

Central Valley Progressive Political Action Committee

Questionnaire

By

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September 2, 2018

[Some sections paraphrased from various sources]

- 1. What do you see as the role of a SCCCDC Trustee and what in your background qualifies you? Include why you want to be a Trustee in your answer to this question?**

My role as a member of the Board is to govern through district board policy. The Board employs a Chief Executive Officer - Chancellor - as the instructional leader. The Board acts as a community bridge and buffer. I am elected by the voters of Area 4, and serve as a Trustee of the SCCCDC.

My public service includes over 16 years: two-terms as SCCCDC Board Trustee (one-year as Board President) (8 years), two-terms as Reedley City Councilmember (2-years as Mayor Pro Tem) (8 years), and two terms as a Member of the Fresno County Southeast Solid Waste Commission (4-years as Chairman) (8 Years), and past member of City of Reedley Parks and Recreation Commission. My first adult leadership position was Boy Scouts of America, Assistant Scoutmaster Troop 281 Reedley (Eagle Scout Rank).

I am a proud graduate of Reedley College, where I was prepared with my Associate Degree to earn my Bachelor's Degree Fresno State, and a Master's Degree University of San Francisco. I have a Vocational Teaching Credential and courses for the Vocational Supervision Credential.

I spent 37 ½ year tenure as Horticulture instructor (Department Chair, Faculty Senate President, and served as a Chair and member on numerous committees including program review coordinator.

Retirement after Reedley College included 2 ½ years with Tree Fresno, an organization who promotes the improvement of our environment by planting trees. As Projects Director, I facilitated tree projects for the greater San Joaquin Valley. Some of the projects included Friant Oak Loop, Tarpey Village, city parks, and school campuses. I am currently teaching Ornamental Horticulture at Fresno State as adjunct faculty (five-years) and thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to work with students, community in the field of agriculture.

While teaching at Reedley College I was an owner of a family business owned business, Dinuba Garden Center. We were a full-service nursery (retail-landscape-consultation) with the focus on quality, service, and knowledge. Employees included five full-time staff and 10-12 part-time workers.

This past month it was announced I will be receiving the American Community Colleges Trustees Association's "Outstanding Trustee Award" for the Pacific Region at their October 24, 2018 Leadership Congress Awards Luncheon in New York. I have been inducted into Hall of Fame by the Greater Reedley Chamber for lifetime public service achievement. I was also the 2017 Reedley College Alumnus of the Year, Reedley College 90th Anniversary Birthday Celebration Lifetime Service Award Recipient 2017, Boy Scouts of America – National Eagle Scout Association Outstanding Eagle Scout of the Sequoia Council 2016, National FFA Association – Honorary American FFA Degree 2001, Fresno County Office of Education – William Noli Award 2009, California Agricultural Teachers Association – Teacher of Excellence Award 1999, and received numerous recognition from Horticultural Industries including the California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers.

I am seeking re-election to the SCCCDC Area 4 to continue my work for students and our "quest for excellence" in education. Through partnerships and support of the community, the dedicated work of our faculty and staff, and Board Trustees, we have experienced exciting and historic 8-years and now ranked as number two best community college in California by Schools.com. I want to ensure the commitment we made to our voters in 2016 to pass Measure C is accomplished for Reedley College.

2. What role does the SCCCDC play in the community and what would you do to insure student access to the district colleges and their courses?

SCCCDC plays a critical role in our community's especially the rural area by providing access to a quality education. Many of the course offerings allows students the ability to received technical training and degrees at affordable fees. The colleges within SCCCDC provide our communities benefits from educated citizens and well prepared workforce. They add to the economic, cultural, social, and intellectual health of our region. The colleges fulfill their role when students successfully achieve their goals.

The SCCCDC Board creates a climate for student success by assuring the fiscal health and stability, maintaining standards for good personnel relations, and monitoring institutional performance. The Board leads as a committed, thoughtful, compassionate highly educated team.

Through partnerships with the Central Valley Higher Education Consortium, Fresno State, Fresno County Office of Education, Central Valley Community Foundation, and the West Hills Community College District has established the "Central Valley Promise." The Promise provides students with: (1) Information, services and resources to prepare for college and

careers, (2) College and career counseling/advising through middle and high school and while in college and/or university, (3) Admission to community college with free tuition for their first semester, (4) Priority registration to stay on track toward graduation. This is a community-wide effort to promote college as a viable option for students in our region.

This semester, the SCCCDC has 758 students meeting the Promise requirements and enrolled district-wide. This number will grow as students make last minute changes.

Plans for the upcoming inaugural event, “Generation Celebration”, to be held on September 29, 2018 on the Fresno State campus are well underway.

In the rural community, access is critical. In Area 4, public transit systems have been established to the Reedley College campus from – Dinuba, Kingsburg, Orange Cove, Parlier, Sanger, and Selma. Students can ride buses to Reedley College and do not need vehicles to get an education.

Fresno City College has started a Neighborhood Campus program at Edison and Sunnyside High School campuses this semester. Courses include 10 and 9 classes respectively. I attended the mid-August press conference at Edison High School.

3. What will you do to insure that the SCCCDC Measure C Bond monies will be spent as promised and that minority and small businesses are effectively represented in the bidding process?

As a Trustee, I will continue to monitor the progress of the projects, keep constituents up-to-date on status, and advocate for timely completion of all projects.

The Board appointed a 9-member Oversight Committee to ensure monies are spent as per bond measure guidelines. The membership reflects our diverse communities in the district.

We have conducted Districtwide outreach workshops to provide information on the bond projects for small, local, minority contracting community to foster greater participation on bond procurement. Advertising included targeted advertisements and communications. The Board adopted new Board policy 6345 Diversity Procurement Policy. Numerous college meetings and community outreach meetings were held and will continue to communicate status updates on bond projects and timelines.

As a member of the Reedley College Bond community steering committee, I made campaign presentations to Area 4 Chambers of Commerce, service clubs, historical societies, and community groups. Additionally, I have given fundraising presentations to service clubs for the one to one match portion for the Center for Fine and Performing Arts for Reedley College. Construction is underway for the new Math and Science Building on campus. I monitor the progress on a routine basis.

4. Do you support the federal and California versions of the DREAM Act? Why?

Yes, I strongly support it. Everyone should have the opportunity to receive earn an Associate Degree or Certificate. Education lays the foundation for a stronger workforce and economy.

The Asian Pacific Islanders Trustees and Administrators (APITA) Caucus passed a "Resolution in Support of Deferred Action For Childhood Arrivals (DACA) at the Community College League of California Annual Conference in November 2016. As an officer of APITA, I shared the document with SCCCD Chancellor Parnell who reviewed the document and wrote Resolution No. 2016.33 "Resolution In Support of Deferred Action For Childhood Arrivals (DACA)" which we passed in December 2016.

As a note, I attended an August 3, 2018 , Fresno City College Dream Center Scholarship Ceremony with two other trustees. Reedley College has opened a new Dream Center. There are workshops to help undocumented students starting August 8th.

5. The five components of the Community College Completion Arch are: 1) Enrollment, 2) Developmental Education Placement, 3) Progress, 4) Transfer and Completion, and 5) Workforce Preparation and Employment Outcomes. As a Trustee, what do you believe your role should be to ensure students entering your campuses leave prepared to transfer to a 4-year institution and/or "The World of Work"? How do you plan to work with your fellow Trustees to make sure that the Completion Arch is at the forefront when approving programs and the District's Budgets?

As a Trustee, I will continue to make certain there are clear, educationally coherent program maps - which include specific course sequences, progress milestones, and program learning outcomes – that are aligned with direct expectations of students upon program completion in the workforce and in education at the next level in any given field. It is important to clarify paths to student end goals, help students choose and enter a pathway, provide accelerated remediation, help students stay on course, and ensure that students are learning. Review Student Success Score Card for completion and related data. Program planning and budgeting should be aligned with accreditation and strategic plan. Periodically review the College's mission and vision statements with fellow Trustees to ensure the Completion Arch is at approval forefront.

During my tenure as faculty at Reedley College, I served as discipline Chair for state-wide horticulture curriculum, and Academic Senate President where curriculum was the primary responsibility of faculty. I am currently serving as adjunct professor at Fresno State and assisting three local high school agriculture programs as an advisory committee member. I firmly believe as faculty and Trustees we must do everything possible to ensure student success!

6. What will you do to further the K-12 & Community College Summit results to help make sure students are ready for college when they graduate high school (recent data shows that FUSD students has less than 5 percent ready)?

As an Area 4 Trustee for SCCCDC my district does not fall into the Fresno Unified School District jurisdiction. It is my understanding that a new “Choosing of the Future” educational model is under consideration by the FUSD Board. The path forward is built on a set of 3 policy recommendations:

- 21st Century Success: We need to redefine success as it relates to the 21 century, and commit to every child graduation prepared to succeed;
- Individualized Student Plans: We want to empower both students and educators with individualized data to ensure every child is making adequate annual progress toward graduating prepared to succeed. Our end goal is the same for all of our students – we want each student to thrive in school and in life after graduation. We also recognize that each student is as unique learner, and we need to meet every child where they are on their own learning trajectories;
- Innovation Zone: Create an Innovation Zone to design and support transformational school models.

The goal is to create a district run, teacher-led schools that empower educators and meet the needs of all students. When approved by the FUSD Board, I am anxious to learning more about their new model and how it will improve and increase the learning experience.

I am a member of the Kings River Union School’s Community Leadership Collaborative and their “Save the Children Program” since its establishment in 2017. The school serves students from the small, rural community of London (Tulare County) in Area 4.

7. Do you support community college classes on the history of Social Movements, Organizing, and Labor Studies?

Absolutely, as a Trustee, I strongly support courses on the History of Social Movements, Organizing, and Labor. Every student should be given the opportunity to achieve a well-rounded education. The SCCCDC has outstanding academic programs and courses in Chicano-Latin, African American, and Asian-American, and Indian-American Studies, and Sociology.

Examples of events include Fresno City College hosting a Dolores Huerta Film Screen in May 2018 and the Art Program's painting a 12 ft. by 12 ft. mural "Honoring the Workers of the Valley" for the Fresno County Historical Museum in Fresno. Each college celebrates the rich culture of our district through annual events. I was recently invited to a Reedley Trail tree planting event by Tree Fresno and the Fresno Labors Union's Pre-Apprenticeship Program.

As a member of the Fresno Labors Union in 1967 at age 24, I had the opportunity to work for a Sacramento Landscaping Contractor who landscaped Fresno Freeway 99 between Fresno Street and Jansen Avenues. Projects with the company took me to Stateline Nevada, North Shore Lake Tahoe, and high school in Mill Valley. This professional experience gave me the foundation and journeyman's level expertise necessary to receive appointment to the Reedley College faculty in 1971. It was the launching pad for my 37 ½ year tenure at Reedley and what I am currently doing in education and public service.

I was also a member of the State Center Federation of Teachers AFT Local 1533 during my teaching career at Reedley College.

8. Why should the CVPPAC endorse you for SCCCD Trustee?

It has been an exciting and historic 8 years for Reedley College and the State Center Community College District. In December 2017, Reedley College was ranked #2 best community college in the state by Schools.com. The College was praised for its high number of transfer students to 4-year universities, student-faculty ratios, and our programs which offer great student services, especially for first generation college students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

As we begin our 92nd year, other key milestones include: awarding of record number of degrees and certificates at our May, 2018 commencement ceremony; providing rural transit access to the College from all Area 4 cities, passage of the \$485 million Measure "C" District Facilities Bond (creating a New Performing Arts Center, Math Science and Agriculture Instructional Complex Expansions for Reedley); installation of award winning cost saving solar panels; the opportunity through new Promise Programs free tuition for qualifying students, and passage of a Strategic Plan for increased students opportunities. The addition of our new Dream Center on campus, Enology and Flight Science programs which will prepare students for advanced education or immediate occupation.

Reedley College Vision 2025's motto – "We Motivate and Inspire Students to Succeed" grounds my priorities for the College and the District: increased completion rates, seamless transfer programs, workforce readiness, and partnerships with education, business, industry, and public agencies.

I am proud of our success and how this campus and district has grown and I want to maintain serving as steward of the public trust. Please allow me to continue our quest for excellence as your Reedley College Area 4 Trustee.

Thank you,

Ronald H. Nishinaka