

# LPoV Candidate Questionnaire Nov 2022

## General Questions

Candidate Name \*

Brigitte Davila

Candidate Website

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Why are you running for *this* office?

I am running for re-election to the City College Board. This is my last campaign for Trustee because I want to see a few initiatives through. I have learned so much during the first 8 years it would be a shame to waste the hard-won knowledge I have acquired regarding the arcane world of community colleges. During my last two terms we have brought the college to a fiscally sound and accreditation-worthy place. Now I'd like to start on the real projects to provide more support for students and re-build our infrastructure. For that reason, we are poised to start on some projects very important to City College.

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

Yes, I've already completed two terms and only want to run this last time to ensure certain goals and projects are completed.

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

My values include:

Accountability, first and foremost, I am accountable to my students at my day-job teaching in the College of Ethnic Studies at SFSU and I am accountable to the stakeholders of City College to ensure that the college is accredited and providing what students need. Sometimes one stakeholder wants something that does not benefit the District and that's where it can be difficult. I have experience dealing with competing stakeholders and making tough decisions. There is no difficult decision I would run from as I know I am accountable to the residents of San Francisco to keep City College Free and Accredited

Transparency, I tell everyone, whether they want to know or not, how I arrive at my decisions. I am so invested in transparency that we now have a contract with an independent auditor that reports directly to the Board. I also rely on the process at City College where the Academic and staff senates weigh in and ultimately the Participatory Governance Committee weighs in on programming and budgets.

Listening is also a key value. I learn so much from just listening to students, faculty, staff, administrators and other stakeholders. I learn so much from Public Comment, even when I'm not inclined to agree on an issue, I will listen intently because there may be something I have missed in my analysis.

As to how I got these values, it was definitely my grandparents, Trinidad & "Joe" Davila, who raised me. Although they had little formal education themselves, they were honest and forthright with whatever they did and kind enough to keep me around until I was grown. They always instilled respect for others and kindness by example. I miss them everyday.

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

I was raised in a working class Chicana suburb of Los Angeles and although I was in elementary school, major events of the Chicano Movimiento were swirling around me. The Chicano Moratorium, The UFW Farmworker organizing efforts, the Brown Berets: it was a heady time and my best friend and I embraced it all. To this day, the diverse Latinx community, is not only where I got my organizing roots but its direction is my my raison d'etre. I am accountable to this community through my work and my advocacy.

I also represent educators and those who strive to make sure that young people have access to quality public higher education. Although I have a degree in Law, I ended up teaching undergraduates through pure luck. I have now been teaching at SFSU in the College of Ethnic Studies for 27 years. Through my union, the California Faculty Association, and through my terms as trustee, I have worked hard to lobby for appropriate budgets, student support and capital resources at the State and Federal level.

What three endorsements are you most proud of?

I have just started seeking endorsements: So far I have Sierra Club, David Campos, Myrna Melgar, Gordon Mar and Rafael Mandelman. I will be able to update the list next week.

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

Keeping the doors open at City College, we have met the accreditation standards and are ready for our peer review. I can't underscore how important this is. If a college is not accredited it is of no use to anyone. Period.

Using our bond money of \$845 million to resuscitate a badly aging infrastructure. The Board VP, John Rizzo, and I have been in countless meetings with architects, contractors, project managers and end users (faculty and students). I can proudly say we have three shovel ready projects.

I would like to begin stronger DEI practices across City College. There is no parity with the diversity of our students and the lack of diversity among faculty. I will implement the best practices from across the state.

I know you only asked for three but we planning now and will be ready to launch dual -enrollment programs in High schools where students will have the opportunity to complete up to two years of college while in High School. This has really helped enrollment at other colleges and we are ready to roll.

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

No for-profit boards, but I am still an officer on the San Francisco District 11 Democratic Club since 2010. I had to step back from my officer position on the SF Latinx Democratic Club but it is in the capable hands of former students. ( I have 1000's of them ; )

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

In 2019, I was elected by trustees across the state to serve on the statewide CCLC California Community College Board. I was able to listen and understand the issues affecting community colleges across the state. Even more importantly, I was exposed to solutions working at other colleges to address budgets, DEI work and student support. I also participated in many of the higher education workshops and planning for the National Association of Latino Electeds (NALEO)

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

Specific accomplishments during my tenure as Trustee:

Passing Free City was a group effort that the trustees participated in along with unions, student organizations, and neighborhood groups Free City provides free tuition for any San Francisco students

Seeing CCSF through the Accreditation Process in 2016 and now again in 2023 is a notable accomplishment. We are now fully prepared to meet all the Accreditations standards, thereby avoiding a state takeover which leads me to the bond.

Passing the 2020 CCSF Bond for \$845 million was a singular accomplishment. We have buildings that are barely habitable and a need for target structures addressing Science and the Arts. thanks to the Board s work on the bond we have the funds to build. Thanks to making the College accreditation ready, the state will not be able to freeze any of our projects like they did in 2012.

I will mention AB 705. This was before I became a trustee, but I testified at hearings on the effect of remedial education which impacted Latinx, in particular, to years of non-credit classes regardless of their ability to compete in credit classes. Often, a student used all their Pell grant years without a single transferable credit to show for it.

Last, I am still proud of the organizing and lobbying efforts I ccordinated, from 2008 through 2014, to increase the budgets and properly fund public higher education in California.

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

Very specifically, I work with an immigration attorney to provide pro bono counsel to detained immigrants. i organize students and train them to translate documents to be presented in court. At a policy level, it is often challenging to provide equitable resources to undocumented immigrants. Free City is an example of that as the City tried to put limitations on who could apply by requiring a financial aid form. Often undocumented immigrants do not want to fill out a form like this for obvious reasons. We worked around this by providing resources to anyone who requested a waiver of this requirement.

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

I served on a statewide Diversity, Equity & Inclusion committee addressing racism and white supremacy in community colleges across the state. I am now implementing the best practices from this experience across City College. I was also one of four faculty members to develop a Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion - Pedagogies for Inclusive Excellence: a highly successful online training for our (mostly white) faculty to be able to understand their students of color.

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.

Right now, we have no full time faculty (through retirements) in the LGBTQ Studies Department. We do have a Director of the LGBTQ Center. I know as a policy matter that if a department does not have any full time faculty it is likely to wither away. I have directed the Chancellor to address this immediately and we are working on a plan now. The LGBTQ Studies is an important component of our diversity departments and I want to see it thrive and ultimately offer online certifications in LGBTQ Studies.

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?

Prioritize affordable and workforce housing, especially on public land. We are working on a proposal to use some of our unused properties to house students and faculty and staff. Although we don't own the Balboa Reservoir (The SFPUC does) we were able to get a commitment of 100 units of housing in the proposed development.

What is your favorite park, and why?

Normally, it is McLaren Park, the deep, edgy park in the hinterlands of San Francisco. There is something both mysterious and exhilarating about it and it doesn't hurt that I live close enough to walk or take the 52-Excelsior there. I do have to mention, however a park that my 8-year old granddaughter and I found while exploring. I do walking tours for my students and one of the parks that we often start at is the smallest park in SF. Honestly it shouldn't even be called a park. But there is a seal on the sidewalk and a row of eucalyptus trees dedicated to the memory of Mary Ellen Pleasant, the mother of Civil Rights in California.

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

I absolutely love your voter education materials! I pass them around on the SFSU campus and at BART stations around election time and they are accepted at a much higher rate than any other voter materials.. (Also, one of your graphic designers was a former student.) Kudos to the best Voter Education Guides around. Who wouldn't want to be a part of that!.

Is there anything else you want to tell us?

Yes, I and other members of my Board had to make an extremely tough decision that was years in the making. We were warned 3 times by the state and most recently by the accreditation agency - that we needed to get our finances in order and develop a budget for the students that we have not the students we want. CCSF never recovered completely from the last accreditation debacle and the pandemic exacerbated this problem. Although we had tried to adjust by offering fabulous retirement benefits three years ago - we had few takers. This left us with no other choice than to lay off faculty. Honestly, this is the most difficult decision i have faced in my entire life, especially as I am a faculty member myself. I saw no choice though as the accreditors close in. We do now have a balanced budget, no structural deficit and we have met all the other requirements for accreditation.

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College Board

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

I take classes in Visual Media Design when I can - this gives me a birds eye view of what works and what doesn't. I often bring up my experiences in Board meetings. My path as a first-generation college student, who ultimately obtained a graduate law degree, started at a community college. Last, i have eight years of experience dealing with the state and local policy issues as a trustee.

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

Increasing enrollment is our greatest challenge and our the dedication of our faculty, students and alums are our greatest strength

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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?

Thank you for recognizing this issue. I have already begun discussions with our state representatives regarding the problematic manner in which the state funds community colleges. I am joining with other colleges to lobby for changes with our legislators as well as the state chancellor's office and the governing board. Also, there is more money in the Free City pot, and we would like to put it to work on a new registration system and additional counselors

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

Implementing DEI practices and supporting students along their path equitably. This is my area of research and I have so many ideas on supporting student success and

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

Transparency, first and foremost and always. Also the ability to understand City politics is helpful.

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

Dedication to the job: being prepared, attending meetings and special events like graduation. The ability to keep City College as a priority in decision making when stakeholders of one stripe or another may not represent the clear interests of the District as a whole. This is much harder than it appears but is extremely important. Last, the imagination to see innovative projects through to implementation.

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