



Candidate Questionnaire

To be considered for Graduate Washington's endorsement, please complete the following questionnaire by 9:00am on Monday, June 11th. Responses should be sent to board chair Quinn Majeski at gmajeski@gmail.com.

Why do you think higher education is important?

Our second president, John Adams, is the father of public education in America. He argued in 1776 that legislators have a paramount duty to create equal access to higher education opportunities for all our citizens. What was true 236 years ago is still true for our democracy.

I am the only candidate in this race who has worked for eight years inside Washington's first-ever public university, the University of Washington (UW). My job is to identify federal and private research and education funding for faculty and students; write proposals; build partnerships with other universities and local non-profit organizations; and help faculty leaders manage the grants. I'm an expert on federal research programs and know how federal agencies allocate funding to universities nationally. The UW is a research and education powerhouse bringing in \$1.5 billion in research and education funding each year from non-state government sources. It is a magnet for faculty and students who do this research, a top employer in Seattle, a premier source of innovation in our state, and a center of national and international influence in international studies, medicine, public health, oceans and climate studies, and international law and business. Washington State University, Western Washington, Central Washington, and Eastern Washington all are essential partners with the federal government as well.

Our views on higher education are part of who we are and how we are raised. My Mom used to say that our democracy depends on an informed citizen – an individual who will ask questions, be part of a community, and above all else, vote. She and Dad treated their five daughters and two sons equally, making sure that all seven of us earned our high school diplomas and were able to pursue higher education. My four grandparents, born in the late 1890s, were the children of first-generation immigrants from Ireland. I know that at least three of them attended the equivalent of community or technical colleges, and perhaps my paternal grandmother did as well. My maternal grandfather was the oldest of four children when my great grandparents died in the 1919 influenza epidemic. He was in college at the time. He kept the family together, and helped his siblings – two brothers and a sister – get through high school and college. This same grandfather then had four children of his own during the Great Depression and the decade following it. His three daughters – including my mother – and one son all graduated from college.

With roots like these, my commitment to higher education is literally part of my genes. But I was lucky, because in my own high school graduating class, there were dozens of classmates whose parents did not value access to higher education for their children and did not believe their daughters "needed" to aspire to college. This is what happens in too many families today. Whether we talk to immigrants and refugees, the first-generation children of immigrants, or fifth-generation Washingtonians, we need a shared culture of commitment to higher education. I will be an effective champion for Washington's higher education institutions because I believe in their mission.

How do you plan on prioritizing higher education if elected?

Higher education is one of my top four priorities. In a recent conversation, someone observed that I was the only candidate in the race who wasn't running on a single-issue platform. They asked me why that was the case. I responded: "Because I've lived in my district for 18 years and this is not a single-issue district." The people in this district are deeply committed to higher education and access to public education more generally. They are also committed to protecting and creating family-wage jobs; investing in public health systems to benefit all our citizens; and ensuring that we are breathing clean air and drinking clean water. There is a common thread through these priorities: we need an educated citizenry to solve problems, open businesses, hire people, and generate tax revenues that create a better quality of life for all of us. Higher education is at the center of this interconnected web.

What is the best way to allocate resources to provide adequate support for higher education?

The best way to allocate resources is, first and foremost, define all of the priorities that budgets must support. Higher education must be in the first tier. We must not think in terms of "adequate" or "minimum acceptable" levels of funding. We must think in terms of what we are trying to achieve; create goals where we can measure success; and help legislators, taxpayers, and higher education stakeholders share the responsibility in achieving those goals. Just as my work on the Port Commission reflects, I will work with my colleagues to jointly define the goals for higher education as well as for K-12 and early learning.

We cannot afford to make gains in higher education and have K-12 and early learning suffer. Parents and taxpayers will give their support to those who are working to improve everyone's opportunities. Our families and kids need all three parts of the system – early learning, K-12, and higher education – to be successful, so that our citizens and state all share in the benefits.

We need a system for allocating resources to higher education in the near-term so that we can work on the longer-term financial sustainability and investment challenges. In the short term, I will advocate for:

- **Establishing a tuition "freeze" for three years for our four- and two-year institutions.** We need to stop the inevitable escalation of student debt. Parents, students entering 11th and 12th grades, need to have some predictability and confidence about what tuition costs they will face, while administrators need predictability of revenues. Other student costs – housing, student fees, transportation, food, and other expenses – will be unpredictable. But having some predictability on tuition costs will help everyone minimize the amount of student loan obligations and make higher education more accessible for all students.
- **Using additional tax revenues resulting from a recovering economy, tax loophole closures, and federal matching grants to hire new faculty and lecturers at all of our four- and two-year institutions.** These are the people who will offer more courses, compete for federal and private grant dollars, and generate critical revenues and resources that expand work-study and job opportunities for students.
- **Setting goals to expand the absolute numbers of students being admitted to our higher education system,** to keep pace with higher high school graduation rates and create opportunities for returning veterans and other adults seeking career changes and job certification programs.
- **Pushing aggressive outreach initiatives into high schools** in tribal nations, rural and underserved communities, and families with children in free-lunch programs to plant the seed for higher education now.

What have you done to advocate for higher education in office or in the community? What do you plan to do?

As a professional working in Washington's higher-education community for the past eight years, I know that access to the state's community and technical college systems are critical to connecting students to real jobs. I will bring a credible voice on the issue of education funding to Olympia. As a Commissioner, I am a member of the Seattle Community College System's Chancellor's Advisory Council on Career Pathways. This program seeks to re-integrate young adults, the unemployed, and immigrants back into our higher education system to perform jobs that we need in the trades and specialized crafts. Our region is about to feel the full force of returning veterans who wish to rebuild their lives, create new careers, and contribute to rebuilding our communities after their years at war. They will have access to the most generous GI benefits in our history. We will need community colleges in every part of the state.

I have already fought to protect the integrity of our two- and four-year higher educational institutions. That is why I have many endorsements and supporters from the UW faculty and student body. For eight years it has been my job to be an advocate for the faculty and students who make Washington's higher education system one of the premier public systems in the nation. I have secured millions of dollars in critical research and education grants for UW from a dozen different federal agencies and private donors.

What do I plan to do? I will continue to be the higher education community's most effective advocate because I know how the university system works; I appreciate the exceptional stress that students face when the tuition bill goes up and their own jobs are being cut; I understand how the students are the real barometer of a teacher's effectiveness and whether a course will survive student reviews; and I know how hard all the employees – teachers, staff, administrators, and volunteers – will work to give the students every possible chance to come out with a degree or certificate. We have extraordinary people and institutions with proven track records on our side, and that's why we will figure out how to sustain our public higher education system for generations.

If elected how do you plan on increasing accessibility for students?

This is a persistent crisis for the students, families, schools, cities, and state. It requires intervention strategies designed to protect students vulnerable to falling into the gap; injecting tiger teams into the schools where students are at greatest risk; and establishing measurable goals to track the turnaround at specific schools. We need to create partnerships among universities, community colleges and school districts where the achievement/opportunity gap is the widest, showing minority students that higher education is within their reach.

As we recover from the Great Recession, we must accelerate access to higher education throughout the state. Recent tuition hikes at our four-year institutions will make our state universities seem unreachable, making community and technical colleges the first choice for students of all ages. They are able to hold a full-time job, go to school part-time, and take care of their families – or live at home while they save money to transfer to a four-year university. We need to invest in our community and technical colleges now so that those searching for jobs or re-entering civilian life after years in the military can make that first step towards a future career. Our four-year institutions must be working with our community and technical colleges to make it easier for these students to transition into four-year degree programs during the coming five years.

The universities and community colleges must provide tutoring, mentoring, and counseling programs for students and their families. This is a strategy where the partnering higher educational institutions build a sustained relationship with low-income and minority students at "adopted" schools. There are public and private grants and gifts that would support this strategy. If this program set a goal of creating equity and reducing disparities within five years for every at-risk student, the school districts and the state could develop a new source of revenue to sustain the program. In addition, we must look at:

- Establishing a tuition "freeze" for three years for our four- and two-year institutions. Parents and students entering 11th and 12th grades need to have some predictability and confidence about what tuition costs they will face. Other costs – housing, student fees, transportation, food, and other expenses will be unpredictable. But having some predictability on tuition costs will help everyone minimize the amount of student loan obligations that students will incur.

- Using additional tax revenues resulting from a recovering economy, tax loophole closures, and federal matching grants to hire new faculty and lecturers at all of our four- and two-year institutions. These are the people who will offer more courses, compete for federal and private grant dollars, and generate critical revenues and resources that expand work-study and job opportunities for students.
- Set goals to expand the absolute numbers of Washington residents being admitted to our higher education system, to keep pace with higher high school graduation rates and create opportunities for returning veterans and other adults seeking career changes and job certification programs. We do not want our public universities and community colleges to be out of reach for our own citizens because out-of-state and international students are paying more for a place in the system. Public education should not become yet another commodity accessible to the people who can afford the highest price. We must put our own citizens first.

If elected how do you plan on improving the academic quality of the student's higher education experience?

Accreditation standards are the key to establishing and sustaining academic quality for students in higher educational institutions. In addition, Washington's public universities are unique: tenured faculty still teach courses every year. This is one of the key distinctions between public and private research universities. As public institutions, our faculty are teachers first and researchers second. The students in Washington's public universities expect – and deserve – to have access to the best faculty. When it comes to measuring the quality of a public education, we must ensure our students are taught by the professors who are the best in their fields, and who help students find employment in a field of their choice.

Continued academic achievement comes from a culture of research and innovation. We need to ensure that discovery, lifelong learning, and the values of a public education are continually present in our academic environments. Partnerships with other public and private organizations advance the academic rigor of our institutions, and this includes pursuing grants that focus on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The legislature's recent investment in engineering programs at UW is an important step forward. Our public two- and four-year higher-ed institutions have been designing and delivering math, science and writing programs for students throughout Washington, using grants from the National Science Foundation. Additionally, I support remedial programs for our middle and high school students in the short term. These students have highly disparate learning experiences and they need to be ready to take on the academic challenges they'll face in the higher education system. As we pursue a strategy of fully funding K-12 education, we will reduce the need for remedial programs in the longer run.

How should the legislature ensure that the state has enough degree holders to meet current and future workforce needs?

Our universities must be the place where we welcome the students who will be the next generation of pioneers and explorers, regardless of the careers they choose. We do not know what majors students will choose, and we will never know where their careers will take them in the 21st century. Artists and linguists may not know it, but they will work for Google, Disney, a company not yet created, or the State Department. Historians and biologists will join forces to explain the rate of climate change in the Arctic. Oceanographers and astrophysicists will monitor ocean currents from space. And teams of researchers in China, India, the United States, Germany and Brazil will jointly develop a new vaccine.

For more than 15 years, the National Science Foundation and U.S. Departments of Education, Energy and Defense have tried to incentivize students to pursue degrees in engineering, technology, the sciences and mathematics. Despite these efforts and national programs led by Microsoft, Boeing, Dell, IBM, the Gates Foundation, Keck Foundation, and other private foundations, U.S. students are not choosing these career paths. According to recent studies, only 14 percent of U.S. college graduates hold degrees in high-demand sectors such as engineering and science, whereas students in China, India, South Korea and Japan dominate these fields.

Instead of assuming that our universities are failing students, it is time to recognize that workers are preparing themselves for a global marketplace. We need to understand how college students are preparing to hold jobs in many career fields throughout their working lives. My own career is a reflection of the changes that have dominated the workplace through the era of globalization and in the era of globalism. With an undergraduate degree in international affairs and a certificate in international business diplomacy, I have been a Senior Research Analyst in the national intelligence community, leading teams of scientists, engineers and analysts to solve critical national intelligence challenges. At the nation's largest employee-owned science and technology company, I led teams of scientists, engineers, policy analysts, and business experts to open markets in Russia and Eastern Europe. And for eight years I've helped faculty in the UW College of Arts and Sciences, College of Engineering, and Information School compete for funding from the federal government, private foundations, and individual donors.

The legislature's responsibility is to support the institutions that award academic degrees and offer certification programs for current and future students, making access to education and equal opportunity for all our top priority, regardless of a student's age, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, income, or country of origin. Therefore, we should set some ambitious goals for our higher education institutions:

- Using projections for high school graduates and Washington population growth, establish a 10-year goal for increasing the numbers of graduates from our state four-year, community, and technical colleges.
- Expand the numbers of Washington high school graduates who we admit into the higher education system over the next 10 years, including creating spaces for those with high school GPAs of 2.0 and above.
- Develop a state-wide piece of legislation, modeled after the U.S. Department of Education's Title VI legislation, to define aggressive goals for STEM qualifications, investments in teachers who agree to teach in rural and underserved communities, and scholarship programs for in-state students to compete for state scholarships.
- Establish a state board of experts to assist all our state universities in competing for and winning federal grants to fund Title VI research, education, and community service.
- Establish a Higher Education Investment Fund, similar to the Life Sciences Discovery Fund, to allow faculty and institutions to seek matching funds from the state to help faculty submit competitive proposals for the most prestigious and largest U.S. federal and private foundation grants.

What are your ideas for improving the transition from K-12 to higher education, both community and technical colleges and four year institutions?

Our public two- and four-year higher education institutions have been designing and delivering math, science and writing programs for middle- and high-school students throughout Washington, using grants from the National Science Foundation. We need to take advantage of the opportunities created by these federally funded programs to expand horizons for middle- and high-school students. Research shows that if we're going to influence career choices of students, we need to reach them – and their parents – when they are in middle school and the first two years of high school. I wrote the winning proposal for a five-year UW grant that brought high school students from around the state to Seattle, who are learning in summer seminars about college programs that will help them pursue careers in international affairs and national security studies, as I did myself.

As a Commissioner, I am a member of the Seattle Community College System's Chancellor's Advisory Council on Career Pathways. This program seeks to re-integrate young adults, the unemployed, and immigrants back into our higher education system to perform jobs that we need in the trades and specialized crafts. Our region is about to feel the full force of returning veterans who wish to rebuild their lives, create new careers, and contribute to rebuilding our communities after their years at war. They will have access to the most generous GI benefits in our history. We will need community colleges in every part of the state. I have already fought to protect the integrity of our two- and four-year higher educational institutions. That is why I have many endorsements and supporters from the UW faculty and student body.

What changes, if any, would you like to see in the governance of our higher education systems?

This is a question to be deliberated by many people in our communities. Most parents don't know how the higher education system is governed. It probably seems especially confusing to immigrants. As with most governing systems in our state, they evolved over the decades in a political culture where we value local control, decentralized institutional oversight, and use of locally generated revenues. We should examine:

- The roles and responsibilities of the Board of Regents and the Faculty Senate.
- The potential need for restructuring in the state executive and legislative branches so that higher education institutions aren't competing against each other for scarce dollars.
- The opportunity to create a state-level strategy to help our higher education institutions compete against other states for precious federal research and education funding – we could double the amount of federally funded research in Washington, creating thousands of jobs and generating tens of millions of dollars in taxes for local communities.
- Some state-wide goals, such as the percentage of WA high school graduates we want taking seats in our classrooms; immigrant access to higher education; and life-long learning opportunities throughout the state.
- The possibility of creating state-wide standards for non-faculty positions such as salaries for university executives, administrators, professional and classified staff, and students.

What policies would you propose to increase transparency and efficiency in our higher education system?

I would propose the following steps for transparency, efficiency, and accountability:

- Change the oversight structures and requirements for public meetings for the University Regents.

Regents are appointed by the Governor and have critical powers to hire, promote, or fire the University President; have some power to establish tuition rates; approve tenure; oversee police departments; deliver food services; approve annual budgets and capital development programs at our universities, including benefits and investment portfolios. In many respects, universities are their own city (and most are larger than the majority of cities in Washington). The larger the institution, the more that Regents' decisions will affect the quality of life for tens of thousands of people – students, faculty, employees, and neighboring communities. We need to understand how to make the Regents more accountable for the decisions made by this appointed body.

- State audits that focus on different metrics.

The state should mandate that the State Auditor's Office undertake periodic audits of higher education institutions for specific efficiencies, such as: appropriate use of state monies; reviews of compensation systems for senior leadership, administration, and students, faculty, and professional and classified staff; and the possibility of having some in the higher education community share administrative functions, such as for minority affairs, information and communications technology systems; and benefits and personnel programs.

- Shared website for all higher education institutions to help parents, students, new residents, and job-seekers access the higher educational system through a single portal.

This website would also provide a way to share financial information, budget analyses, and enrollment data to show all families and legislators how the benefits of higher education are distributed around the state.