

Watchmen Voter Guide for North Idaho College, Trustee Zone 5

** Click on each candidate's name to see their completed questionnaire **

| Question | <u>Michael H. Barnes</u> | <u>Dr. Paul Sturm</u> |
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| 2. How could North Idaho College be improved? Please provide your top 2-3 ideas. | NIC has many positive programs that I would continue to support. The improvements from my perspective would be to 1) ensure policies promote an atmosphere devoid of political correctness, 2) promote open dialog for all points of view, and 3) ensure that the Board removes politically charged advocacy for BLM and other “social justice” indoctrination efforts being put forth by the “Diversity Council”. | <p>a. Expand enrollment - Expand and promote existing dual-credit options for high school students</p> <p>b. Advocate to restore state and federal funding to ease the burden on local taxpayers.</p> <p>c. Expand Post Career Education - Many people are moving into the area as retirees. Provide and market training and skills development for this demographic.</p> |
| 3. What is your educational philosophy and how do you plan to implement this philosophy as a member of the board of trustees? | My educational philosophy is that course study should be applicable and relevant to a student’s life and career objectives and NOT blend into its curriculum left-leaning socialist ideology that is unrelated to course syllabus – Unless that is the NAME and OBJECTIVE of the course. I disapprove of mandatory courses that are unrelated to a student’s career path to achieve an AA degree unless those courses are remedial courses to improve basic reading comprehension, writing, mathematics and US and World History; and such required courses should always be eligible for testing out of to receive college credit when passing. | My philosophy of Education places the learner as the focus of education. Education provides the opportunity for a learner to gain knowledge about the physical, natural and biological world and to apply that knowledge to an understanding of their world through related study and experiences. Education is important for a citizen to be a knowledgeable participant in his/her government. Education also provides important skills training to enhance the learner’s opportunities for work and career. As a trustee my educational philosophy will influence my collaboration with other trustees as we advocate for resources, establish policies and budgets, and monitor the work of the president of the college for compliance with laws and policies and oversee financial decisions. |
| 4. Do you support “Critical Race Theory,” why or why not? | I absolutely condemn the “Critical Race Theory” in its entirety. My research of its history and the promotion of it in all levels of education is clearly prejudicially racist at its core as its proponents make virtually everything an issue of skin color and places irrational condemnation on white males specifically. It is clear that in their eyes I am a racist white supremacist by virtue of my skin color and nothing else. This is abhorrent. I will not tolerate it as a Trustee. | North Idaho College does and should provide a safe and inclusive environment for any student of any background to study, learn and pursue his/her educational goals. As a trustee of NIC I will advocate for opportunities for each student without discrimination in accordance with the law, accreditation requirements and established policies. |
| 5. If faced with a budget deficit, would you support cutting spending or increasing student fees or tuition? What would be your reasons for this decision? | Deficit spending is a practice of liberals who have no problem spending other people’s money. It is irresponsible and should not be done. Just as any business and fiscally responsible household must do, sacrifices have to be made to ensure that expenses incurred do not exceed revenue. IT’S CALLED A <u>BALANCED BUDGET</u> . Fees and Tuition make up about 20% of the NIC total budget according to a recent report I saw. Creative cost cutting measures should always be seriously considered before raising taxes or tuition. The Boards primary responsibility is to protect the interests of the taxpayers of Kootenai County. Tuition costs should be commensurate with other equivalent educational institutions in our region and not be confiscatory to try to pay for a pet project. | My past practice in regard to school budgets has always been fiscally conservative--living within allocated resources. Budget pressures may be the result of multiple factors. The trustees must explore and apply a variety of solutions available to them. Reducing costs through efficiency is always a goal when possible. Advocating to restoring state and federal funding will be my highest priority. Increasing tuition and fees will be my least attractive option. There is strong evidence that the trustees have held both tuition and fees as well as local taxes low for several years. I would work to maintain that practice. |

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| 6. How do you view the role as a trustee member in regard to public policy like taxes? | The Board is established with three primary responsibilities as I understand it. 1) Hire a President that will faithfully execute the objectives of NIC Policies; 2) Establish NIC Policies and 3) approve budgets which include Faculty and Staff salaries and facilities. As an elected official representing one of five zones, and in light of the fact that 80% of the budget is collected in the form of taxes, half of which is direct property taxes, my policy is to be transparent with the voters and taxpayers of Kootenai County to keep taxes low while still promoting a healthy and vibrant junior college campus. | Taxes allow for an institution like NIC to exist for the benefit of the entire community. Budgeting requires the trustees to balance spending against a number of revenue sources. A trustee must advocate for its share of state and federal taxes in order to reduce the burden of taxes on local citizens. We must always be aware of the implications of local taxes on those citizens least able to pay them. I will advocate for resisting tax increases and for reasonable tax exemptions for legitimate vulnerabilities such as health and other disabilities. |
| 7. Do you support the ability for employee unions to automatically deduct money from their members' paychecks to finance political activities, why or why not? | While it may be arguable that unions have served a valuable function in our past, I am NOT in favor of unions in general precisely for the fact that they often dictate what a member may or may not say or do, and practice confiscation of earnings in the form of "Dues" in order to conduct political campaigning for people or causes that the union member may or may NOT approve of. This is the essence of socialist/communist behavior. I am opposed to unions confiscating earnings automatically from paychecks in the way the IRS would garner money for unpaid taxes. In fact, I think it should be illegal. | No. I believe political contributions should be by individual choice. |
| 8. Do you support or oppose bathroom and locker room usage based on preferred gender identification? Why or why not? | I do NOT support use of bathrooms or locker rooms by individuals who are experiencing a gender identity crisis. Such people should be treated respectfully and encouraged to make other arrangements for their personal needs. (The remainder of Mr. Barnes' answer can be seen in his questionnaire) | As a trustee I will uphold state and local laws and ordinances regarding the use of these facilities based on a person's birth gender. |
| 9. In what ways can North Idaho College help local high school students prepare for a college education or for a trade school? | I currently do not have a strong grasp on how to address the question of how NIC can help high school students prepare for college or trade school. It seems that this objective and responsibility rests on the primary school systems and parents. However, I am always open to others' creative ideas. | Cooperate with high schools to provide information about NIC's programs, current and future career opportunities, and transferring options from NIC to a 4-year college or university. Accreditation is essential in order to maintain this transfer option. Further develop and promote existing dual-credit options for high school students. |
| 10. What is your opinion regarding freedom of choice for parents for the education of their children (School choice)? | All parents should have the CHOICE of where their children attend school. Whatever the calculated cost to taxpayers to educate one pupil per year should be provided to the parents for that purpose alone. If a child attends a public school closest to their residence, then that school gets that figure. If a different school in a different location is desired and there is space, the funds go there. (The remainder of Mr. Barnes' answer can be seen in his questionnaire) | I support parent's freedom of choice in regard to their child's education. |
| 11. How would you, as a trustee, create opportunities for an education more equitable towards students coming from a private or homeschool background? | I believe there should not be any bias against any student coming from a private or home school environment. If there are inequities, I as a Trustee, would encourage a serious investigation to understanding why such students are being considered less favorably than a public-school graduate. | NIC is open to any student whether coming from public, private, or homeschooled backgrounds. NIC provides transition and remedial programs that are designed to help students transition from various backgrounds and be successful at NIC. NIC can be a viable path for some students to transfer to a 4-year college or university. |

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| 12. What does the term “education” mean to you? | The term “Education must be understood to NOT mean “Indoctrination”. Education should focus more on HOW to accomplish a task and HOW to think and learn independently. I have seen and experienced how “education” in our public institutions focuses far too much on WHAT you must think and believe and ostracize those who think and believe otherwise. | Education in the context of a trustee at NIC means formal study and learning by the learner based on a set of standards or criteria. NIC provides students a wide variety of opportunities to gain knowledge and skills to further their goals. Education can also be viewed more broadly to include informal learning through life experience which can represent a valid education. It is most valuable to the learner when formal and informal learning go hand in hand. |
| 13. Do you support or oppose the legalization of marijuana? Why or why not? | Current I oppose the legalization of marijuana due to the results we see in Washington, Colorado and California. My understanding is that there is a rise of DUI’s relating to the legal use in those states. (The remainder of Mr. Barnes’ answer can be seen in his questionnaire) | No. It is an illegal drug and it may have harmful health and safety risks. |
| 14. What is your background and why does it qualify you for this position? | I was born and raised in Southern California in a very conservative but non-religious home. At 16 I became a Christian, much to the dismay of my father who made my decision a point of continuous contention. At 19 I joined the US Navy and became a Cryptologic Technician. 4 of my 6 years active duty were spent in other countries where I truly learned the value of the economic and religious freedoms we enjoy in the United States. While serving in Turkey, I met my wife of 33 years who was serving there in the US Army. Our situation pushed us to the realization that a career in the armed forces was not ideal for raising a Christian family, so we both got out of the service while serving in Maryland. After the service I had to establish a career which I did in the computer field while simultaneously serving another 4 years in the US Navy Reserves. I quickly became proficient enough in the computer industry to venture out on my own as an independent consultant. I then moved into the field of IT and Systems Security Auditing which allowed me to work remotely anywhere I wished. This led us to the opportunity of leaving liberal Maryland for the red state of Idaho, where my father had retired some years prior. After assisting him as best I could for three years as he fought prostate cancer and subsequently passing on in a solo fatal accident, my wife and I decided we had fallen in love with North Idaho and decided to stay. We have lived in the same home in Athol for the past 14 years. We intend to live out our years in the area and have recently taken up the hobby of motorcycle riding and RV’ing and try to escape the cold dark months of winter for a few months in the warmth of Arizona. I am running for NIC Trustee for Zone 5 primarily because the opportunity presented itself and I believe this to be a calling to positively influence the environment and culture of higher education which I believe has failed our country as it has slipped into ever more radical left progressive ideology that is contrary to our Nation’s founding and is proving more and more dangerous as it more blatantly promotes socialist objectives. My goal is to bring conservative values to the top leadership of our local higher educational institution that is funded by the local property owners of Kootenai County. | a. 34 years as a public school teacher, principal and superintendent. b. 10 years superintendent for Pullman School District c. Elected president of the Washington Association of School Administrators d. Leadership coach for Washington State Leadership Academy e. Earned AA degree - Spokane Falls Community College f. Bachelor’s degree in biology and chemistry - Eastern Washington University g. Master’s degrees in Educational Administration - Whitworth University h. Doctoral degree in Educational Leadership from Washington State University Having worked with school boards, as well as serving on private and nonprofit boards, I possess extensive and relevant educational training and experience that will be useful in the role of NIC Trustee. |