

Good leaders

Good leadership applies a healthy mix of courage, vision, dedication and determination, humility, temperance, patience, honor, and respect. Before you cast your vote allow me to answer these questions:

- Do I have the courage to lead? If I said I wasn't afraid, be afraid. Courage is not found in a person with no fears. No fear means no restraint, which means someone is bound to get hurt. Courage is found when you face your fears. I'm scared to death of taking on this leadership role—what if I fail? But with your help I will find the courage to lead and I will not fail.
- Do I have the vision to lead? Yes, I believe I do. That vision includes keeping to the highest goals of excellence, openness, and adherence to democratic principles in our organization. The ends never justify the means. A healthy, pure democracy ensures that the means are part and parcel to the ends. My vision includes ... increasing membership significantly, ensuring our workforce is treated fairly and that this union is a great place to work—whether you are a volunteer or earning a paycheck, and fostering open debate and respectful disagreement always with the aim of bringing everyone in and everyone along. That vision includes convincing, in an ongoing way, politicians and trustees and especially the citizens of California of the value of the CSU and its most valuable resource within the CSU—the people who make it run day after day. Further, reminding ourselves of the value of the CSU, that the battle is not just about our wages and benefits but the quality of the institution as a whole. Dedicating ourselves to recognizing the transformative power of this great working-class entity and ensuring that generations to come have the same opportunity I and many of us had to pull oneself up out of poverty and contribute inherent and developed talents to the greater good of society. That vision includes the idea that the health of our union depends on the relationships we build with like communities in other universities and unions, to join in the great struggle to make justice for all workers a reality first in the United States and then around the world. With this vision we will inspire others to action. Please come talk to me about specific organizing plans. I have lots of ideas but I want to hear about your's too.
- Do I have the dedication and determination to lead? Yes, I believe I do. You've seen me stick with projects even when I myself was frustrated at my own inadequate efforts. Can I sustain my passion throughout the next two years? Can I set realistic expectations (but not too "realistic" because it's problematic to set goals too low)? You bet I can.
- Do I have the humility to lead? Is it safe to disagree with me? Am I teachable? Do I listen to and honestly consider other, contrasting views? Yes, I believe I do. By the same token, am I a pushover? No, you know I'm not. On occasion you really do have to work if you want to convince me. That's a good thing. "If you stand for nothing, you'll fall for anything."
- Do I have the temperance to lead? Yes, I believe I do. Can I stay even under pressure? Can I push passionately for something while remaining respectful to those who disagree? Can I pick my battles to live to fight another day? Most definitely!
- Do I have the patience to lead? Yes, I believe I do. Do I realize that none of us is perfect? That we need a world where it is OK to make honest mistakes? The idea is to learn from those lessons. What would we know without them? Can I be understanding? Yes, after all, we are all in the same boat.
- Do I have the honor and respect to lead? Yes, I believe I do. Can I honor this great institution and respect the synergy created from the sum total of everyone's input? Think about it. We are a mostly volunteer-run entity. We even ask a lot of our employees, who wouldn't be doing what they do everyday of the week if they too didn't believe in our mission. What we do for our represented employees and the CSU is absolutely amazing. I have a tremendous amount of respect for that.

After all is said and done I would like one more thing said about me: That I liked a good fight! Like Rosie the Riveter said: "Bring it on!" I realize some concerns have been raised about the time I have to dedicate to the union. Rest assured, our union will be my primary focus throughout my term. I plan to resign from Berkeley's Labor Commission and put my master's degree on hold; whatever is necessary to devote the time needed to making this organization the best it can be.

Finally, let me share with you what I call the “Creed to Lead.” No matter who gets elected, I would like these principles adhered to:

Life-affirming leaders are those who ...

- Know he or she cannot lead alone. No one person is smart enough to know what to do.
- Have more faith in people than they do in themselves and patiently and courageously insist on their participation.
- Recognize human diversity as a gift and the human spirit as a blessing.
- Know that people only support what they create and only act responsibly for things they care about.
- Solve unsolvable problems by bringing new voices into the room.
- Continually expand who’s included in decision-making.
- Convene and host conversations that really matter.
- Know that trust and caring make everything possible.
- Offer meaningful work as the greatest motivator.
- Freely express gratitude, appreciation, and love.