

Daren Miller responses

1. The primary function of a State Center Community College Trustee is the financial oversight of the district. Secondly, Trustees create policy to be implemented throughout the district. Trustees should have an understanding of adult learning theory and be connected to both the rural and urban areas of the district. For the past 28 years, I have worked in educational systems grades K-16. My professional career includes administrative/management positions at Washington Union High School- Easton, Buchanan High School- Clovis, Madera High School, and Edison and Fresno High Schools as well as middle school assignments at Kings Canyon, Fresno Unified, West Fresno Elementary and Madera Unified. I also worked five-years at the community college level as an adjunct professor and Upward Bound Counselor. Additionally, I have been an active member of my community serving in leadership roles for social, political, and community organizations. I desire to use my vast educational career in combination with my years of community activism to raise the educational outcomes of adult learners in State Center Community College District.
2. SCCCDC is a major adult learners' education system in the Central Valley, serving nearly 60k students at their six sites. Additionally, community college is one of the most affordable adult education systems in the United States. Because of this, SCCCDC can affect educational outcomes in numerous ways. Fresno is recognized as one of the least educated cities in the country. As a trustee, I will work to create policies and community relationships to bolster and enhance current course offerings, career certification programs, and professional classes for those seeking to improve themselves. This can only be accomplished through knowledge of current adult learning systems and connections with surrounding school districts and larger community.
3. I will review current project plans, have conversations with current trustees and Chancellor Parnell, and engage the communities I represent about their desires for the project. The proposed West Fresno project will be of specific concern for me, as there is a history of unfulfilled promises to that area, as well as that area having the lowest academic achievement levels in the area. Minority and small businesses can be included in the process by using Project Labor Agreements and the targeted recruitment of their involvement. The board of Trustees can ensure this occurrence with the development and explicit enactment of policy calling for such to be done. The forthcoming growth/expansion of the district provides numerous opportunities for creative application of practices that include local small and minority businesses.
4. Yes, I do support both forms of the Dream Act. The legislative procedure affords protections to young people living in the United States that are not legal citizens. The Act also provides opportunities for these young people to become legal citizens after following and completing a specific legislatively created pathway, which includes the attainment of higher educational degrees. SCCCDC can be a major actor in the attainment of citizenship via the Dream Act procedure by specifically recognizing Dreamers (already done) and creating specific supports designed to assist Dreamers attaining education and citizenship.

5. First, student's desired outcomes must be clearly defined. Community college students represent a wide-range of learners. I believe that it is vital for students to identify their reason for entering community college. Beyond that, the system must have the ability to support, encourage, and direct instructional practices and programs that meet student's stated desires. The currently utilized "Student Success Scorecard" provides highlights for successes and areas of concern for the site's current practices and outcomes. The "Scorecard" system reviews the five areas listed in this question and more. The system has been used for the past five-years and provides a frame of oversight for the Trustees when creating policy and budgets.
6. I will work to expose 7-12 teachers to college professors and vice versa. Currently, there is a void of understanding between the two systems. K-12 instruction is guided by curriculum created at the state level (Common Core and frameworks), while CC instruction allows professors academic freedoms (teach curriculum as you wish). Additionally, K-12 educators are working to get their students graduated from high school. Graduating from high school only requires that a student earn a certain amount of credits. It is not requirement to show mastery of provided curriculum. The awareness of and remedy to this issue will be a major focus for me as Trustee. College Readiness of graduating high school students cannot be achieved in absence of understanding community college incoming expectations.
7. I do support college course on these subjects, and know that such coursework can be created and taught on CC campuses currently. It only requires a professor to create coursework, develop a curricular framework, and present the course to the site committee that sanctions new courses.
8. I am the most experienced candidate in the race. My 28-year professional career in K-12 education and five years working directly as a community college adjunct professor and Upward Bound Counselor in combination with extensive community involvement provides me with an array of educational system knowledge and connections in the community. These factors make me the most qualified candidate for the position.