

Collin College Board of Trustees Candidates Forum – March 2017

Answers submitted to Faculty Council questionnaire

Stacey Donald

1. What compels you to serve as a Collin College Trustee and if elected, what do you view as your primary role as Trustee?

I'm compelled to serve as a Collin College Trustee because I am in a position in my life to give back to my community, and my area of expertise is higher education. I've lived in Collin County for eleven years, and I've had wonderful opportunities in terms of my own education, my profession, and for my daughter because I am a resident here. Additionally, I taught at Collin College as an Associate Faculty member while earning my PhD. I learned how to be a teacher at Collin.

As a Trustee, my responsibility falls into three main areas: (1) to ensure the college keeps pace with the population growth and workforce needs in the areas we serve, (2) to ensure that education remains affordable here while managing the college resources in a fiscally responsible manner, and (3) to support and offer ongoing professional development as well as innovative technologies to the faculty. The third is the area nearest to my own interests. I deeply believe that supported, engaged faculty in turn support and engage the student body which increases student persistence rates.

2. What is the biggest challenge that Collin College faces in meeting the workforce needs of North Texas and how has your background, experience, or education uniquely prepared you to address it?

Over and over, I hear companies ask for students who have soft skills in addition to the skills of their chosen field. Companies want students who can communicate ideas clearly, troubleshoot independently, and present themselves professionally, particularly in speaking and writing. My background is in higher education, specifically in Liberal Arts. I have a PhD in Literary Analysis from the University of Texas at Dallas, and I have taught at the college level since 2006. As a teacher of rhetoric/composition, humanities, philosophy, and literature, I have a deep connection to the soft skills employers are looking for.

In my current full-time position, I have served as the chair of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Faculty Excellence for the last three years. Managing and cultivating faculty has been my primary administrative focus, and as I supervise faculty in both blended and online modalities, I've gained a great deal of insight into how faculty can instill these soft skills into their students.

3. As fiscal stewards of Collin College, what research/information would you use to determine how to prioritize spending tax payer dollars?

One of the keys to a fiscally successful community and college are students who reach graduation, find gainful employment, and are able to pay back student loans and guarantee the college's ROI. I am interested in research that begins with student persistence and works

backwards, so I read about persistence and overall success in samples of student bodies most closely resembling our own at Collin College. If we dedicate tax money to helping students graduate, whether that means buildings with equipped labs, programs for students testing into developmental levels in math and/or reading, technology to help faculty engage blended and online learners, etc...then we are well on our way to producing students who will pay back into Collin County's tax base and keep the college financially viable.

Additionally, analysis of population, median income, and property tax projections have to balance with the above plans to maintain a workable budget for the college.

4. What role do you see Associate Faculty playing in the shared governance of the College and what are some beneficial reasons for the Board to focus on the role of and capital investment in our Associate Faculty?

I have taught at multiple schools as an associate faculty member, and I know how frequently this group of teachers feels less enfranchised than their full-time counterparts. This is particularly dangerous when associate faculty are responsible for the care of more than half of the students and classes at the college (the current ratio is 397 FTF/858 PTF). It is essential that the Board focus on and invest in Associate Faculty and foster that group's feeling of personal ownership in and loyalty to the college. They need a voice. They need representation in college governance and the ability to advocate for both their tangible needs (like compensation) as well as the more intangible needs (a culture of inclusion). The commitment of Associate Faculty to students is a direct reflection of the college's commitment to the Associate Faculty, and a strong advocate on the Board of Trustees is a step in the right direction to that commitment.

Greg GomeI

1. What compels you to serve as a Collin College Trustee and if elected, what do you view as your primary role as Trustee?

I've benefited over the last decade by being a resident of the county and to have all 4 of my children attend Collin College. At this point in my life, I want to return to the community by paying back with my time, experience and knowledge to enhance the opportunity for others to participate in higher education. I've had several occasions to counsel with the friends of my children on the benefits of attending Collin College and to former military members. Having lived through several years as the parent of Collin students has provided me with experiences I wouldn't had gathered otherwise. I want to share what I've learned with the next generation of students and influence the direction the college takes as we enter the next decade.

My experiences, both in the military and private sector, have shown me that by listening to what the people you support say, you'll become a better leader. The role of a leader is to provide a shared vision that brings people together to work toward a common cause. My primary role as a Trustee is be a sounding board for the community and allow their voices to be heard.

2. What is the biggest challenge that Collin College faces in meeting the workforce needs of North Texas and how has your background, experience, or education uniquely prepared you to address it?

Determining how we're going to maintain focus on scaling Collin College growth to align with where the county is headed while balancing the other initiatives will call for a level of governance that is challenging. When working with my clients in dealing with the similar issue of prioritizing projects across a portfolio of desirable goals, I ask them which will truly make a difference in the survival of their company. While Collin College isn't faced today with making a life or death choice, there should be a sense of urgency in preparing now for the needs of the county in the future.

I've spent my life working with a variety of individuals with differing skills, knowledge and abilities and to help individuals to become the best versions of themselves. Collin College is poised to allow that reality to expand to even more individuals than those that it currently serves. My vision is that there are many paths that lead one to Collin College; from a high school student participating in dual enrollment, to a former military member using their GI benefits, and that we need to continue to provide a vision of how Collin College can meet these evolving needs.

3. As fiscal stewards of Collin College, what research/information would you use to determine how to prioritize spending tax payer dollars?

In order to provide value to the Board and the College in making expenditure decisions, I would attend the professional development offered by the Community College Association of Texas Trustees. While I have familiarity within my domain (corporate information technology), I wouldn't want to limit myself to only one perspective and desire to seek out additional expertise.

One area that I would suggest we consider, if not already being done, is to benchmark ourselves against similar organizations to determine which components would allow us to maximize the investments we make. Like having the Disney Institute offer training last year to the College, I'd examine other opportunities to partner with best in breed groups to see what we can do to improve.

4. What role do you see Associate Faculty playing in the shared governance of the College and what are some beneficial reasons for the Board to focus on the role of and capital investment in our Associate Faculty?

I read an article in the Chronicle of Higher Education discussing the "Corporatization" of education and how the dynamics had changed the quality that students received. The author stated that the use (and at times abuse) of adjunct faculty had the potential to undermine the gains that have occurred and that a shared governance model was one element to address the situation.

Stakeholder involvement is a critical component in an effective governance framework and within the college environment this includes the Associate Faculty. Each group that is impacted by decisions made at the executive level should at a minimum have their voice heard. The formality with how this involvement may vary, though the primary intent is that the offer to provide commentary is offered.

With Collin College students receiving a substantial component of their instruction from Associate Faculty, it makes sense to appropriately invest in their professional development. Failure to adequately provide for the team members (employees or contract) needs to improve their skills can lead to some predictable outcomes: decrease in the quality of education; departure of the member; and an increase workload for those left behind. This was the concern of the author and one we should heed.

Jeri Chambers

1. What compels you to serve as a Collin College Trustee and if elected, what do you view as your primary role as Trustee?

I am passionate about education. I am especially passionate about Collin College and what a positive impact it has on both students and the community. The College has an impressive operational blueprint:

Great learning for students at the lowest tuition rate in the state
Great stewardship for taxpayers with the second lowest tax rate in the state.

My primary role as a trustee is to determine and interpret the policies of the College. This includes developing a strategic plan for the college that meets the ever-changing learning needs of students and approving an economically sound budget.

2. What is the biggest challenge that Collin College faces in meeting the workforce needs of North Texas and how has your background, experience, or education uniquely prepared you to address it?

The biggest challenge the College faces is responding to the steady growth of Collin County. The College must determine how best to serve an increasing number of students and how best to fulfill evolving workforce needs. I am uniquely prepared to address this growth. My education, time in the classroom and leadership experience in a vast number of organizations across the county give me the knowledge, insights and connections to be a conduit between the College and the business community as a listener and advocate.

3. As fiscal stewards of Collin College, what research/information would you use to determine how to prioritize spending tax payer dollars?

Trustees have a responsibility to stay informed of news and trends in higher education, especially as it relates to community colleges of similar size and economic climate. They should also be aware of Collin County demographics and tuned in to budgetary issues faced by our county and the state of Texas. I am a lifelong learner and relish the opportunity to read, learn and research in order to make informed and wise choices about the use of financial resources. As a trustee, I will engage in entities across the county including school districts and business which will also help me to assess college needs and priorities. Additionally, trustees must rely on the College president to gather input from multiple sources, including faculty and staff, when creating the budget. The classroom for the 21st century will not look the same as it does today and the needs of the classroom will be changing. Faculty and staff input during the strategic process will also be a key source of prioritizing spending.

4. What role do you see Associate Faculty playing in the shared governance of the College and what are some beneficial reasons for the Board to focus on the role of and capital investment in our Associate Faculty?

Since Associate Faculty teach roughly fifty percent of the students, they play a very important role at the College. Full-time faculty have a great opportunity to lead and develop the Associate Faculty to participate in college governance and identifying what professional development and investment is needed. It is hoped that full-time faculty will look to Associate Faculty when filling full time positions. With the projected growth of the College, Associate Faculty will be needed to meet the demands of increased enrollment.

Fred Moses

1. What compels you to serve as a Collin College Trustee and if elected, what do you view as your primary role as Trustee?

As a small business owner, I know first-hand the importance of an educational system that meets the growing demands in business and industry. I look forward to serving alongside other Trustees in directing the future of the College as Collin County continues to grow.

2. What is the biggest challenge that Collin College faces in meeting the workforce needs of North Texas and how has your background, experience, or education uniquely prepared you to address it?

There are several issues facing Collin College. We must improve the campus' infrastructure, increase marketing and outreach strategies throughout the county, cultivate workforce programs with businesses, expand the campus' footprint, and work with high schools to develop a technical school for our area. My extensive experience in serving on professional boards and commissions including the Plano Chamber of Commerce, the Plano Economic Development Board, the Texas General Services Commission, the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulators Commission, the Dallas Black Chamber of Commerce, the PISD Strategic Planning Finance Committee, and others, will bring organizational and strategic skills to the Board. This, coupled with my business background, will be a tremendous asset and serve the residents of Collin County and the students of Collin College well.

3. As fiscal stewards of Collin College, what research/information would you use to determine how to prioritize spending taxpayer dollars?

We must take a comprehensive approach to evaluating and setting the budget. Analyzing current spending and identifying waste, evaluating the effectiveness and success of current programs and courses, and obtaining feedback from students, faculty, and industry will all play roles in establishing a good budget that ensures we are being good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

4. What role do you see Associate Faculty playing in the shared governance of the College and what are some beneficial reasons for the Board to focus on the role of and capital investment in our Associate Faculty? (I am not sure how to respond to this)

When there are important issues and policies facing the college that would impact the college operations and the staff and faculty, I think it would be vital, working with the administration to get input from the Associate Faculty and other key stakeholders. Two areas I think their input would be invaluable in would be security and fair compensation.

Dr. Raj Menon

1. *What compels you to serve as a Collin College Trustee and if elected, what do you view as your primary role as Trustee?*

Education is one of the most powerful if not the most powerful means of improving the life of an individual and the quality of life in a community. This is what Collin College offers! I serve as a trustee because I understand the challenges we face as a county and as a college, know what it takes to do the job, and I have the interpersonal skills and governance experience to serve, as well as a passion for improving education and for servant leadership.

Primary responsibilities of the Board of Trustees are

- to select, hire, and evaluate a chief executive officer,
- oversee the mission and vision for the college,
- establish a set of consistent policies within the law, including approval of the budget and setting tax rates,
- and to NOT interfere with the administration and implementation of the policies by the administration and faculty.

2. *What is the biggest challenge that Collin College faces in meeting the workforce needs of North Texas and how has your background, experience, or education uniquely prepared you to address it?*

Collin County is experiencing an incredible and awesome population growth and diversity in the community. As a result, the biggest challenge for Collin College is to keep pace with the growth and deal with providing an excellent and cost-effective educational path for both the young adults graduating from the K-12 systems around us as well as in education and re-training of older adults in the workforce.

My analytical background, education and training in engineering and business has taught me to recognize problems, analyze data, evaluate options, and solve problems. Furthermore, my experience with governance on non-profit and other boards allows me to work collaboratively with a peer group of volunteer board members as well as deal with public input and work effectively with a chief executive.

Advocating to address the nursing shortage in Texas and getting the BSN program established at Collin is an immediate priority and the prospects of getting legislative approval are looking very promising right now.

3. *As fiscal stewards of Collin College, what research/information would you use to determine how to prioritize spending tax payer dollars?*

I tend to rely on the research, data, inputs, feedback and other information provided by the administration and faculty of the college. I also learn from listening to student input as appropriate, as well as from independent sources of external data, and expert data and analysis as needed from time to time from demographers, economists, business and community leaders, civic leaders, local, state and federal elected officials, chambers of commerce, education and workforce development experts and so on.

I also think it is the responsibility of a trustee to remain open, visible, and accessible to the public, and to listen to inputs from the citizens of our county.

4. *What role do you see Associate Faculty playing in the shared governance of the College and what are some beneficial reasons for the Board to focus on the role of and capital investment in our Associate Faculty?*

Faculty members serve the College District in academic, governance and strategic planning matters through membership and involvement in, but not limited to, more than 30 different College District-recognized councils, committees and task forces.

It is my understanding that Associate Faculty are involved in teaching a significant number of courses at Collin – and given our population and education mix in Collin County, that we are able to recruit and retain very high quality Associate Faculty – that allow us to stay true to our mission of providing a quality education at an affordable price.

To date, I have not had many discussions specifically pertaining to investment in and role of AF in shared governance, so I have not formed an opinion yet, but I am open and very interested in learning and understanding more about the subject.

Larry Wainwright

1. What compels you to serve as a Collin College Trustee and if elected, what do you view as your primary role as Trustee?

Since 1985, I have been associated with Collin College as an adjunct professor, associate faculty member or trustee. I highly value the friendships and associations developed during my tenure and enjoy sharing viewpoints with students, faculty, administration and Board of Trustees.

Collin College has a passion for learning, service and involvement, creativity and innovation, academic excellence, dignity, respect and integrity. These core values are a means to measure every activity, expenditure, accomplishment and failure.

2. What is the biggest challenge that Collin College faces in meeting the workforce needs of North Texas and how has your background, experience, or education uniquely prepared you to address it?

Growth – the population explosion of Collin County and surrounding counties create enrollment opportunities unseen since the inception of the college. Meeting the needs of a growing student population requires additional facilities, quality faculty, funding (public and private), programs (certifications, associate and bachelor degrees and corporate partnerships) as well as class availability (on-line and classroom). Furthering partnerships with universities will continue attracting students to Collin College thus enhancing the cost saving of a Collin College degree.

For the past seven years, I have served on the Collin College Board of Trustees. Serving on two board committees and chairman of one committee, I have witnessed the strength that comes from senior leadership and experience.

The vision of a tenured trustee is immeasurable. By providing experience and vision, a multi-term board member provides direction, focus and a long-term strategic view of the college. Losing an experienced trustee creates a void not only in leadership and quality, but also in respect and willingness to consider alternative viewpoints. Thus, my desire to serve a second term on the Board of Trustees.

Acting on the concerns of faculty and administration is one of my highest objectives. You see, the faculty member has contact with our customer, the student regularly. He/She must be satisfied with our product (education) or we lose customers (enrollment), reduce our price (tuition) and eventually fail as an entity. Much like business, we (Collin College) only succeed when our customer's needs are met in an affordable manner that is useful beyond the classroom. Our product must always be improving.

Since 2010, a conference center, two libraries and the Cary A. Israel Health Science Center has been constructed. New faculty and administrators hired and Dr. Neil Matkin became Collin College's third president. Who wouldn't want to serve a second term?

The Board of Trustees has guided this college from inception, through growth periods and now into a mature, well respected college financially secure in its long-term future. My role as a

trustee is not to create a new college, but to keep Collin College moving forward in new and creative ways.

3. *As fiscal stewards of Collin College, what research/information would you use to determine how to prioritize spending tax payer dollars?*

Academic Need – students, faculty, administration and hiring employers. Tax payers expect a return for their tax dollars. Their return is a highly educated workforce/community. It has been proven a higher educated community earns substantially more resulting in a more robust spending economy.

Employment Need – Collin County is home to many highly specialized technical corporations. To keep those employers fully staffed, Collin College must step forward as a leader in degree offerings, technical training and certification.

Facility Need – because of the unexpected growth in local communities, additional facilities must be built. No longer can facilities be paid for by reserves, a bond program must be established for new facilities needed in the future. The future is NOW. The Allen, Celina, Farmersville and Wylie campuses would take years, perhaps decades to build under the existing financing methodology.

4. *What role do you see Associate Faculty playing in the shared governance of the College and what are some beneficial reasons for the Board to focus on the role of and capital investment in our Associate Faculty?*

By the end of 2016, approximately 67% of faculty were associate faculty. Teaching specialty classes, over-loads, but perhaps the most misinterpreted statistic is the number of associate faculty aspiring to teach full-time. As an Associate Faculty member for 25 years, I sought full-time faculty status, but never reached that goal. Had a full-time faculty mentor, my goal may have been reached.

Today, I believe it is important for aspiring Associate Faculty members to have a Full-Time Faculty member to mentor, guide and direct the teaching associate. Improving their teaching skills and recognizing shortfalls, an Associate Faculty member can reach Full-Time status when opportunity avails itself.

Growth is going to happen whether we plan or not. With enrollment growth comes the need for Full-Time Faculty. How great the next generation of Full-time Faculty teach at Collin College and have passed the supervising committee of his/her peers? Yes, I believe Associate Faculty are worth the investment and deserve a role in the shared governance of the College.

Associate Faculty are not a threat to Full-Time Faculty. They are not replacing Full-Time Faculty. Associate Faculty teach over-load classes, a minimal number of classes, classes requiring special backgrounds or abilities and many teach sections at times when Full-Time Faculty wish to be at home. Associate Faculty allow the college to grow inexpensively while providing a resource when Full Time Faculty positions become available.

Nancy Wurzman

1. What compels you to serve as a Collin College Trustee and if elected, what do you view as your primary role as Trustee?

I want to be elected to another term as a Collin College Trustee because the work that I have done as a member of the Board for the past seven years is unfinished and I can make a significant contribution to reaching the next level. The visionary Five-Year Master Plan we have developed is the embodiment of where this Board sees the future of the College and our role in the community. We currently developing the implementation plan that will serve as a blueprint for how we bring on programs and facilities subject to market forces, realization of expected growth, and the passage of the Bond in this election. We will still need to grow even if the Bond does not pass, and it will be important that our experienced Trustees help modify the plan while we determine priorities and explore alternate sources of revenue. My other priority as a Trustee is to make sure we evaluate current policies and the need for new policies that affect our students, faculty, and staff to reflect changes in State and local laws, evolving needs in our community, best practices in higher education, and integration of our Core Values in everything we do.

2. What is the biggest challenge that Collin College faces in meeting the workforce needs of North Texas and how has your background, experience, or education uniquely prepared you to address it?

Collin County has diverse workforce needs that are driven by both the need for the highly educated professional and technical workforce that has attracted businesses to our community and the highly skilled service workforce that forms the backbone of our community life. The traditional mission of Collin has been as a transfer college that provides students with a low-cost, high-quality beginning to their college careers. The Master Plan sets us on a course to expand our program offerings to technical training and certifications that allow students at all levels to immediately begin well-paying careers without a lot of student debt. The biggest challenge will be how we grow our workforce and technical programs fast enough to satisfy the needs of our business community and those seeking to fill the available jobs. As a current Trustee, I have been privy to the research and data that forms the basis for developing and implementing the Master Plan. My experience in guiding the construction of multiple facilities on both an operational and financial basis will help bring these visions to fruition in the shortest time possible while maintaining quality and financial integrity.

3. As fiscal stewards of Collin College, what research/information would you use to determine how to prioritize spending tax payer dollars?

The current Board has been provided with massive amounts of data relating to the growth we are addressing in the Master Plan. We have looked at studies of population growth and

distribution throughout the county, data on what the workforce of tomorrow will look like, transportation and traffic pattern studies in where and how we can best position campuses, and financial analysis of how the growth of our tax base can support the expansion we envision as our future. Although we are firm in our commitment to keep tuition low, the goal is to fund the cost of instruction through tuition and state funding so that taxes are used to provide the infrastructure we need to fulfill our mission. The College has an extensive schedule and reserve for maintenance and replacement of critical systems in our current facilities, and that is a priority in the use of taxpayer dollars. Based on our commitment to the community not to raise tax rates, we will continually assess the factors that allow us to build new facilities for the least possible cost including labor and materials costs and the optimal timing for issuing bonds.

4. What role do you see Associate Faculty playing in the shared governance of the College and what are some beneficial reasons for the Board to focus on the role of and capital investment in the associate faculty?

In my time as a Collin College Trustee, I have witnessed a strong commitment of all constituencies in the College community to shared governance. Associate faculty are an integral part of delivering the high quality education at Collin College, and as such they should be afforded a full seat at the table to have their voices heard on all important decisions, including curriculum development and evaluation of faculty. The College will reap substantially benefits from capital investment into associate faculty because our goal in providing outstanding educational programs can only be realized when all faculty have access to tools and resources to empower professional growth. The College will also benefit by the stability of having associate faculty who are invested in Collin and who will be prepared for opportunities to become full-time faculty as we grow and expand.