

August 17, 2009

Foothill-DeAnza Community College District  
Board of Trustees  
12345 El Monte Road  
Los Altos Hills, CA 94022

Dear Trustees:

I am honored to submit my application for the Foothill-DeAnza Community College District Trustee position recently vacated by Hal Plotkin.

This decision did not come lightly. Because of my experience working with elected officials, foundations, and non-profit boards, I am keenly aware of the enormous responsibility one shoulders as a public servant. It requires integrity, a willingness to listen and make tough decisions, an ability to communicate clearly, and, most importantly, a deep personal commitment to the people whom he/she is elected to serve.

I believe I am prepared to take on this responsibility. My attached resume offers an overview of my employment and volunteer experience in the areas of advocacy, governance, development and communications. I am a self starter, a quick learner, and I am known for my common sense leadership and diplomacy. I believe that building relationships is the cornerstone of successful communities, and it would be a privilege to be appointed as a trustee of the Foothill-DeAnza Community College District.

### **INTERESTS AND PRIORITIES**

California community colleges face difficult times: funding from the State is sparse, enrollment is up, and our students do not have the financial means to pay for the continually increasing cost of higher education. Yet, community colleges are one of the few State institutions that offer an affordable opportunity for people of all ages to productively and positively improve their lives.

I am applying for this position because I also believe that community colleges play an integral role in the vitality of our communities and in the health of our economy. I feel my experience working in state, regional and local leadership roles will be an asset to the Foothill-DeAnza Community College District. My priorities as a trustee will be to:

- Work to align K-12 curriculums with the community colleges, with special emphasis on math and sciences
- Identify the criteria for defining a “successful community college student”, and attach appropriate measurement goals
- Ensure financial discipline and accountability, seeking new, sustainable funding sources
- Effectively advocate at all levels of government for community colleges
- Improve community outreach to underserved populations

## ETHICS

Maintaining the public trust is essential to the success of the Foothill-DeAnza Community College District. Any perceived notion of impropriety can have a devastating effect on the District's reputation, and it can mar its growth and development. Therefore, it is incumbent on the Foothill-DeAnza Trustees to responsibly adhere to a consistent set of principles that reflect a commitment to equality, respect and fairness. Decisions must be made for the common good and in the best interest of the students. There is no place for favoritism or prejudice.

I have been fortunate to have worked with two excellent role models whose ethical leadership is unparalleled: State Senator Joe Simitian and Congresswoman Jackie Speier. From them, I have learned the value of thinking and acting independently even in the face of intense political pressure. I have also learned that the long term rewards of political integrity far exceed the fleeting benefits of political expediency.

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Often in labor negotiations, trustees must consider the competing needs of retaining and attracting high quality teachers while safeguarding the financial viability of the colleges. First and foremost, trustees must develop a positive working relationship with the college administration and teaching staff; without this, a positive outcome in labor negotiations will be an even greater challenge. Teacher and student input should be encouraged, and the trustees can then work to set the framework, or guidelines, for the negotiations. At times, decisions will be difficult, and trustees will be required to use principled leadership to act in a matter that is balanced, open, and focused on the best interest of the students.

## SUMMARY

I would enjoy the intellectual challenge of working as a public servant in an academic environment; I communicate well with diverse constituencies, and I have the passion, time, and advocacy experience that will support a balanced and participatory governing process. As a community leader, I consistently try to follow these four steps to good governance:

- **Facilitate:** Provide ample opportunities for the community to participate
- **Listen:** Foster a safe environment for public participation; let others know they are valued
- **Lead:** Make a decision, inspire others to follow, and be accountable
- **Educate:** Always look for avenues to educate the community

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in this process. The quality and integrity of the Foothill-DeAnza Community College District must be preserved and protected. I value public education, and it would be an honor and a privilege to serve as a trustee.

Please let me know if you have additional questions or concerns. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jeannie Conner

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# Jeannie Conner

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## Summary

- Demonstrated ability to successfully direct and implement new strategies and financial programs for organizations serving diverse constituencies
- Strong supervisory, organizational, fund raising and public relations skills
- Resourceful problem solver, placing a high value on collaboration and teamwork
- Quick learner, works well under pressure, eager to assume leadership roles as required
- Extensive non-profit training, including best management practices, strategic planning, financial reporting, public speaking, and video production
- Experienced presenter, speaking for nonprofit organizations and testifying before the California State Legislature

## Education

Bachelor of Arts Degree in English  
Santa Clara University

1981

## Employment History

### **Political Director, *California State Senator Joe Simitian***

2006 - 08

- Reported directly to Senator Simitian; managed all senate campaign finance activities; worked with elected officials, constituents, business executives and political organizations
- Provided analysis on statewide ballot propositions and candidate position statements
- Planned and executed campaign events and mass mailings, raising over \$300K in eighteen months
- Managed all campaign office activities, including database management and procurement

### **Executive Director/Development Director, *KMVT Community Television***

2004-05

- Developed new strategic plan to revitalize the financial position of the organization
- Implemented first phase of reorganization which included performing staff evaluations and retraining, developing new local programming, revising membership and service pricing policies, improving government relations, and creating community classes and television training opportunities
- Supervised a staff of eleven employees

### **Executive Director, *Democratic Forum of Silicon Valley***

2003-04

- Handled all administrative, membership and financial functions on behalf of Board of Directors
- Established business identity and tax exempt status for organization
- Coordinated all membership events, including securing high profile speakers
- Revised bylaws and policies to more accurately reflect the values of the membership core of Silicon Valley executives

## **Related Volunteer Work**

### **Co-Chairman, , *Silicon Valley for Obama Election Night Event***

- Organized event for 1500 guests with a three week lead time
- Coordinated over 100 volunteers
- Secured Computer History Museum as venue
- Assisted in raising funds to defray costs

### **Silicon Valley Coordinator, *Jackie Speier for Lieutenant Governor***

- Assisted in raising funds, coordinating events and securing media coverage for the campaign

### **State Public Affairs Chairman, *California Junior League***

- Representing sixteen leagues and over 13,000 women, directed effort to sponsor four State bills
- Testified before California State Legislature
- Provided advocacy training at the JL Public Policy Institute in Washington DC
- Guest Speaker at the California Mentor Initiative Conference

### **President and Endowment Chairman, *Los Altos Educational Foundation***

- Directed \$600K fund raising campaign and launched \$10 million “Invest in Excellence” endowment fund campaign
- Responsible for overall management of Foundation, including annual appeal, grant allocation and executive director search

## **Volunteer History**

- Delegate, California State Senate District 11
- Commissioner, Santa Clara County Commission on the Status of Women
- Board Member, Fremont Hills Country Club
- Board Member, League of Women Voters
- Board Member, Junior League of Palo Alto Mid Peninsula (JLPA)
- Board Member, KMVT Community Television
- Board Member, Los Altos Educational Foundation
- Big Sister, Big Brothers / Big Sisters in Santa Clara County

## **Awards**

- Inaugural San Jose Magazine “Women Making a Mark” Award 2000
- California State Assembly Resolution 2000
- Los Altos Volunteer of the Year Award 1999

## **References**

- Available upon request.