

**Candidates for
College of DuPage District #502 Board of Trustees
Listed in Order of Answer Submission**

College Trustee - to serve an unexpired 2-year term (Vote for 1)

- **Alan L. Bennett**

College Trustee - to serve a Full 6-year term (vote for not more than 2)

- **Dan Markwell**
- **Christine M. Fenne**
- **Taso Triantafillos**

Each candidate was asked to submit the following questions for inclusion in this booklet. For fairness, the answers are listed in the order the candidate submitted them, with no changes made other than to have a uniform layout. This is also the order in which they will be seated for the forum.

- Please provide your name, city of residence, and any contact information you wish to share with voters.
- Why did you decide to run for the Board of Trustees at COD?
- What qualifies you to run for the Board of Trustees at COD?
- What major issues do you see facing the College today and what would be your plans for addressing them?
- What are your thoughts regarding the College being placed on probation by the Higher Learning Commission? What would you do to make sure the College never finds itself in this kind of difficulty again?
- What impact does the college being on probation with the Higher Learning Commission have on academics, student performance, and the fact that enrollment is down? What suggestions do you have for increasing enrollment and guiding students to achieve success?
- What is your stance on bargaining units and their role in higher education?
- How would you foster open and honest communications between the Board and other constituencies at the college (administrators, faculty, and classified personnel)?
- If you saw cuts that needed to be made at the college, where in the budget would you look first?
- What more would you like to add regarding your vision for the College of DuPage over the next 5-10 years?

Alan L. Bennett

Candidate for College Trustee - to serve an unexpired 2-year term

Contact Information:

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Decision To Run:

As a resident of DuPage County and a grandparent of three elementary school age children, who, in all likelihood will attend COD, I was prompted to seek this office to assist the College in its process of restoring full transparency, fiscal accountability, operational efficiency, cost effectiveness, and full accreditation so my three grandchildren and the other children residing in DuPage County have full access to a quality institution of higher education when they are ready to pursue their vocational and/or educational goals.

My Qualifications:

My background includes the following:

- 1-BS in Business Administration, Elmhurst College and a MA in Political Science, NIU
- 2-Former teacher at Holy Cross HS in River Grove, IL
- 3-20 years experience in Illinois public higher education at Northeastern Illinois University, Governor's State University, and Triton Community College in various administrative capacities
- 4-CMAP Board Member for suburban Cook County 2008-12
- 5-NIPC Commissioner and Treasurer 1995-2007
- 6-Elmwood Park Village Trustee and Deputy Village President 1975-2012
- 7-Member, District 401 Board of Education 1971-1974

Major Issues Facing COD:

The College needs to continue to work on the implementation of the 19 recommendations from the Auditor General's Performance Audit. Completion of this task will increase transparency in the College's operations, increase Board oversight of the College's administration, and ensure greater adherence to the Board's policies and procedures. In addition, the College must continue to pursue full accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission and remove the two year temporary accreditation status the College is now under. The current Board of Trustees has established a well thought out process and organizational structure to address these two paramount issues and I would hope to join them in a cooperative effort to fully implement the 19 Auditor's recommendations and regain full accreditation for the College.

Budget Issues:

The FY2017 Budget assumes receipt of zero Operating Grant payments from the State of Illinois. Obviously this a major concern that can only be addressed by working closely with the College's elected representatives and senators whose constituents reside within the College boundaries to restore State funding for the College. Since salaries and benefits consume 71.4% of the FY17 COD Operating Funds, I want to examine the historical circumstances surrounding the College's compensation policies and the organizational structure that contains 7 vice-presidents, 21 deans and associate deans, and 12 directors. Other budget reduction strategies could possibly include a temporary hiring freeze, using reserves, across the board budgetary reductions, and a freeze on new capital construction. Since COD is under tax caps, the ability to raise property taxes is severely circumscribed. I would only support tuition increases as an absolute last resort in combination with a minimal property tax increase after all essential economies have been exercised.

Other College Visions:

I want to ensure that COD is in the forefront and leader in providing assistance to those DuPage County residents who are negatively impacted by the forces of globalization and technological advancements such as automation. That effort should include educational and skills assessment, literacy and computational skills training, as well as vocational retraining of impacted workers. This effort should be a cooperative effort with both business leaders and organized labor. The College must also strive to keep tuition as low as possible consistent with cost effective operations for transfer, technical, developmental, continuing, and cultural education.

Honest Communication Issue:

In order to foster better communication between the Board and all the College constituencies the Board should issue a hard copy newsletter and/or E-Mail to all the impacted employee groups summarizing the decisions made at the previous Board meeting. In addition, the Board should select a Board member to serve as a liaison to each organization, such as the Faculty Senate, or other similar groups, to serve as a two way conduit of information between the Board and the constituency group. In the Village of Elmwood Park each trustee served as Board liaison to groups such as the Youth Commission, Planning Commission, Library Board, etc. and this served as a vital communication procedure.

My Stance On Collective Bargaining Issue:

When employees decide by a majority vote that they want to bargain collectively with their employer, management has a legal and moral obligation to respect their wishes. That said, both the bargaining unit and management have to engage in the art of compromise when deciding on matters concerning wages, fringe benefits, working conditions, safety issues, and management prerogatives. In the collegial environment,

management and the faculty bargaining units must also work collaboratively on issues such as course and curriculum development, academic program review, faculty workload issues, adjudication procedures, and issues related to the student body.

My Thoughts On HLC Probation:

In order to prevent another adverse decision from the HLC, the College must fully implement all 19 recommendations contained in the Auditor General's Report. Full implementation of these recommendations will increase the Board's oversight, increase administrative accountability to the Board, fully enforce Board investment policies, and increase transparency surrounding Board actions. The existing Board has done a great deal to correct the situation at COD that led to the HLC probationary status ruling. The Board abrogated the \$763,000 buyout, fired the president and the two top financial administrators, initiated the audit conducted by the State Auditor General, hired a new president, hired a new General Counsel, authorized Board ethics and legal training, moved to certify for credit programs, and hired a new outside financial consulting firm.

The Impact Of Probation On The College:

Obviously the College's probationary accreditation status has had a negative impact on the public's perception of the College. However, from observations and conversations I have had with various constituency groups I have come to the conclusion that there is a genuinely positive feeling regarding the corrective actions taken by the current Board. The Board and administration are currently working on the finalization of the Assurance Filing that will be submitted to the HLC by April of 2017. Given all the corrective actions taken by the current Board I am reasonably confident that the HLC will restore full accreditation to COD. As far as enrollment is concerned, my experience at Triton College has indicated to me that a community college's enrollment is inversely related to the state of the economy. When the economy plunges, community college enrollment will increase, when the economy improves, community college enrollment will diminish because individuals do not feel the need to either improve their job skills or retrain for another profession. In the Fall of 2016, 50% of the for credit student headcount indicated they were transfer students, leaving the remaining one-half attending the college for job related training, personal interests, GED training, or unknown reasons. This other one-half is the volatile enrollment component that is largely related to the state of the economy. In order to develop a more stable enrollment base, the college should make every effort to make itself more attractive to the transfer student population by increasing the number of cooperative degree programs with four year institutions of higher education. The college should also more actively pursue cooperative training and apprentice programs with the local trade unions.

Dan Markwell
Candidate for College Trustee - to serve a Full 6-year term

Contact Information:

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Why did you decide to run for the Board of Trustees at COD?

I decided to run to be a Trustee to give greater representation to the student body as well as a vote on policies, and to give the board a perspective from within the classroom. I feel the college faces many challenges, and I want to ensure that our solutions to those problems benefit the entire community, both here on campus and taxpayers across the tri-county district.

What qualifies you to run for the Board of Trustees at COD?

Being a student at the college gives me a perspective different than that of any other trustee or candidate: it allows me to have insight in how board policies and decisions will affect students on a day-to-day basis. Providing a high-quality education to our students should be the top priority of the college, and the teachers and students of COD deserve to have input into how we go about ensuring the college can provide that education.

What major issues do you see facing the College today and what would be your plans for addressing them?

Addressing the Auditor General's report, regaining full accreditation from the HLC, boosting student enrollment and completion rates, and balancing the budget are some of the biggest issues in my opinion.

The 19 recommendations from the Illinois Auditor General all seem to be reasonable, sensible changes to be made at the college. I believe the board must adopt a series of new policies to address those recommendations, especially in regards to creating standing committees; those committees can help get more community members involved in the college and assist the board by making recommendations.

I believe implementing many of those 19 recommendations will go a long way towards getting the HLC to remove COD from probation, as many of them deal with the transparency of the board and the administration of the college, which are among the reasons the HLC placed COD on probation to begin with.

In order for the college to succeed, or to serve its purpose at all, students must be

enrolled. To that end I believe the board should be exploring options to improve public transportation available on campus and expand the relationships with high schools across the district. However, enrollment alone is not a solution: we must also work to improve the completion rate of students here at COD. Working with local businesses, trade schools, labor unions and other universities and colleges is crucial to ensuring that whether a student is at COD for a degree, certificate, or to transfer to another learning institution, they leave COD with the skills and knowledge they will need to succeed in their field.

Balancing the budget is the last of my main concerns. Currently, we have a deficit of several million dollars, in large part due to the enrollment drop that COD has been experiencing. Another key piece to this is the sharp decrease in state funding available to the college, due to the lack of a state budget. I believe that it is time to begin repurposing some of the college's reserve funds, and to begin by covering our budget deficit. With more than \$220 million of taxpayer and tuition dollars at the college's disposal, I am opposed to any form of tuition or tax levy increases. Increasing enrollment, and keeping student enrolled until completing their degree or certificate will go a long way to putting the college in a better financial position.

What are your thoughts regarding the College being placed on probation by the Higher Learning Commission? What would you do to make sure the College never finds itself in this kind of difficulty again?

I think it's a shame. Obviously, no one wants to see COD lose its accreditation, or to be on probation but I think we have to look at how the board and administration of the college operated before the probation began and learn from the mistakes that were made. Going forward we must take even greater steps towards transparent administration of the college, and ensure that the focus of the college is upon providing students with a high quality education and providing teachers and staff the resources they need to instruct and assist our students.

What impact does the college being on probation with the Higher Learning Commission have on academics, student performance, and the fact that enrollment is down? What suggestions do you have for increasing enrollment and guiding students to achieve success?

Needless to say, the affect that the probation has on COD is not positive. It wouldn't surprise me if student completion and enrollment have decreased in part due to the probation, as losing accreditation would make things very difficult for students looking to transfer to a different university after attending COD, although I don't know of any real numbers to prove or disprove that.

I believe that by expanding the partnerships of the college with local schools, businesses, labor unions and 4-year universities across the state, we can give students more opportunities and more options which will help bring new students in, and help guide our students into the fields of study and work they are interested in.

What is your stance on bargaining units and their role in higher education?

Bargaining units, and labor unions in general, are a good thing for employees and for consumers. Here at COD we have teachers and students instead of employees and consumers, but the relationship is the same. It is in the best interests of both the student body and the community to have teachers who are not only capable but enjoy their job and have the stability to focus upon the classroom and their students. If anything, I believe we should be strengthening the Faculty and Adjunct Associations here at COD.

How would you foster open and honest communications between the Board and other constituencies at the college (administrators, faculty, and classified personnel)?

I would like to see committee of the whole meetings happen more frequently than they do, as well as a committee created specifically to identify and discuss concerns of the staff at COD and to make recommendations to the board on addressing them.

If you saw cuts that needed to be made at the college, where in the budget would you look first?

New building construction. While there are a number of projects that the college has had an interest in, I believe constructing new facilities should be at the bottom of the priority list going forward. While a new learning center would be a great addition to the campus, if faced with needing to make budget cuts I would rather not build a building then have to lay off staff or cut educational programs.

What more would you like to add regarding your vision for the College of DuPage over the next 5-10 years?

I would like to see the college create a plan to manage the reserve funds, working them down to a more manageable and reasonable level at around \$80 million. I would like to see that money invested into building a bridge from the HSC across Lambert road, educational programs and to address the needs of our teaching staff. Our adjunct faculty teach 60% of classes here at COD, and yet the highest paid adjunct makes around 26,000 per year. I believe that in the short term there isn't room in the budget, but long-term we as a college and a community have to take a serious look into increasing the by-credit-hour pay rate for adjunct faculty members and/or transitioning willing adjuncts into full-time faculty members.

I also believe that the college should re-evaluate the student trustee position. A large part of why I chose to run for the board in the first place is because of the fact that the student trustee is technically a non-voting member of the board. I believe the board should change that and give the one-year student trustee position full voting rights on the board, to ensure that the student body has not only a voice, but a vote on the board every year, regardless of the outcome of an at-large election.

Christine M. Fenne

Candidate for College Trustee - to serve a Full 6-year term

Contact Information:

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Why did you decide to run for the Board of Trustees at COD?

I've always had a connection with COD. I grew up very near the college. My husband took general education classes at COD before transferring to Northern Illinois University.

My nephew performed in the Jazz and Concert Bands at COD. I was once in the DuPage Chorale, the large community chorus for adult singers at COD. Everyone knows someone who has benefitted from the educational and cultural programs at College of DuPage.

In 2015, I became fascinated with the stories printed in the Daily Herald about the board gridlock. I didn't understand how board members failed to show up for an open public meeting when they were elected by the taxpayers to provide oversight. I care about our community and the College of DuPage is an important institution of academic excellence.

This is a six-year commitment and my son just turned twelve. If I have the privilege of serving on the Board of Trustees, I will ensure that the College of DuPage continues a path of improvement and growth so that he might attend COD just like his father did.

What qualifies you to run for the Board of Trustees at COD?

My qualifications include the following roles:

- President of the Wheaton Public Library Board of Trustees for 2 years
- Member of the WPL Board of Trustees since 2012
- Member of the WPL Finance Committee and Executive Director Search Committee
- Responsible for Marketing and Business Development for AlphaGraphics Wheaton
- AlphaGraphics Wheaton Store Manager for 10 years
- AlphaGraphics Franchise Top Ten Manager for 5 years in a row

What major issues do you see facing the College today and what would be your plans for addressing them?

HLC Accreditation and 19 State Auditor Recommendations

Through the audit it was determined that many of the college's policies and procedures were not documented and some were not followed. I have experience developing and

implementing public policy as President of the Wheaton Public Library Board. We need to implement good policies, define committees and review RFP, contracts and budgets while keeping in mind the needs of the taxpayers, faculty, staff and most importantly, the students.

Student Enrollment

College of DuPage is District 502, which encompasses all of Dupage County, Lyons Township and Wheatland Township. We need more outreach to the community and high school student population in the outlying areas. I believe the college should develop academic courses in alignment with current and emerging skill needs of local businesses and employers. Through community partnerships, we can offer more classes and programming that will provide opportunities for greater student enrollment. The college should promote faculty and students successes to the community as examples of great higher education instruction received at COD through a strategic and measurable marketing plan.

Communication

In order to improve communication with the community, administration, faculty and students, we need to listen first. It also requires an evaluation of what communication procedures are in use now and how could they be improved. How would students, faculty, staff like to receive information? What social media platforms or campus wide email could facilitate better communication? With this input, the College can develop a collaborative plan for improved communications and better relationships. It is important to develop an open communication and foster an environment of inclusion. One idea may be to include one faculty member on every board committee.

What are your thoughts regarding the College being placed on probation with the Higher Learning Commission? What would you do to make sure the College never finds itself in this kind of difficulty again?

While the students certifications are not at risk during probation, this has certainly shook the community and caused negative public relations for the College. I am aware that the current board members have responded quickly and developed a process to reinstate the accreditation of College of DuPage with the Higher Learning Commission. In the future, the Board must ensure that the administration is working appropriately through Shared Governance; that all new for-credit and certification programs are properly vetted through the faculty; and that there is not any inappropriate cross walking between for-credit and non-credit classes. The HLC standards are clear that faculty must be responsible for the curriculum quality and controls. The Board's Academic Committee should be tasked by the Board with ensuring program reviews are done, and secure input from the faculty and administration as to the appropriateness of such review. Ensuring that adequate documentation for programs are in a single place for historical preservation purposes is also essential. We will need to ensure we are maintaining standards as well as developing more partnerships with transfer universities, and as the issue of credit for prior learning becomes in higher demand. The board should continue to systematically review policies, procedures and committees with the highest ethical

standards. Also, to ensure we do not reach a point of "No Confidence" as occurred previously, the Board must be willing to listen and self-correct when appropriate.

What impact does the college being on probation with the Higher Learning Commission have on academics, student performance, and the fact that enrollment is down? What suggestions do you have for increasing enrollment and guiding students to achieve success?

No one wants to attend a college with negative publicity under a cloud of probation. The board continues to improve its policies and procedures in order to remove the probation status with the Higher Learning Commission.

Increasing Student enrollment within the college credit transfer programs and continuing should begin with partnering with all of the high schools within District 502. The College's administration, faculty and advisors should meet with high school principals to evaluate students' college preparedness skills and inform students of the college's certification programs. Increasing the number of state colleges and university partnerships in the 2+2 and 3+1 programs can positively impact the student enrollment. Developing these community partnerships in collaboration with a strategic marketing plan will go a long way to impacting student enrollment. Along with increasing enrollment, this will impact the Enrollment and Advising departments and the administration should be prepared to handle the additional influx of students. Consistent with the current SLRP, we should be ensuring adequate resources are directed towards identifying more pathways to assist students readily reach the transfer programs of choice, which in turn will make COD a more attractive option. Further, we need to ensure our attendance costs are competitive with our alternatives and 4 year institutions who are poaching our students.

What is your stance on bargaining units and their role in higher education?

Professors, Adjuncts and teachers are the heart and strength of higher education at College of DuPage. I look forward to working together with the board and all faculty associations to improve College of DuPage. I believe that all parties can come to the table to be heard and to compromise on issues of wages and benefits.

How would you foster open and honest communications between the Board and other Constituencies at the college (administrators, faculty and classified personnel)?

It is important to develop an open communication and foster an environment of inclusion with the board. I would like to suggest that all the departments prepare annual presentations to the Board so that they can highlight success, identify challenges and share goals with the board. In turn the board can learn more about how their department operates and who the key people are.

If you saw cuts that needed to be made at the college, where in the budget would you look first?

Currently the budget shows a shortfall between \$2.2 and \$7 million dollars. We need to make tough choices and develop a balanced budget. I do not support raising tuition or taxes to make up the difference. This is an opportunity to make good choices for the community. College of DuPage should develop a reserve fund balance policy and implement replacement funds for Buildings, Capital and Technology.

Since salaries and benefits make most of the budget, I would review the college administrative salaries and benefits with an industry benchmark study of similar community colleges. Other possibilities include using reserve funds or spending cuts. The college should identify other revenue sources, grow student enrollment, increase grant procurement and encourage alumni giving.

What more would you like to add regarding your vision for the College of DuPage over the next 5-10 years?

College of DuPage, District 502, serves a very large geographical area including parts of Will and Cook County. I think the college could best serve outlying areas by partnering with the high schools, business community and industry leaders in those areas where the college can meet a demand. Through survey data, we could find out what student interests are and what employers need for skilled workers. This way the college can impact the community in a positive economic way.

I believe the college can increase its exposure and partnerships by utilizing existing facilities in District 502 municipalities for the delivery of college programs and services. The college should promote their resources to the entire community, like the Center for Entrepreneurship and the Library Learning Center.

The mission of a community college is to enrich and educate the residents who work and live around the college. A community that supports an educational center like the College of DuPage is better for it because of the employment opportunities at the college, the employment opportunities and increased revenues for the local businesses who support the college, the increased job prospects for students who complete their education at the college and become skilled employees – all of this completes a cycle of success for a better community. The needs of college students and the community are central to all that the College of DuPage does.

Taso Triantafillos
Candidate for College Trustee - to serve a Full 6-year term

Contact Information:

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Why did you decide to run for the Board of Trustees at COD?

I believe Education to be the cornerstone for fulfilling the globalization evolution in business, and it is our responsibility to make sure our future is prepared.

What qualifies you to run for the Board of Trustees at COD?

Elected to the Board of Education at Addison School District 4 (2013)
Appointed to DeVry University National Information Security Advisory Board (2015)

What major issues do you see facing the College today and what would be your plans for addressing them?

I think education is evolving and needs to attract the next generation of students which require unique courses and programs to be delivered using new innovative interactive technology. I plan to focus on courses and certification program initiatives that prepare students for technology careers since that is the fastest growing sectors.

What are your thoughts regarding the College being placed on probation by the Higher Learning Commission? What would you do to make sure the College never finds itself in this kind of difficulty again?

We need to make sure we restore and preserve our college's accreditation by addressing the audit findings and recommendations. I believe this could be accomplished by collaborating and becoming more transparent with our community, faculty, and administration.

What impact does the college being on probation with the Higher Learning Commission have on academics, student performance, and the fact that enrollment is down? What suggestions do you have for increasing enrollment and guiding students to achieve success?

This is a long road to recovery, and will require patience and teamwork with all those involved. We need to make sure we listen to our students and faculty in driving and implementing strategies that make sense without imposing any increase burden to the tax payers or student fees.

What is your stance on bargaining units and their role in higher education?

There is a reason they have historically existed in higher education which ensures representation is accounted for when facing decisions.

How would you foster open and honest communications between the Board and other constituencies at the college (administrators, faculty, and classified personnel)?

Absolutely, I firmly believe in transparency and accountability in order to ensure a clear understanding of topics up for discussions and why decisions are made.

If you saw cuts that needed to be made at the college, where in the budget would you look first?

Need data. As a best practice it is unwise to make financial decisions without understanding the impact to the community, students, or faculty.

What more would you like to add regarding your vision for the College of DuPage over the next 5-10 years?

I would like for COD to offer more technology related courses that are specific to certifications and programs that are in demand today such as the growing demand in Cyber Security professionals or skilled resources. There are over 250k job openings today, with an estimated 2 million by 2020. Our students and community businesses should can recruit from COD, and prosper from the economic benefits within our counties.