

# LPoV Candidate Questionnaire Nov 2022

## General Questions

Candidate Name \*

Anita Martinez

Candidate Website

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Why are you running for *this* office?

I love City College and am saddened to see its current state. The Board has been negligent in tracking expenditures and supervising the Chancellor, the only employee it directly supervises. Reportedly, there have been at least six Chancellors within 8 years, another failure. Consequently, the budget has been overspent during the time the incumbents have been in office resulting in a dreadful advisory letter (2/23/22) identifying financial issues. The Board has ignored the other identified issue, a 35% decline in enrollment. The Board's reaction, responding to administration's providing only an ongoing failing remedy, has been to cut more classes and lay off employees causing further enrollment decline and damming the permanent state revenue funding stream: apportionment based on enrollment. The Board has scant experience in community college budget and planning and seems unwilling to learn, relying instead on advice from the current chancellor who views budget from the accounting/audit lens in which he was trained instead of also viewing it from the necessary companion lens of planning intertwined with budget. As a seasoned (and retired) community college administrator with years of budget/planning experience, I see the flaws in this reasoning and subsequent action and will work to correct them.

If elected, do you commit to completing your entire term?

Yes. I have no political aspirations.

What are your values, and how did you get them?

Honesty/integrity, respect, and hard work. These are values inherited from my parents and our indigenous heritage in northern New Mexico. (My father, Comanche/Navajo, was adopted by an Hispanic family when he was four months old; my mother was from a community of detribalized people who could not own land.) They valued education and transmitted that value to me, knowing it is a way to a better life and away from our 2 room house without running water. They were right; I learned my way out of poverty and want the same for others.

What communities do you represent, and how do they hold you accountable?

When elected, I will represent all the diverse communities of San Francisco. If pressed as to my personal identity, I would say I am of La Raza, a term developed in the 60s to appreciate our indigenous roots. I also answer to Chicana and Latinx.

I expect voters from all communities to hold me accountable by voting me out if I don't do the job I was elected to. I hold myself accountable, and I will hold our entire Board accountable.

What three endorsements are you most proud of?

AFT 2121; the Labor Council; Tom Ammiano

What are the top three issues you will work on, and how will you implement solutions in a timely manner?

1.The layoff of tenured and tenure track faculty.This pool was the most diverse group of faculty, but the Board, which says it values diversity, equity, and inclusion laid them off. All part-time faculty in their departments were also let go and cannot be rehired unless all the full-time faculty in their departments are rehired or three years pass.

Solution: Rescind the layoffs.

2. The cancellation of hundreds of classes and damage to programs, including cutting the second yearly cohort in Nursing, ESL classes needed by immigrants, and classes for Older Adults (cut by 90%). The last two are in noncredit and earn more than they cost, providing funding for more expensive but needed programs like Nursing.

Solution: Direct the Chancellor to re-establish the Planning and Budget Committee to advise him about class restoration with reports to the Board. Direct the Chancellor to include Department Chairs in all decisions involving class cuts or restoration.The chairs are the experts, the unrecognized first line of administration, and know how to cut with the least harm and which classes to restore.

3. The lack of the kind of understanding of budget operations that the Board needs to make budget decisions. A review of past Board agendas shows items that were clearly out of line, for example, paying rent for several administrators and paying for out of country travel to conferences and meetings.

Solution: Increase the Board's understanding of the budget. Direct the Chancellor to provide Board study sessions, open to the public, on budget development; require that all expenditure items coming for Board approval include the approved starting balance and a running balance (to prevent over-expenditures); identify other mechanisms that will allow the Board to track spending.

What for-profit or non-profit boards do you serve on, including political organizations?

None as a retiree. Several while working.

What local and state commissions or policy bodies do you serve on?

None. Human Services Commission before.

Please describe specific accomplishments in your activism. What did you get done, and what was your role?

My most impactful accomplishment (impactful on me) was the student strike at San Francisco State. I was an incoming community college transfer student, and going on strike meant I might lose a scholarship and my future education. During the strike, I learned about systemic racism and how to organize against it from the primary student organizers. This analysis and subsequent action were much more relevant than what was being taught in the classroom. My role was to walk the picket line and organize my department (English) to go out on strike. I did. The strike prevailed, and The School of Ethnic Studies and the Educational Opportunity Program were established, becoming national models. The Dean of Ethnic Studies asked me to apply for an administrative job in the EOP; I was hired first as the Associate Director, and a few years later as its Director. This activism led to a lifetime commitment to improve educational access and success as a means to address systemic racism. I left to complete graduate studies and was hired at City College part-time in ESL.

That led to ongoing activist accomplishments, which included working with faculty to win recognition of AFT 2121 as the exclusive representative. I was on the Executive Board and helped draft and bargain the first contracts. I was elected AFT's third president, its first woman of color. As a union, we were entitled to receive the budget, needed to ascertain how proposals could be funded. We knew more about the budget than most administrators and the Board - we had to. Because we knew more about the College than most employees, many faculty leaders were appointed to administrative positions when a new chancellor arrived. I was appointed Vice Chancellor of Instruction. In response to a board directive to re-organize the College from a three division district (Credit, Noncredit, and District administration) to a single comprehensive college, I was assigned the work. This was in response to an accreditation mandate. I and my team got that done, flattening the administrative structure to be more effective and easing the flow of noncredit students into credit instruction. We discovered that the noncredit pool of students had been and was the primary source of credit enrollment and thus future ongoing revenue, a larger pool than high school graduates. We also recommended that the Board approve a participatory governance system that was inclusive and resulted in sounder recommendations and policy. The structure still exists but the governance process has fallen apart. As a result, the Board has come to be used as an appeals board during public comment resulting in lengthy unproductive meetings. While this last example may not seem to be activism, the participatory governance system was democracy in action.

Please list specific ways you have shown up for immigrants at risk of deportation.

I have attended rallies and other support activities. Because of my interaction with immigrants as an ESL teacher, I privately advised individuals and provided information on resources. Now that I am retired, I still know immigrants and do the same on a personal level.

At every community college I have worked at, I have worked to ensure that immigration status is not reported when students enroll.

Please list specific ways you have fought against racism and white supremacy.

I have been on this bumpy road since I participated as a student striker during the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF) Strike at San Francisco State later working as an EOP English teacher and then EOP administrator. I learned how to organize across communities and with community resources such as churches and other organizations. My community college work has included establishing programs (finding the money/other resources and being the administrative resource) to reach students of color, for example, the African American Retention Program and the Latino Retention Program, both designed to prevent high school dropout and encourage college enrollment through a program that brought high school students on campus to enroll in Ethnic Studies and other classes to improve college readiness. The programs still exist at City College as the African American Scholars Program. At Skyline College, as Dean of Language Arts, I suggested to a teacher that she write a grant proposal to create the Kababayan Program, similar to Puente but for Filipinos; when it was approved, I served again as the administrative resource. While at the College of Marin as Vice President of Student Learning, I bought the Puente Program there, working with its state director who had been my student in the English composition classes I taught at SFSU. As a retiree, I give to causes, march in protests, and mentor younger colleagues and other community activists fighting white supremacy.

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Please give us some examples of situations you've encountered where gender and LGBTQ inequity was evident and what you did or would do to address it.

I've encountered gender inequity all my life; I've always known I have to be twice as good to be considered half as competent. I've had to battle the impression that I was where I was because of affirmative action, once being challenged by a fellow teacher as to why I was a full-time teacher while she was part-time. In a very gentle way, I suggested we compare degrees earned, prior experience, contribution to the profession, etc.; the other teacher graciously recognized that I was better qualified.

As Dean of Language Arts at Skyline, I noticed that a teacher I supervised was gradually transitioning. We talked, and I offered support. Even the little things matter; I secured a key to the non gender administrator bathroom for them. As the next semester began, a few students came to my office to request that I transfer them to another section or hire a different teacher. I set a later appointment so I could first discuss this with the teacher. We agreed on a course of action; I met with the students a few times; and the students kept attending class. All was well.

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Amid a homelessness crisis, how can the City and County of San Francisco improve the effectiveness of our city's homelessness and supportive housing services?

I support creating a commission or board, some pointed by the Board of Supervisors, to oversee the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing for more accountability and to better coordinate services among city agencies and non-profit organizations that serve unhoused people. I am concerned that time, energy, and money are wasted in duplicative efforts when coordination among providers would give better results. When I worked at City College's Downtown Campus, I noticed a real uptick in homelessness as SROs were torn down to develop that part of the City. Perhaps this suggests that with the small size of the City, any development for any reason must be evaluated to see how much land is used, for example, for another office building, that could be better used for housing, I also support all 100% affordable housing measures and encourage more of them. The goal should be permanent, safe housing for all.

What is your favorite park, and why?

Golden Gate Park. I used it to study there.

Why do you want the League of Pissed Off Voters' endorsement?

Machine politics disfavor grassroots candidates.

Is there anything else you want to tell us?

Thank you for this opportunity. My website is being revised but where I stand now is very similar to where I stood in 2020. I'm running on a slate with Susan Solomon and Vick Chung who are well prepared to serve on the Board. We know as life-long organizers, it will take more than one person to turn things around.

What experience do you have with City College or Community Colleges in general?

Forty years for frontline work experience, most at City College. I was a teacher, Dean of Students, and Vice Chancellor of Instruction. While a teacher, I was elected President of AFT 2121 and President of the Academic Senate. I also served as the Dean of Language Arts at Skyline College and Vice President of Student Learning (Instruction and Student Services) at the College of Marin. I also worked as the national Community College Representative at the College Board. As a teacher and and administrator, I represented my colleges on statewide groups, task forces, and committees.

What do you see as City College's greatest strengths and challenges?

Its greatest strengths include its students who find their way at the College and its employees who have a singular devotion to students and the college in general. Classified and certificated staff are committed to making the student experience rewarding. The second strength is that historically City College has always served the community whose members have varying goals. It is a comprehensive community college, not a traditional junior college. Its third strength is that the voters of San Francisco are supportive of the college they love.

Its challenges are that it is losing employees, especially diverse employees, through staff reduction. (lay-offs, class cuts) Another challenge is the ongoing downsizing of the College that threatens to turn it into a junior college and away from its origin of serving all of San Francisco. Its third challenge is that the vestiges of the 2012 accreditation crisis linger, continuing to cause the (mis)perception that the loss of accreditation is imminent and driving all decisions based on that fear. The Board, whose authority was removed by the state and placed in the hands of state appointed administrators, seems to still be struggling to reclaim its authority/responsibility.

Do you support the City College Parcel Tax slated for the November 2022 ballot?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Given that many of the policy and funding decisions for SFUSD are made by other entities, what is your vision for fully funding City College, and what actions can the Board of Trustees take to that end?

My vision is that the Board truly understands the current funding formula and that the administration recommends how the college can take full advantage of all parts of the formula rather than narrowly focusing on a small part that depends on a small pool of recent high school graduates matriculating through the college within two years. That could unjam the state funding stream.

The Board must also demand data and research before it approves a budget that depends on the cutting of classes and programs thus cutting future revenue from state apportionment. State apportionment is based on student enrollment. When enrollment goes down, so potentially does revenue. The Board has been buying time by depending on hold harmless legislation that will expire.

Finally, the current funding formula is unfair to large urban districts. City College has to learn how to use all aspects of that funding formula until it can work with statewide allies to change the formula. The Board of Trustees should take a leading role in organizing the movement for change.

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How do you plan to close the opportunity gap for students of color?

By restoring City College so more opportunities are again accessible. 40+ English 1A sections, required to graduate, transfer, or enroll in some classes, were lost in the last round of layoffs. By restoring programs (e.g., Puente which was cut in half when a counselor was laid off) and services (the loss of diverse and culturally competent counseling staff). By creating a modest grant program for employees to submit grant proposals to close the gap. (College faculty and staff are very aware of the issue and are innovative.) By growing Ethnic and Diversity studies.

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What specific qualities would you look for in a new chancellor?

Partial list and not in priority order:!

Demonstrated commitment to closing the college readiness gap

Demonstrated commitment for diversifying the faculty

Demonstrated ability to build a positive campus climate conducive to learning

Demonstrated ability to link planning to budget while preserving fiscal integrity

Prior work experience as a community college teacher, librarian, or student services professional

Demonstrated experience in planning and budget, policy development, governance, and accreditation

Demonstrated commitment to environmentally sensitive and physically sound facilities maintenance and operations, including experience in construction of new facilities using bond funds

Demonstrated experience in working in large urban community colleges

Knowledge of San Francisco and its diverse communities

Demonstrated commitment to preserving City College as a community college

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What metrics would you use to determine your success as Board Trustee?

Self evaluation absent the inclusion of evaluations made by other individuals or by representatives of constituencies may be self serving. Or misleading. I'm open to learning more about the use of metrics to determine success as a trustee. Complicating the discussion is that the Board consists of 7 individuals who take action as a collective.

Putting that aside, my personal metric might be to identify what my individual goals are in the context of a 7-member board. Were the goals realistic? Appropriate? If yes, did I meet the goals? This would involve self-reflection, a process I am comfortable with. But I have found that as a teacher, I preferred metrics established by a group process (my department) and measured by my peers (other teachers) along with metrics measured by people who were affected by my work (my students). That gave me a more accurate and helpful assessment.

Not being re-elected is the simplest metric, I suppose. But too often, incumbency almost always ensures re-election even when by any metric, a board member should not be retained.

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