

Jo Co Community College Board of Trustees At-Large 2021

Response ID:8 Data

1. Candidate Information

1. Candidate Name

Lee Cross

2. Address

Street Address/Apt/Suite : 8430 Tomahawk Road
City/State/Zip : Overland Park, Kansas 66207

3. Phone Number

9137109761

4. Email Address

lcross@gmolaw.com

5. Campaign Website

crossforthecollege.com

2. Candidate Background

6. Occupation/Work History (last 5 years - 25 words or less)

Have owned and operated my own law firm since 2010. Have served on the JCCC Board of Trustees since 2013; among other boards and service.

7. If you are or have been affiliated with a chamber of commerce or other business organization, please list which organization(s) and any leadership positions you have held.

In the past have been a member of the NEJC Chamber. Attended Leadership NE in 2017.

8. Other recent political/community experience (50 words or less)

Have served on the JCCC Board of Trustees since 2013. Have served on JCERT Board since 2019.

3. Issues and Policy

9. What would be your top three agenda priorities as a Trustee you would work toward for the betterment of the College and the education it provides? (100 words or less)

1. Work to make the College more affordable for our students, and our community.
2. Continue our partnerships with businesses and employers in the area so our students have job opportunities.
3. Work to increase our enrollment.

10. With respect to paying for the cost of educating the College's students, where do you stand regarding tuition increases vs. mill levy increases and what is the appropriate way to balance those interests? (100 words or less)

I have supported a responsible mill levy. We have frozen, or held, our tuition steady in an effort to attract more students and make it affordable. In both 2014 and 2021, I voted to cut the mill in a responsible manner so as to not burden our tax payers too greatly. It may very well be time to raise tuition. However, I think our county has wisely invested in the College to grow and stimulate our economy, am thankful for that policy, and would do anything to protect the College.

11. Kansas is experiencing low unemployment rates and employers are struggling to find qualified workers, especially in technical and skilled trades. What role should Johnson County Community College play with regard to workforce development, locally and statewide? (100 words or less)

We should be the leader in the Community College Movement in Kansas, and certainly in the KC Metro, to educate and train as many qualified workers as possible. Then, we need to do so in an affordable manner so that those students have less debt and can fuel the economy for the decades to come. Further, we should continue our existing partnerships and continuously search for new ways to serve our business community. Just as we have done with BNSF, the Inter-Modal in SWJC, and inter alia, at the Culinary Academy; and especially now for medical providers.

12. What do you see as key aspects of JCCC's coordination with high schools, universities, and other post-secondary educational institutions? (100 words or less)

Absolutely critical that we maintain these relationships. In my time on the board, I have been surprised by the fact that we must constantly work to inform each class of high school students and their parents about JCCC. Especially now with so many for profit and online competitors.

While we must continue our relationships with other universities and institutions, I am also weary of how JCCC students have been treated by programs that merely want students and dollars in the their community. It is important we have support our business community so these partners stay loyal to JCCC.

13. What is your vision for the College ten years from now? (100 words or less)

My vision for the College is that we remain an affordable, viable option for as many of our students as possible throughout the 21st Century. We need to continue to grow, develop, and create strategic partnerships so that our students so that they can learn and earn good jobs, fueling our economy.

14. Why do you believe you are uniquely qualified to serve on the JCCC Board of Trustees and why are you seeking this office? (100 words or less)

I care deeply about the College, our students, its history, and my entire family attended JCCC. Our College helped my family escape poverty, and I want to do that for others. Specifically, in my eight years of service, I dedicate my time to this Public-Private Hybrid approach because I believe Bill Gates is correct when he says that community colleges are the best way to teach people to do for themselves. After eight years, I remain one of only two lawyers, and I am proud to use my litigation experience to her protect the College, its reputation, and its supporters.