

August 24, 2018

Dear CCE COPE Committee,

Thank you for considering an endorsement of my candidacy for trustee of the Palomar Community College District. I appreciate this opportunity to respond to your questionnaire.

**1. Please summarize your background and describe how it has prepared you to effectively serve as a Community College Trustee. What motivates you to run for this Board seat?**

I am thankful for my Depression-era parents who believed in education, a strong work ethic, and frugality. I seek this trustee position partly to honor them and to give back to a college I love. With nearly 30 years of community college experience (21 at Palomar), I know many of Palomar's challenges—and opportunities.

I am uniquely qualified and well prepared to be an effective trustee. During my career, I held numerous positions in nearly every employee group. I was a classified employee (newswriter at MiraCosta College in the late-80s) a part- and full-time faculty member, a temporary employee, a mid-level academic director, and an Instructional Dean. I understand college operations, having served on the President's Cabinet, Instructional Planning Council, Curriculum Committee, and several other shared governance councils at Palomar College. I also volunteered with the Foundation and served twice as Chair of its annual Gala. Post-retirement, I led a planning group for the two newly opened Fallbrook and Rancho Bernardo centers and I performed the dean duties for a division that desperately needed a trusted leader.

My academic background in communications/journalism and my Palomar work experiences have prepared me well for this trustee position. As a former journalist, I know how to dig out the facts. I know what questions trustees should be asking, and I have the courage and confidence needed to ask the necessary questions. I've attended many board meetings, heard questions asked by the trustees, and I've been shocked by the partial responses provided by some members of the present and past executive teams. To myself, I thought: "Now ask this" . . . the appropriate follow-up question. Don't settle for the politically-correct and/or partial response. To my dismay, the trustees are usually satisfied with partial responses, or perhaps they are not well enough informed to know the appropriate follow-up question. I promise NOT to settle. Because of my Palomar experiences, I believe I'll know what follow-up questions the Board should be asking. I will not be afraid to ask and to demand transparency.

Additionally, I believe those who have worked with me know that I am honest and approachable. I have friends across the institution. As a trustee, I will continue to have lunches with my "friends" and I will develop new relationships as I encourage others to seek me out. It's important to gather information from a variety of sources. The CEO cannot be the single source of information!

## 2. What role do you feel Classified Staff should play in carrying out the educational mission of a Community College District?

Many years ago Palomar College gave birth to the Learning Paradigm. Its premise was that EVERY employee contributes to the educational experience and success of students. Every employee, in his or her role, has the ability to help students achieve their goals. I'm sorry that this concept has faded over time because I KNOW every employee has the power to impact students—for the positive, or not.

Classified employees are the first line of defense (or offense); you are the face of Palomar College. A classified employee answers the phones; greets guests at the college entrance; helps students with their enrollment questions and paperwork. Classified employees know what classes tend to make (and why). Our classified employees, as a group, have the greatest impact upon student success. Many classified employees go way beyond performing their respective job duties; they become mentors and peer counselors for our students.

As a dean, I reminded the staff I supervised that staff and management have the same job: to support the faculty and students. A good manager will tap the shoulder of staff and discuss issues and possible solutions. I found that the classified staff members KNOW a lot; too frequently, though, they are not asked for their input. This is a problem from the top down. The two-way dialogue with staff is critical for the success of the institution. Staff need to be empowered to feel safe in these honest and sometimes difficult conversations. Smart managers (from the top down) will look to the classified staff—their first-hand experiences and knowledge—to help inform decisions.

## 3. Given the current State budget deficit forecast, what would be some of the guiding principles you would direct management to follow if we indeed do end up having to cut the District's budget even further?

It's not a popular premise, but the college is a business. An institution with expenses and revenue IS a business. Our own households operate as a business; we have income and expenses. I would direct management to examine closely both sides of the ledger.

Some guiding principles would be:

**INCOME.** The primary source of revenue is FTES. What is being done to boost enrollment? What strategies are in place to retain students? What could Palomar offer students that the competition cannot?

- Examine the annual marketing and outreach plans. (It's my opinion that the college has not had a viable plan for the past dozen years.)
- Examine the product (course offerings). Are we providing what students want . . . and how and when they want it?
- Make partnerships with business and industry; provide not-for-credit offerings for a price.
- Look at other revenue-generating ideas and then put a plan in action.
- Evaluate and refine the plan at regular intervals.

**EXPENSES.** Approximately 89% of the college's budget is in salaries and benefits. These expenses are a given. I believe in protecting the jobs of our staff; however, there may be opportunities in some areas for re-organization—for improved efficiency without any loss of positions. If a re-organization appeared worthwhile, I would encourage transparent dialogue and input. Again, staff knows “stuff” that management may not.

Effectively, any reductions need to come from the remaining operational budget, which is roughly 11 percent of the total. An analysis of these budgets needs to occur. It's my experience that some academic departments are flush, while others are running on fumes. Why? Because the roll-over budgets have been making the rich richer and the poor poorer, year after year. Zero-based budgeting might assist the District in properly allocating resources. This would be a difficult conversation but if all groups have a voice and the process is developed by an integrated group, the outcome could be very positive.

Secondly, look for duplication of efforts. This exists! There are cases where three departments are offering the same, or nearly the same, course.

Thirdly, true program review must occur. Every academic department needs to carefully examine its certificates and degrees to determine their viability.

Finally, change of any sort needs to be transparent and purposeful. And, most importantly, staff members across the institution need to be involved and consulted. It's been my experience that classified staff know the true story and can help craft the best solutions.

**4. Under what circumstances do you think it is important for you to consult with the Classified Executive Council before making a decision as trustee?**

I would maintain an open-door policy, always. First, I would hope that the Classified Executive Council would reach out and make me aware of any issue or concern. (The door opens in both directions.)

Those who know me well know my belief: There are *three* sides to every story. I'm going to make certain I understand the issues from all possible perspectives. To best understand the issue at hand, I will speak with those who will be affected by the decision. I would hope for an ongoing dialogue that is honest and respectful at all times.

**5. Would you commit to hearing our point of view before committing your vote in any issue concerning Classified staff?**

Yes, absolutely! As I mentioned above, I would expect the dialogue to be ongoing, open, honest and respectful.

**6. Please tell us why you think the Classified COPE Committee should endorse you for election?**

Change is needed at Palomar, and Lee Dulgeroff and I will bring change. I have the courage to maintain an independent voice. I will work with all stakeholders to solve pressing issues of student access to needed classes, more careful spending, and more effective marketing and outreach so the college will be better positioned for growth.

Almost daily, I hear from my friends and colleagues at the college. Employees across the institution, in all employee groups, feel threatened and devalued. Morale is at an all-time low. There are a host of reasons for the current state of affairs, but the number one reason is the Board is listening only to one employee, the Superintendent/President. The Board has forgotten its fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers of this District.

In 2017, I worked the entire year as a temporary employee. My job duties were those of an academic dean. During this time, I told one member of the executive team that the College was too focused on projects and not focused enough on its people. If you care about the staff, the work will get done, and it will be done with great pride.

We say, "Students First." My motto is "Employees First." If classified staff, management, and faculty are treated with respect and empowered to do their respective jobs, the natural result follows. "Students First" will be the result. If Mom and Dad (all College employees) are not healthy, they cannot adequately take care of their children (our students).

In closing, I seek your endorsement . . . with humility. I acknowledge the stewardship I'll have and I'll work diligently on behalf of the staff of Palomar College and the taxpayers at large. As your elected trustee, I will always be accessible. I will partner with you to ensure that Palomar College is meeting the educational needs of its diverse communities.

Thank you for your consideration. I appreciate this opportunity to respond to your questions. Please let me know if you have additional questions or need clarification.

Best regards,

Norma Miyamoto

Please note that on my ballot statement, I close with:

**Integrity, honesty, professionalism: that's Norma. Vote Miyamoto for Palomar College Governing Board. It's a vote you can cast with confidence. (normamiyamoto.com)**