure accountability and meaningful public input in Board decision-making?

I am committed to making our board thought processes in a difficult budgetary situation as transparent and responsible as possible. I know that our decisions affect students, professors, classified staff, community members, and all their families. Transparency is of the utmost importance, and I have always governed with that in mind. It is one of the reasons that in the past few months as chair, I have transferred our board meetings to a larger auditorium- to make sure that public input is prioritized.

5. Santa Monica College recently faced a significant budget shortfall that led the Board to approve layoffs, prompting substantial public debate over the College's financial management and long-term planning. What is your assessment of how the Board handled the situation? How would you balance fiscal responsibility, workforce impacts, educational quality, transparency, and long-term institutional stability when making difficult governance decisions?

Our board made very difficult decisions when the majority approved layoffs. It was necessary at this time because of our fiscal situation, and looking forward I will continue to do what I have always done- prioritize the education and wellbeing of our students, and the wellbeing of our faculty and staff- every decision that I make starts with that, even the difficult ones like our layoffs.

Students & Learning

1. What specific steps would you take to improve student outcomes at SMC, including transfer rates, completion, and workforce readiness? How should success be measured?

The measure of student success is a personal and complex one- transfer rates are important, but so are the success of the students that go directly into a rewarding job with certain coursework completed or through a workforce program. Surveying our students as a whole after leaving the institution, regardless of if they transferred to a four year institution or otherwise,

would be very valuable to help get objective feedback from all our students to influence the improvement of our programs. I will continue to advocate for that to happen.

2. How should SMC address student housing insecurity, and how should access to any new student housing be prioritized?

I have long been advocating for campus housing for our SMC students. When students are sleeping in their cars because there is no affordable housing for them, we have failed in our role to provide for those students. I will be focused on developing student housing on our Bundy campus. Currently, the main obstacle is a stable funding mechanism, and I'm hopeful that will come in the near future.

3. What role should Santa Monica College play in supporting student mental health and well-being?

Student mental health is as important as physical health. As a physician, I have seen time and time again that mental and physical health are intertwined, and I continue to advocate for funding towards mental health support services for our SMC students.

4. How should Santa Monica College balance the use of digital learning tools and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, with concerns about academic integrity, student engagement, and educational quality? What guidelines or limitations, if any, should the College adopt?

Artificial intelligence is still in its nascent stage, and many have been, in my opinion, far too quick to try to incorporate it into learning environments. While it may have its place in a workplace (e.g. automating repetitive tasks or tedious data scraping) AI can be detrimental to an educational environment. We should be using tools to screen for AI generated responses in written assignments, and we should limit students' use of AI tools unless specifically required.

Campus & Community

1. In light of increasing political tensions surrounding public education nationwide, how should SMC balance academic freedom, free expression, inclusive learning environments, institutional neutrality, and disruptive campus protests?

Both academic freedom and having a safe, affirming campus for our students can be accomplished. During the 2025 protests of the Gaza conflict, we had no arrests and kept a safe, orderly environment where our students could express their views. I'm proud of the work that the Board did with the Campus Police in order to make this happen, and I'm even more proud of the way our students handled themselves.

2. How should the College adapt its programs to meet evolving workforce and economic needs?

Just like our healthcare workforce programs and nursing programs meet the needs of careers where there are massive shortages of workers, we need to look for other areas that have these same shortages. The rising cost of living demands that we make community college more affordable, and I intend to work with the state to see where and how we can lower costs.

3. Do you support the Club's resolution calling for a citywide ban of artificial turf on locally owned public land?

Yes except where necessitated by performance standards.

4. In what ways should SMC strengthen pathways between K-12 education, community college, and career opportunities?

As I stated previously, community college is one of the best-- and last remaining-- pathways to upward financial mobility. The California community college system is an undervalued resource that serves more students than the UC or CSU systems, and indeed it can serve as a pipeline to both those systems for students who wish to further their education. I support expanding our workforce programs, but also better integrating the pipeline from high-school to community colleges, as well as partnering with skilled trades.

5. What role should Santa Monica College play in the broader Santa Monica community and regional economy?

Santa Monica College serves as an affordable pathway for so many middle class Santa Monicans and Malubians to start their higher education without accumulating debt. Additionally, workforce programs through the college allow students to get the training they need to match to jobs locally in our community. Finally, SMC serves as a huge resource for courses for students in SMMUSD as well as seniors through our Emeritus college. Through all these mechanisms, SMC is a vital part of the community as a whole.

Ballot Measures

1. Do you support the California Billionaire Tax Act, which would impose a one-time emergency 5% tax on those worth more than \$1B? Why or why not?

I do not support the current CA Billionaire Tax Act because it is a one time tax and, like our over reliance on capital gains taxes, these types of revenue sources are volatile. I would favor a tax that would be permanent and provide more of a stable revenue source which could not be dodged by those with the means to do so.

2. Do you support the state ballot measure which would require voters to present government-issued identification when casting ballots? Why or why not?

No. Our voting systems in California are secure, and voter identification is verified in multiple steps. These voter-ID laws are a way to make it harder to vote and do not make voting any more secure, so I will not support them.

3. Do you support the proposed state taxpayer initiative which would limit the ability of local governments to raise revenue through certain taxes and fees including real estate transfer taxes? Why or why not?

I oppose these types of measures as municipalities need to have the ability to raise revenue. If voters are opposed to any revenues, they can vote them down at the ballot box.

4. Do you support the proposed ballot measure which would set aside 25% of the airport land for 3000 units of affordable housing, in addition to the remainder which would become a Great Park? Why or why not?

While I now understand that this ballot measure will not go forward to the voters this November, I have long supported the Airport to Park project. The current iteration of the plan provides for this whole area to become a Great Park, which I support. While, of course, we need more affordable housing, we also are incredibly park poor, with a huge deficit of green space for the number of residents we have. The Great Park would go a long way towards adding urban canopy, which lowers temperatures, etc, to the Santa Monica area, and it would provide a much needed community green space.

As SMC trustee, my major focus will be advancing our project on the Bundy campus focused on affordable housing for students over the course of my next term.

5. Based on results from the first few years of implementation, do you believe that 2022's Measure GS should be amended? If so, how and why?

Measure GS has been a boon to our renters, elders, our affordable housing capabilities and to our schools. At this time it likely does not need amending. If different data comes to light, I would always be open to learning about it.

Additional Questions

1. 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?

As my home club, I will continue to be an active member.

2. What is the most important topic that was left off of this questionnaire?

It is a comprehensive questionnaire.

3. Please describe whether and how you used generative AI tools in preparing your responses.

If elected, how would you use these tools in governance, if at all?

No AI tools were used, nor do I use them in any governance capacity.