

**Santa Monicans for Renters' Rights
College Board Questionnaire - 2026**



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Did you include the requested Additional Materials? Yes X or No ☐

Please email completed Questionnaire and Additional Materials to
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Your Candidacy

1. What is your understanding of the role of a Santa Monica College board of trustees member?

As a Trustee, we are designated to ensure that SMC follows its mandates to serve its students in the most constructive way possible. We are also in charge of ensuring that the college is on a stable footing financially, and that we are being responsible with student fees and government funding. We interact with the President of the college in furtherance of this goal.

2. Why are you running to be a trustee of Santa Monica College?

In my two terms on the SMC Board, I have worked to be able to make the college a better place for students, as well as a resource for our community- through some difficult times with Covid and our current financial crisis. We introduced multiple successful healthcare workforce programs that have introduced a new generation of students to rewarding careers in the healthcare industry, an industry that has experienced severe staffing shortages and needs qualified workers. But we have a lot more work that needs to be done. My primary concerns for the upcoming term is getting our college back on stable financial footing, and-- to that end-- advocating for more robust funding from Sacramento, along with finally making progress on creating a solution to our student housing problem.

3. What skills, background, and experience do you possess that prepare you for this office?

I have served two terms on the SMC Board, in the last term serving as Chair. During that time I helped lead the Board through a very difficult financial period, and during my 2 terms we have also established new programs to serve the needs of our students. Even in the most difficult situations, I try to be a coalition builder, seeing where we can all agree on common goals to help our students. As a doctor, I have been serving the surrounding community for over a decade.

4. What sets you apart from the others running to be a trustee of Santa Monica College?

Firstly, my experience as a two-term Board member means that I have a track record of achievement that I can point to. Secondly, even through the most difficult times for this institution, I have sought to be a coalition builder and work together with my colleagues, as well as the faculty and staff of SMC to make this the best possible college for our students. And as a Santa Monica resident, I have a vested interest in maintaining this crown jewel of our community.

5. List each organization other than SMRR whose endorsement you have sought and whether or not you completed a questionnaire for that organization. Provide a copy of any questionnaire(s) you submitted to any other organization(s).

Santa Monica Democratic Club, CEPS, LA County Democratic Party

6. Please list your main funders, endorsers, and supporters, and provide an overview of your campaign's financial progress to date.

I have just finished running a state senate campaign, where I did not finish in the top 2. I am gathering my coalition of support for re-election to the college board and working on developing a fundraising apparatus. For my state senate campaign, I was able to raise almost \$800,000. I am confident I will be able to garner the support and resources to get my re-election message to the community.

7. Will you accept donations from developers and/or their paid lobbyists for your campaign?

No.

8. Please provide a list of all organizations with which you are a member, along with a description of leadership positions held, whether related to your civic, community or professional endeavors.

I am a member of the Santa Monica Democratic Club, of which I am a former President. I also served as a delegate to the California Democratic party 2014-2024, including as a member of the CDP finance committee 2017-2021.

SMRR

1. How long have you been a member of SMRR? Please outline the extent of your relationship and engagement with SMRR.

I have been a member of SMRR for more than a decade. I joined SMRR soon after we moved to Santa Monica in 2010.

2. Do you pledge, if elected, to attend SMRR's monthly Steering Committee meetings to provide the College Board report (in rotation with other SMRR supported College Board members)?

Yes.

3. Do you pledge, if elected, to discuss major policy issues related to your office with SMRR leaders prior to making decisions?

Yes.

Issues Relating to the College

1. What are the top 3 goals you want to achieve during your term on the SMC Board?
How do you think you can achieve these goals?

Firstly, we need to stabilize the college financially. We have had a rough period financially that forced us to make very tough decisions to keep the college moving forward. We need to work with Sacramento to advocate for more stable funding and a revised funding formula to allow our community colleges to grow and serve the needs of California's students. Additionally, I want to continue to lead the charge on solving our student housing shortage and finally come to a solution that will alleviate the extraordinary burden of near-campus housing costs on our students.

2. The College's fiscal status is difficult. What is your plan to improve it?

As a Board we faced an enormous challenge and some very painful choices in order to keep the college solvent. This was a situation where there were no good choices. Moving forward, we need more robust and stable funding, as well as a funding formula from Sacramento that will provide more stability for institutions like ours when revenues become scarce or enrollments dip and truly capture student success in all its ways.

3. Given the fiscal pressures experienced by the college, particularly since the beginning of the second Trump Administration, do you think the Board of Trustees made the right decision in laying-off a significant number of classified staff?

This was not a matter of making the "right" decision, but rather, the best decision amongst a number of painful choices. This was not a decision that any of us wanted to make, but it was one we had to make in order to fulfill our fiscal duty to the college.

4. What can you point to in order to assure SMRR that you are capable of being a good steward of the fiscal health of the college?

I would point out that the college's current fiscal state, while not ideal by anyone's standard, is the best it could be under the circumstances-- many of which were outside the control of the Board. I would add that myself and the current Board are not satisfied with the current state and plan to make the improvement of the college's finances a top priority.

5. With all of the stress and strife in the world and on college campuses today, what will you do if elected to help alleviate tensions that may arise and keep SMC from being a hostile environment?

During the protests that arose around the Israel/Hamas war, the Board worked with our campus police and faculty to ensure that students had their voices heard, and I'm proud of the fact that there were no arrests during those demonstrations. I think that points to both the planning that we did as a Board with our great public safety team, as well as the culture of respect that we have at SMC.

6. What specific steps will you take to reduce achievement gaps and increase both enrollment and completion rates of students from socio-economically challenged backgrounds?

Closing achievement gaps requires tireless focus on doing this, and cannot be done with a one size fits all model. I think workforce programs are a key to help students of all backgrounds find opportunities to find rewarding jobs in the communities they live in, meet community needs, and not saddle students with crippling debt. As the college rises from its difficult financial situation, I will be particularly focused on the college expanding workforce programs in all sectors.

7. What can you point to in order to assure SMRR that you are truly committed to reducing achievement gaps and increasing both enrollment and completion rates of students from socio-economically challenged backgrounds?

In my career, I have always focused on these issues. One of my proudest accomplishments on the board has been creating a monthly lecture series bringing together our SMC foundation, LA County Medical Association, Black Collegians program, and Adelante program to bring students of color together with healthcare workers of color for mentorship and guidance. This program resulted in so many rewarding lectures and interactions, as well as scholarships for our students. These types of collaborative programs are wonderful for everyone involved.

8. SMC was once known for having a higher percentage of full-time vs adjunct faculty members as compared to other community colleges. Has this changed? If so, please explain why, and what you think can and should be done (if anything) to reverse this trend.

Over the course of the past couple decades, part time faculty percentage at SMC to meet curriculum demands, but now our percentage of full time faculty fall far short of the recommended 75% standard recommended by the state legislature. As we come out of our fiscal difficulty and eventually expand the courses offered at the college to meet rising student needs, the focus should be hiring full time faculty to meet these needs.

9. Higher education in California (and beyond) is changing a lot. What does the future of higher education at the College look like to you? What will you do if elected to facilitate your vision for the future of higher education at the college?

Higher education in California should mean more investment in our community colleges. Our community colleges serve more students than the UCs and the CSUs, and we are a direct feeder into both of those programs. We need to maintain our concentration on giving students the skills they need for rewarding careers (e.g. our healthcare workforce program) rather than focusing on the latest trend in education. The learning that we provide our students should be focused on the needs of the future while remaining grounded in pedagogy that we know works.

10. Do you support the College building student housing? If so, what will you do if elected to assure that it happens?

I have been proud to lead the discussion around student housing at SMC. That is one of my top three priorities upon reelection. When we have students worrying about whether they need to live in their cars in order to attend an institution that should be of service to them, then we have to reorder our priorities. While housing will be expensive, this is an integral part of what we need to provide so students can concentrate on learning.

11. If and when the College builds student housing, what percentage would you like to see devoted to **affordable** student housing, including housing for unhoused students and students at risk of becoming unhoused?

I could not say at the moment an exact percentage, but it should be the vast majority. The whole point of the student housing discussion is to provide housing for students that desperately need it.

12. Among its other important obligations, what obligations do you believe the College has to the communities of Santa Monica and Malibu? What goals and plans do you have for the College vis-à-vis the Santa Monica and Malibu communities?

SMC is a jewel in our community. It is a renowned community college that has helped countless students build their lives or transfer to CSUs or UCs, including many who grew up in Santa Monica and Malibu. Additionally, dual enrollment and emeritus programs directly help so many families that live in our district, and we should continue to support and expand these programs in both Santa Monica and Malibu. Finally, we should make sure that our facilities are open to our community as much as possible, so that our constituents benefit from the incredible facilities that they have helped pay for through their bond dollars.

13. The college has a remarkable music program. Do you have ideas for taking that program more visibly into the community of Santa Monica?

I pledge to look into this and collaborate with our music faculty to see if there are ways that our administration can support the music program to expand its role in the Santa Monica and Malibu communities.

State Ballot Measures

1. Do you support the Howard Jarvis measure (or any substitute for that measure) to require a two-thirds vote on any and every form of new local tax? Why or why not? Will you actively encourage your supporters to vote the same way as you on this measure?

No. This measure would decimate local funding and the ability of localities to raise revenue. I cannot support that and am strongly advocating against it.

2. Do you support the measure to require that any ballot measure imposing a new super-majority vote requirement must itself pass by that same super-majority in order to become effective? Why or why not? Will you actively encourage your supporters to vote the same way as you on this measure (assuming it appears on the ballot)?

This was removed off the ballot by ACA 21.

3. Do you support the measure to condition the right to vote on new voter identification requirements? Why or why not? Will you actively encourage your supporters to vote the same way as you on this measure?

I absolutely oppose this measure. There is no evidence of voter fraud in California elections; quite the opposite. Our state makes elections secure and accessible to as many Californians as possible, and this voter ID measure is merely a way to try to restrict voting rights.