

# Candidate Responses for the College of DuPage Board of Trustees

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## Florence Appel

1. **The City of Naperville approved a paid parental leave. Do you feel the College board should consider a similar benefit for its employees? If so, how do you see it working? If not, why not?**

*A society that values human life is one that provides parents with the resources they need to raise healthy children and to take care of their families. In the absence of federal legislation to guarantee resources such as paid parental leave and universal health care, it is left to employers to carry the load. I believe that providing paid parental leave is not only the right thing to do but also a common-sense, progressive policy that contributes to the increased well-being of all who are impacted by it, especially women who bear the brunt of not only childbirth but also childcare. Parents and children are healthier and more secure, and institutions that offer such a benefit are judged as family-friendly and good places to work with loyal and engaged employees who are more able to do their jobs well. An institution with a public charge like COD should welcome the opportunity to cultivate this culture.*

*Benefits like these are often hard won in the workplace and require sustained effort and commitment from both the institution and the workforce. The opposing argument is almost always largely economic, but unless a thorough calculus is made of the pros and cons, the economic argument cannot be accepted wholesale. There are many other factors to examine.*

*So, how to begin at COD? With an invitation to open discourse that encourages employees and all stakeholders to tell their stories. With a look at current COD related benefits such as sick and personal leave, vacation days, and the implementation of the Family Medical Leave Act. With a commitment to be both creative and fiscally responsible. A worthy goal is always worth the effort.*

2. **Do you think that leadership, top administrative positions, and faculty at the College of DuPage reflects the diversity of its student base and regional community? If not, what remedies might you suggest?**

*U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 DuPage County demographics were estimate*

- *80% White, 5% Black, 13% Asian, 15% Hispanic.*

*COD 2018-2019 Fact Book reported these student demographics:*

- *48% White, 7% Black, 12% Asian, 27% Hispanic.*

*According to the COD Equity Plan published in 2020, the administration is:*

- *84% White, 10% Black, 3% Asian, 3% Hispanic.*

*According to the same COD Equity Plan, the faculty is:*

- *83% White, 4% Black, 8% Asian, 3% Hispanic.*

*Clear disparities exist.*

*As a public, open-enrollment institution, COD is expected to attract students who are underrepresented in higher education. And so, it is important to note that Hispanic students at COD are represented at nearly twice the rate that they are in the general population. This has resulted in COD's successful effort to be designated as a Hispanic-serving institution. This designation opens the door to substantial grant opportunities to support Hispanic students financially, academically and culturally. It also places a responsibility on the institution to employ Hispanic administrators, faculty and staff to contribute to an institutional culture that is welcoming to and supportive of Hispanic students. Black students are enrolled at a rate that is 40% higher than the county, but the actual number is much lower than it is for Hispanic students. Recruitment in districts with larger Black populations continues to be an important priority, as does commensurate representation at the administrative, faculty and staff levels.*

*The COVID-19 pandemic has taken its most awful toll on students who are on the fringes of academic preparedness, on those who are demographically under-represented in higher ed, and on first-generation college students. At COD, Hispanic enrollments were down 17% in Fall 2020, Black enrollments were down 8%. These students need to know that the institution understands them and is willing to go to bat for them, now more than ever. Every effort to hire administrators, faculty and staff who truly represent them is important.*

*The Board is responsible for approving all new hires and ensuring that the College adheres to its aspirational mission of diversity and equity. The COD Equity and Access Team has been charged with the responsibility to address College issues of diversity and equity in hiring and in general. The Board has a responsibility to proactively monitor the work of this body and to be more transparent to the community in its hiring practices.*

**3. Do you feel the College of DuPage is welcoming and inclusive to students and faculty of a variety of ethnic, socio-economic, and gender identities? If not, how do you feel this could be rectified?**

*This question addresses serious ongoing systemic problems in our society. No institution is exempt from them. The COD Center for Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion exists to address the quality of campus life for all students, and to support students in pursuit of racial, economic and gender-based justice and equity. The Board in its oversight role should be engaged with this center and supportive of its efforts to impact the culture of the institution. There is always room for improvement and every institution in this country must commit to ongoing review of its practices. The Board must invite the opinions of all stakeholders including students, faculty and staff.*

**4. Given the social unrest that surfaced in 2020, do you feel the college should be offering programs for students and the community on racism, equity and the LGBTQIA+ community?**

*The COD Center for Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion exists to address the quality of campus life for all students, and to support students in pursuit of racial, economic and gender-based justice and equity. They are well-positioned to address and involve the College and wider community in their work and public events, and they are well-connected to many affiliate organizations. They are an excellent vehicle through which the College can meet its obligation to educate and inform the COD and wider District 502 communities. The Board should actively support these efforts.*

**Heidi Holan** - no contact email

**Nick Howard**

**1. The City of Naperville approved a paid parental leave. Do you feel the College board should consider a similar benefit for its employees? If so, how do you see it working? If not, why not?**

*Yes, of course, I am all for the PAID Family Leave Act. The typical scenario is 12 weeks for the mom and, if the partner is included, 2 weeks for them. I have spoken to spouses receiving more time off recently (and more flexibility to take it) but I think that is happening in some of the larger, more flush, corporations. This is an extremely important issue and should be required. It is an important part of making sure each family gets off on the right foot during these early, critical days after a child comes home.*

**2. Do you think that leadership, top administrative positions, and faculty at the College of DuPage reflects the diversity of its student base and regional community? If not, what remedies might you suggest?**

*I am not fully versed on the demographic of the faculty and staff, but I think that an effort to hire talented and qualified people that properly represent our community is imperative, if possible. As the makeup of our community changes, we should be doing the same as positions become available. The more we reflect our student population, the more adequately we can provide specific guidance for each.*

**3. Do you feel the College of DuPage is welcoming and inclusive to students and faculty of a variety of ethnic, socio-economic, and gender identities? If not, how do you feel this could be rectified?**

*I think the demographic of the student population speaks for itself in that it is changing with the county. Are we doing all that we can to be inclusive? Well, I am hoping to learn more about that and then making sure that we are being flexible as the groups change, grow and are identified. If it needs to be rectified, it will have a good start by making sure question 2 is answered and solved since we will inherently be in a better place to move in the right direction given the proper people will be in place since it is the faculty and staff that will need to lead these initiatives.*

4. **Given the social unrest that surfaced in 2020, do you feel the college should be offering programs for students and the community on racism, equity and the LGBTQIA+ community?**

*The job of the college is to educate and prepare its student body to deal with what's happening out in the everyday world. Any program that will help our students (and community as well) become better, more open-minded and forward thinking citizens should be a welcome addition to our already robust set of programs. I am all for doing whatever it takes to make this happen.*

NickForCOD.com)

**Daniel Malloy - no contact email**

**Andrew Richard Manno - no contact email**

**Don Potoczny**

1. **The City of Naperville approved a paid parental leave. Do you feel the College board should consider a similar benefit for its employees? If so, how do you see it working? If not, why not?**

*I was shocked and disappointed to learn that COD provides no paid parental leave.*

*My wife and I understand the difficulties of new parents. I was stationed in Baghdad, Iraq when my son was born. I was fortunate that his birth occurred in the middle of my tour. I was able to return for two weeks. He was a little late, but we spent six amazing days with each other. I returned to Iraq for seven more months. My wife's mother was able to stay with her while I was gone. But every time I see a baby, I remember how I didn't see my son at that age. I would have given anything to have been able to hold him every day. I would have gladly changed every diaper. I know how important those first few weeks are to a family.*

*Of course, I would support a period of leave to support family additions. This should include adoptions as well as births. I am currently an employee of Chicago Public Schools. They provide up to two weeks of paid leave. That should be the starting point of our discussion. We can't forget our many adjunct instructors as well.*

*The current COD policy is to allow for up to a year of UNPAID leave for a birth or to care for a related military servicemember. That does little for the many families who can't afford to miss a paycheck.*

2. **Do you think that leadership, top administrative positions, and faculty at the College of DuPage reflects the diversity of its student base and regional community? If not, what remedies might you suggest?**

*The board of trustees clearly does not reflect the diversity in our community. I considered this when I made the decision to run. In the end, I decided I could contribute to the struggle for equity through running. I understand why we don't have more volunteers. First time candidates share many of the same obstacles as "first in family" students.*

*There is so much to learn about financing the campaign, marketing, and so on. I pledge to identify and mentor BIPOC candidates to join me on the board in two years.*

*I am pleased to see that the COD cabinet is diverse. I don't know about the rest of the administration, but I'll certainly be watching for that. A more experienced board of trustees can provide sufficient oversight of the administration. We can ensure policies are in place that require the consideration of diverse candidates for every vacancy and promotion.*

*I have committed to promoting a more fair and just society. I serve in a high school in Little Village in Chicago. Nearly all our students are first-generation Americans struggling against poverty, institutional racism, and violence. I know the challenges they face because I am there with them.*

*I also serve as the Board President for the DuPage Symphony Orchestra. Over the past year, I have recruited and developed directors to double the size of our board. More important, our new members bring several diversity stories, and their impact has been tremendous.*

**3. Do you feel the College of DuPage is welcoming and inclusive to students and faculty of a variety of ethnic, socio-economic, and gender identities? If not, how do you feel this could be rectified?**

*I don't have enough experience on campus to assess this question, but I have no doubt we can continue to make progress in this area. There is much work to be done to build equity everywhere I look in this country. As we develop and review policies, we must do so with an equity lens and consider the experiences of all our students, faculty, and staff.*

*I was pleased to see that equity was added as a core value this past year. I wonder why it took so long and I'm not sure the definition captures the right, welcoming tone.*

**4. Given the social unrest that surfaced in 2020, do you feel the college should be offering programs for students and the community on racism, equity and the LGBTQIA+ community.**

*The brutal public murders of several African Americans at the hand of police forced Americans to face the harsh reality of racism in our contemporary society. I'm thrilled that this reckoning drove the development of so many initiatives focused on building a more just community.*

*The college does have several programs to promote the cause of equality in our community. Most of them seem to be new and they leverage the work done at other institutions. Our challenge is to build on the momentum from our marching and talking. There is no reason why COD can't be a leader in building a welcoming community.*

**Sheng “Texa” Sun - no contact email**