

**OHLONE COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS  
Submitted by George Mathiesen**

**1. Why are you seeking appointment to the Ohlone Board of Trustees?**

I am a recently retired school principal who currently supervises both elementary and secondary student teachers in the Department of Education at Santa Clara University. I have a long-standing interest and involvement in education and believe I possess the skills necessary to assist the Board in continuing to provide meaningful and quality course offerings to our community, seeing to the completion of the voter approved bond projects, and addressing the campus development projects currently under consideration. I also view seeking appointment to the Ohlone Board of Trustees as another means of providing service to the community in which I reside.

**2. What special skills do you bring to the job of Ohlone Trustee?**

The special skills I bring to the job of Ohlone Trustee are in budget analysis and development, staff and instructional assessment and evaluation, collaboration and collaborative team building skills, and conflict resolution skills.

**3. What do you believe the role of the Trustee is? What areas would you emphasize as a Trustee?**

I believe the role of an Ohlone College Trustee is to contribute to the functioning of the Board as a collaborative and ethical team member, possess an open mind when issues/concerns are presented, be an unbiased community representative to the Board, avoid conflicts of interest, and positively advocate for Ohlone College to all with whom I come into contact. All areas will be emphasized for, in my opinion, all are needed to be an effective Trustee.

**4. As a Trustee what do you hope to accomplish during this term? How can the board or college help you in achieving those goals?**

During this term I hope to accomplish assisting the board in collaboratively addressing Ohlone's vision and mission statements, core values, and goals. In addition, I hope to assist in positively advocating for the college, its programs and staff, within our community. The board and college can assist me by providing the information needed and working collaboratively to accomplish these goals.

**5. What would be your three top priorities if elected to the Ohlone Board?**

To work collaboratively to ensure the continuation of meaningful and quality course offerings, completion of the voter approved bond projects at both the main and satellite campus, and addressing the Mission Boulevard frontage property.

**6. Whom would you feel you are representing if you are appointed to the Board of Trustees?**

I feel I would be representing all who are served, are serving, and/or reside within the Ohlone College district, for all have an interest in the successful functioning of the College. In this way all have access and the needs of all will be considered during the collaborative decision making process.

**7. What do you see as the College's role in our community? What would you do as a Trustee to further the role?**

I see the College's role as one of serving our community by offering instruction which enables students to 1) either enter the work force or transfer to the state college or university system, 2) become life long learners by taking classes of personal or career interest, and 3) engage in job retraining. I also see the College's role as one of building partnerships within the educational community, and community at large, which will enhance the College's positive image. As a Trustee I would further the College's role by continually referring back to the College's role prior to taking action on items and would encourage and support actions within our community and community at large that will reflect favorably upon Ohlone College.

**8. What is your understanding of the mission and purposes of the community colleges in California? What are the mission and purposes of our district? Do you have any suggestions about how Ohlone College can be better at achieving its mission and purpose?**

The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office identifies the primary missions of California Community Colleges to be to offer academic and vocational education at the lower division level for both recent high school graduates and those returning to school, and to advance California's economic growth and global competitiveness through education, training, and services that contribute to continuous workforce improvement. The purposes of community colleges model the identified missions. The Mission Statement for Ohlone College states that the mission of Ohlone College is to serve the community by offering instruction for basic skills, career entry, university transfer, economic development, and personal enrichment for all who can benefit from our instruction in an environment where student learning success is highly valued, supported, and continually assessed. The purpose of Ohlone College can be found in its Core Values and College Goals. It is my feeling that Trustees can assist in achieving the College's mission and purpose by collaboratively working toward their mutual attainment, ensuring the optimal utilization of all resources, and by communicating the College's positive actions, accomplishments, and benefits to those within our community and the community at large.

**9. Please discuss your understanding of the relationship between the Trustees of the Board and the administrators, faculty, staff, and students of the institution.**

The relationship between Trustees and administrators, faculty, staff, and students is very clear to me. Trustees, if they are to be effective in their role, need to gather information and be available to all within the College, the community, and all constituencies. Trustees deliberate, collaboratively act upon items, and set policy. Policy is then implemented by staff and evaluated for success and effectiveness. Open communication, with the goal of maximizing success, is crucial for the successful implementation of policy.

**10. What is your opinion of shared governance? What is the Board's role in dealing with decisions made by college staff before being presented to the Board for ratification?**

Shared governance has many meanings and takes many forms. I believe there to be a shared governance model in place at Ohlone which involves all constituencies collaborating and resulting in recommendations being forwarded, with agenda items, to the Board. This model allows all constituencies to be represented, heard, and involved in the decision making process with the realization that the Board will ultimately make its decision. The second portion of the question is a bit confusing to me so I will define what I think it may mean and then answer. If the question is one of staff taking independent action to address an item, such as a safety issue, which has yet to be authorized by the Board, I feel safety prevails and would thank this person for the action. If the question is one of a Trustee commenting upon staff recommendations prior to their presentation to the Board I feel this is inappropriate for it violates what I perceive to be the collaborative decision making model and the shared governance model currently in place.

**11. What is your understanding of the primary responsibilities of the Board? What would be your responsibility to the Board as a Trustee?**

I believe the primary responsibilities of the Board are to act as a collaborative team to support and ensure the ethical and equitable implementation of policies addressing the vision and mission statements, core values, college goals; to represent all constituencies within the college district; to act in a fiscally responsible manner; and to communicate the College's positive actions, accomplishments, and benefits to those within our community and the community at large. My responsibility to the Board and fellow Board members as a Trustee would be to collaboratively support them in reaching shared decisions and in meeting our shared responsibilities as members of the Board of Trustees.

- 12. If a Board Member feels strongly about a matter, but his or her position is not supported by the Board, how should this Trustee conduct him or her self?**

If this is an initial discussion item I may need to provide more information to fellow Trustees. If there has been discussion on this item before and no more information is needed then the item is not appropriate and the Trustee needs to wait to see if an appropriate opportunity presents itself in the future. If a vote has been taken in opposition to the Trustee's position the Trustee needs to embrace the matter as if it was his, or her, original idea. This needs to be done for he, or she, had the opportunity to present information collaboratively and a collaborative decision has been made.

- 13. What is your connection to Ohlone College? Have you ever taken classes or attended events at or sponsored by the college?**

I was a charter member and served as Secretary of the Ohlone College Bond Oversight Committee for the first four years of its existence. I attended the February 28 and March 14 Board Meetings, and planned to attend the cancelled Board Workshop on April 4. Unfortunately, I will be out of the state on a long planned vacation during the Board Meeting on April 11. In the past I have attended basketball games, plays, and concerts on the Ohlone campus. Members of my family have also taken classes on campus.

- 14. What do you see as the major issues facing the community college(s) in the next decade?**

I feel the major issues facing community colleges in the next decade will be in meeting the ever changing educational needs of students and of our community, ensuring a sound fiscal foundation, maintaining local autonomy, and communicating the need for, and accomplishments of, community colleges.

- 15. What is your general impression of Ohlone College?**

My general impression of Ohlone College is that of a well run community college which is effectively addressing the many and varied needs of its students and community, and whose staff is effectively focused upon meeting student and community needs.