



Questionnaire for Community College Board candidates

General Election, November 4, 2008

Candidate/Campaign Information:

Candidate name:	Chris Jackson
Office sought:	San Francisco Community College Board
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Anticipated Budget:	\$25,000
Funds raised to date:	\$7,000
Percentage of donations under \$50	75%

General Questions: Please write a brief response (less than 150 words) to each question. Please return this questionnaire electronically to contactus@phdemclub.org We will make these questionnaires available to our members before the endorsement meeting.

1. Why are you running? Why should we vote for you?

I am running for the San Francisco Community College Board because it is the culmination of my nearly decade long commitment of advocating on behalf of students and working families. I'm running because I believe that with creative leadership, integrity, and hard work City College can be an accessible and empowering community

partner, building ties, decreasing violence in our neighborhoods, and increasing economic stability and opportunity in San Francisco.

For these reasons, ensuring access to higher education is my top priority. Higher education is a right. City College must meet the current and future needs of our diverse and talented community. As a Board member, I will work with integrity to:

- **Increase access** to higher education in underserved communities by improving workforce development programs
- Implement new and creative **youth outreach programs**
- **Secure vital resources** at the local, state, and federal levels
- **Expand teacher preparation programs** in the face of growing demand
- **Promote green** job training programs and sustainability education to meet current and future needs
- Form a **Network of Cooperation** with SF Unified School District, the City of San Francisco and community organizations

2. What sets you apart from your opponents?

I believe that every person who runs for office, especially the Community College Board, has thought long and hard about this decision. This very fact alone makes **every candidate for the College Board a special human being, and I thank everyone kindly for their service to a public dialog about the State of our Higher Education System.**

I am running because the Community College Board is an evolution of what I've fought for my entire life. As a state-wide leader in Higher Education I have fought and advocated for increase access for students in the form of lower fees and increased classes. I have created a state-wide campus diversity policy, and I even created Project Connect: Recruitment/Retention Center at SFSU, which has become a state-wide model in how to structure and perform outreach to underserved communities. **I believe I have the experience to create positive change at an institutional level, and to really connect members of our community with the many services that City College offers. I'm not just talking about creating programs and access; I've done it at a state-wide level.**

I believe that my labor background distinguishes me as well. As a third generation member in the Labor Movement, I have a record of supporting and fight for working-class issues that have advanced the Movement. I organized students and faculty as a leader at SFSU in support of the SF minimum wage increase. As an organizer with Young Workers United I taught courses that help students learn that rights in the workplace and how to organize other members in the workplace to demand better working conditions. Also as an organizer with YWU, I help craft and pass the Paid-sick day leave act, which as help thousands of working-class people in San Francisco achieve a better quality of life.

As a policy/researcher at the San Francisco Labor Council, I look and land use and other policies and try to use them to grow the Labor Movement here in the City. **All of this background and history means that I can be held accountable by Labor and AFT, because from the day I was born, I am Labor to the core.**

Finally, I have a vision of a network of cooperation with CCSF, SFUSD and the City to really create a well-rounded view of education in San Francisco. In order to implement a real vision to improve SF Community College, participation and feedback from San Francisco's government and the San Francisco Unified School District is crucial. As a SF Community College board member, I will propose the adoption of a permanent educational task-force to identify areas in higher education which we can work together to improve. I believe the creation of such a task-force will place K-12 and higher education issues at the forefront San Francisco policy.

3. What are the top three issues facing San Francisco's community college? What will you do about those issues?

There several issues facing City College. As the number of college-age residence increases in the next couple of years, we must make sure that all members of our community are knowledgeable about and have access to City College, especially in our most underserved communities. We need to start this outreach early. **My vision for an early outreach program will be the foundation from wish I hope to implement change. An early outreach program will expose young students in historically under-represented to the higher education options that are available once they graduate high school.** In collaboration with teachers, parents and San Francisco's community members, students will participate in annual visits to SF City College, thus exposing them to a higher educational institution that will start them on a road to success. **I believe that City College's main mission is to build the next generation of work-class people in San Francisco and beyond.** To uphold this mission, we must have a permanent present in our public High Schools.

Another issue of importance is creating a neighborhood planning process for future expansion. CCSF needs to expand and renovate its existing buildings to serve its growing population. Yet, delays in the planning process have lead to late project

completions, and increased costs. We must expand City College responsibly by building consensus early. **Therefore, I propose a Neighborhood Planning Process that incorporates the views of the CCSF community, the neighborhoods affected, and the city as a whole.** Specifically, I want to incorporate a Project Area Committee for new developments made up of the following community members:

- Residents from the neighborhoods impacted
- A City planner from the San Francisco Planning Department
- The Supervisor who's district the development impacts (or a representative)
- A City College faculty member, a City College staff member, and a student representative

By building consensus early, we ensure that future developments will finish timelier, avoid cost delays, and serve the community sooner.

We also must protect City College's 130 career and technical programs and our non-credit program from any cuts. With the economy in a recession, more people are looking to City College as a viable option for career skills to be more competitive in a tougher job market. In tough economic times, San Franciscans need City College now more than ever. I believe that in- order to implement my vision to improve SF Community College, **participation and feedback from San Francisco's government and the San Francisco Unified School District is crucial.** As a SF Community College board member, I will propose the adoption of a permanent educational task-force to identify areas in higher education which we can work together to improve. I believe the creation of such a task-force will place K-12 and higher education issues at the forefront San Francisco policy.

In addition, we need to start looking at local funding streams to help fund our most vital programs at City College, such as using local work-force development funds to fund our career and technical programs, and work with UESF and UHW to help fund and expand our Teacher Prep. program and our Nursing program.

“Faculty-care” is an issue at City College and State-wide that we must do better. **I want to advocate state-wide for our political leaders to provide more funding for more full-time jobs at the community college, to increase the pro-rata pay and for more job security for part-time faculty.** These are issues that every employee at any job deserve. Community College faculty and staff are on the frontlines every day helping to lift communities out of poverty through education. We need to treat our faculty with more respect. Continuing our districts commitment to Shared Governance and ensuring that Part-Time faculty and non-tenured faculty maintain their rights to Academic Freedom are also a priority.

4. Would you describe yourself as fiscally responsible? Please give an example to support your answer.

I would describe myself as fiscally responsible. I was the CEO/President of Associated Students Inc. and I managed a \$3.2 million budget. This is the size of many small/medium businesses in here in San Francisco. I am proud to say that I completed my term in office as the first President/CEO in the last ten years to leave with a budget surplus.

I also believe in have a transparent budget process, and I believe in strong oversight of City College's bonds. I will bring sunshine and accountability to City College's budget process.

5. Would you describe yourself as socially progressive? Please give an example to support your answer.

Yes, as a higher education activist/advocate, I have spent the part of this decade fighting for access and affordable for students. I have also lead the way in teacher and staff pay.

As a leader at San Francisco State, I created a full time recruitment and retention center, Project Connect. Project Connect provides many K-12 students with their first contact with college. The program awards \$28,000 of scholarships annually and it has helped over 8,000 students attend college.

Also while attending San Francisco State; I established a sustainable book loan program, new financial aid workshops, and an internship program.

Also, with Young Worker United, I helped teach, City College classes that educated students about their rights in the work place.

Outside of higher education, with Young Workers United, I led the fight for the Paid Sick Pay Leave Act which has now been adopted state-wide. I also have fought for a living wage in San Francisco and I have organized many violence prevention events here in the community.

I support the Clean Energy Act of 2008.

Issue Questions:

1. Given the very real probability of reduced state funding for CCSF in the coming years, what combination of budget cuts and tax increases would you suggest to address budgetary shortfalls?

The Bush and Schwarzenegger administrations have all but given up on investing in higher education.

I believe that we should look locally for the resources to maintain a world-class community college system. I will look to form a "Network of

Cooperation” with the City and the School district so that we can better leverage our funds toward academic achievement. For example, the City spends more money per capital on workforce training than any other city in the nation, yet we only place 25% of participates in an actually job.

I would like for City College to have greater access to these Workforce development funds to help grow and expand our 140 career and technical programs such as City Colleges Nursing Program and it’s Teacher Prep. Program. I will also look for ways that City College and SFUSD can form joint-partnerships as well. I believe that this Network of Cooperation will be more cost effective and promote better educational outcomes.

In addition, it is still important to advocate State-wide for greater investment in Higher Education. I have advocated for a decade on greater increased funding, increased access/affordability and better services

2. While eleven community colleges in California offer student housing, CCSF does not. Given that housing in San Francisco is in high demand and hugely expensive, what would you propose to solve the problem for CCSF students who need housing?

Affordable student housing is very important, especially to our international student who come to City College at great expense and have very little knowledge to navigate our process our apartment hunting. We had a very good site on the Balboa Reservoir. That site was identified by Mayor Feinstein in the early 1980’s. That site is now being developed for classrooms. **If elected, I will work with SFSU and Parkmerced to identify student housing opportunities. In the next 15 years, Parkmerced will add an additional 5700 units of housing on their site.** This is a historic opportunity for CCSF to secure an agreement for student housing near City College’s flagship campus.

3. How can CCSF address the needs of disadvantaged students – those with lower grades and educational inadequacies? How would you propose to increase opportunities for them to catch up to the other students?

First, we must make it a priority to reach K-12 students in underserved, underrepresented and educationally disadvantaged areas of San Francisco and put them on the track to college. As a Board member, I will propose a creative **Early Outreach Program**, focusing on recruitment and retention, similar to the program I instituted at San Francisco State University which has now become a state-wide model for recruiting students from underserved and disadvantaged communities.

In addition to the Early Outreach Program, I will work to institutionalize a **Network of Cooperation**. As a Board member, I will propose the adoption of a permanent educational task-force to identify areas in which the community, the City of San Francisco and the SF Unified School District can work together to pool every resource

and increase access to college. The creation of such a task-force will place K-12 and higher education issues at the forefront of San Francisco policy.

4. What measures should CCSF take to improve its fiscal responsibility and public financial accountability, especially with its spending of bond money?

4. Do you support a voluntary system of Clean Elections – full public financing – of candidates for citywide offices? Would you participate in such a system if it were available?

I support Clean, publically financed elections for candidates running for city-wide office. While my campaign has received 90% of its money from San Franciscans, and has made a pledge to not accept money from lobbyist, I know that this is not the case with all elections. In order to be held accountable by San Franciscans, candidates must not be financially beholden to outside interest. I believe that this can only happen with public financing.

I comment to helping The Potrero Hill Democratic Club advocate for Public Financing for city –wide candidates.

6. Do you support or oppose the following propositions on the November ballot? Please explain why or why not.

- Declaration of Policy of the people of San Francisco that its elected representatives in the US Senate and House should vote against any further funding for deployment of US Armed Forces in Iraq, except funds specifically earmarked for their safe withdrawal

Support Oppose Reason:

Our country spends \$10 billion a month on the war in Iraq. Think of what we could do with those resources. Want to see American reinvest is educating and empower people. I strongly believe that the War in Iraq and it's drain on our resources is a significant barrier to education and training the next generation. Our future is at stake. Only by voting against War funding, can our elected representatives show that we are all voting for a better future.

- CA Proposition 4: Amends California Constitution to prohibit abortion for an unemancipated minor until 48 hours after physician notifies minor's parent, legal guardian or, if parental abuse reported, an adult family member

Support Oppose Reason:

I oppose Prop 4 because such a sweeping measure would place un-emancipated minors in grave physical and emotional danger.

- CA Proposition 5: Provides rehabilitation as an alternative to prison for nonviolent drug offenders

Support Oppose Reason:

I really believe in Prop. 5. It is a way that California can get SMART on crime, and it's the fiscally responsible approach to law enforcement and incarceration. In addition, I will advocate expanding City College's Second Chance Program. The Second Chance Program is designed for ex-offenders to integrate them into the higher education system.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.