

Michigan State University Trustees Eight-Year Term – Vote for Two (2)

Candidates were asked to summarize their backgrounds in 75 words and were allotted 75 words to answer each question. If the candidate did not reply by the required date for publication, the words “Did not respond in time for publication” appear under the candidate’s name.

QUESTION 1
What role should this university play in the economic development of the state of Michigan?

QUESTION 2
What is the most important issue facing this public university today and what is your position on that issue?

QUESTION 3
Given the current economic climate, what measures will you support to maintain the quality of this university’s education?

Dee Cook, Republican

MSU, BA Communication. Married: Byron Cook, two married children. President, Greenville Board of Education, 12 yrs. Citizen Committee Founder Montcalm Community College. Trustee, MSU 16 yrs. Trustee, Detroit College of Law. MSU Foundation. Wharton Center Performing Arts Council. Chairman, MSU 2000 Capital Campaign. Chairman, Capital Campaign “The Campaign for MSU”. Major Donor, MSU.

MSU is perfectly positioned to lead Michigan into the bio-economy. We have the scientists, the science, the academic talent and the leadership. By partnering with industry leaders, using the talents of the agriculture experiment stations and agriculture extension service and cutting edge research, Michigan’s vast natural resources will be maximized for the future economy, bringing jobs and products to Michigan and the world.

Funding and affordability are the two major issues facing MSU. Funding has been drastically reduced over the past 4 years causing cuts in programs and faculty that directly affect students. Making certain that we can meet our mission to the students and the people of Michigan continues to be a challenge as our support from the state of Michigan decreases or is flat at best.

As a trustee I have watched the state’s portion of our funding decrease dramatically forcing more of the cost of education to be placed on the students and their families. Most of my effort as a trustee has been focused on raising private support for student scholarships, additional facilities laboratories, equipment and endowments. It is becoming more and more important for public universities to seek private funds to maintain quality.

Dave Porteous, Republican

MSU Board of Trustees since 1998, MSU Chairman of Board 4 years. MSU College of Law Board of Trustees. Member, Board of Directors of Huntington National Bank, Huntington Bancshares Inc, Jackson National Life Insurance Co of NY, and 4-H Foundation. MSU, 1974 BS cum laude. Cooley Law School, 1977 JD with distinction. Attorney, private practice specializing in corporate and municipal law, government relations. Age 53. Married 30 years. 3 children.

MSU is uniquely positioned to be a research and development arm for various industries such as agriculture and medical science. The agricultural industry looks to MSU to prepare future farmers for the challenges the industry will face and conduct research benefiting the industry. The bioeconomy initiative and the plant and animal initiatives are examples of existing partnerships. Partnerships with private corporations, the state, and other universities are opportunities emerging in technology and medical science.

Our budget is our biggest challenge. The state previously provided 75% of the general funding for MSU. It is now less than 50%. The cuts have been significant. We must keep the balance between assuring an affordable, quality education for students, while demanding a standard of excellence to attract and keep the best faculty. We must find additional private funding for research and scholarships, maintain our excellent investment record, and manage tax dollars wisely.

Maintain diligent advocacy with the state legislature and the federal government for adequate funding. Establish priorities in programs distinctive to MSU to remain competitive for the needs of MSU students. Seek additional private scholarship funding for qualified students. Overall, insist on university wide cost efficiency.

Faylene Owen, Democrat

Business woman, community service, and homemaker. Founder and CEO of Mica Corp. Marketing Director for Village Green. Director of Special Projects for Governor Blanchard. Chair of Sparrow Hospital Foundation. Board of Child Abuse Prevention and MSU Safe Place. President of Royal Oak PTA. Raised two children, both of whom attended MSU. Grandparent of three, two of whom attended MSU. Married to Larry Owen, who also is an alumnus of MSU.

MSU can play a major role in creating a strong, high wage economy. MSU was founded on the idea that educating the children of ordinary families would strengthen the state’s economy. Today MSU’s research, too, will create jobs of the future. Along with high energy physics, MSU’s strength in life sciences and agriculture are key; both fields show great promise as anchors of businesses in the new bio-economy and bio-fuels.

The most critical issue facing MSU is the high cost of tuition and resulting load of debt many students have when they graduate. This is wrong for our students and contrary to the state’s economic need to have a highly-educated populace. Not so long ago the State accounted for close to 70% of MSU’s budget; today that figure is less than 40%. I will be a constant, vocal advocate for policies that value higher education.

As indicated above, I intend to be a forceful advocate for more State investment in higher education. Our universities are a source of strength for the economy of the future and are the gateway to opportunity for our children. The State is being extremely short-sighted in failing to provide adequate funding. It is also true that higher education must continue to demonstrate that it is attentive to cost control. I will be alert to this aspect ...

George Perles, Democrat

George Perles has been a leader throughout his life by winning four Super Bowl rings for the Pittsburgh Steelers, as Head Coach of the Michigan State University (MSU) football team, as Athletic Director at MSU, where he had a balanced budget every year, as a U.S. Army veteran, and as the proud parent of four children and six grandchildren. Perles’ campaign as a Democrat for MSU Trustee is his first time running for political office.

As the premier land grant university and one of the best research universities in the country, MSU should be offering affordable tuition to all Michigan families. College education should not just be for the rich. Furthermore, with biofuel becoming an important resource, MSU can use its knowledge of agriculture and manufacturing to propel Michigan to the forefront of this crucial development. MSU has the tools to successfully thrust Michigan’s economy into the 21st Century.

There is no question that tuition is spiraling higher and higher and eventually only the rich will have access to higher education. I owe my success to MSU and I want everyone to have the same opportunity to attend MSU. I will use my connections in state government to increase state funding and use my knowledge of the MSU budget to cut waste.

MSU is one of the greatest universities in the world, but tuition must be affordable for Michigan’s families or only the wealthy will be able to afford to send their children. I will comb through the MSU budget to look for waste and I will go to the legislature and the governor and be a cheerleader for MSU to ensure more funding.

Lauren Elizabeth Spencer, Green

I am a sophomore at Michigan State University majoring in Social Relations. I want to be a civil rights attorney. I am active on campus, participating in the Multiracial Identity experience (The MIX), Case Hall Black Caucus, LGBT groups and Students for Choice. I am concerned with social justice and believe that quality education should be affordable and accessible to all who seek it. If elected, I will focus on social justice and affordable education.

MSU should take the lead in demanding its share of Michigan’s federal tax payments that go to the Pentagon (over \$8.7 billion for the Iraq war alone). This money could fund \$425,000 full scholarships to Michigan’s universities, and attract more young people to our state. Support affirmative action for a truly diverse university where individuals could be trained to go back to their communities and rebuild Michigan’s cities as planned and green communities.

The U.S. wars, occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq. For immediate U.S. withdrawal – bring the troops home now. Make MSU an anti-war leader in demanding funds for education, not for war. Dismantle the Pentagon and use military funding to instead reduce tuition immediately for all students and provide full scholarships for low-income students. Make higher education affordable and accessible to all who seek it. No military recruiters on campus. Jobs and social services, not war.

All MSU students have the right to an education in an environment where they feel safe. An anti-discrimination policy should address all forms of discrimination. Include same-sex benefits and rights, gender identity in the MSU civil rights code. Defend affirmative action and defeat the racist, sexist Michigan “Civil Rights” IsicI Initiative. No attacks on union benefits or pensions. Elect a student to the Board of Trustees so students’ concerns are heard at all levels.

Robert Gale, US Taxpayers

I attended Macomb Community College and MSU. I am a Self-employed businessman with a business management and finance background.

The university must accept and keep excellent and superior standards and expect nothing less.

I support to contain and lower costs without sacrificing the quality of education is to eliminate all contributions to politicians with university, taxpayer or student money! As your MSU Trustee I will get more support from business and labor.

The current system is very flawed that has been in place for a lot of years We must reassess the current programs that are not working.

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J.P. Denoyer, Libertarian

I was born in Ann Arbor in 1976 and am a life-long resident of Michigan. I am a computer programming student and appreciate the value of quality education. I ran for city council twice in Ann Arbor and lead a successful petition drive.

The Primary purpose of the university is to educate people. Having an educated populous helps the economy. Also the university conducts research projects that lead to new technologies and more efficient ways of doing things, greatly helping the economy. The university should accept and use Liberty Dollars and E-Gold. Widespread use of these types of money will protect the economy from problems caused by miss-management of Federal Reserve Money.

Most levels of Government, including the state are likely to go bankrupt in the near future. While the affect on the university is uncertain, it would be prudent to seek alternative funding sources. One way I would like to secure future funding is to give tuition discount to students who contractually earmark a percentage of their future income to the University. It is necessary to aggressively seek donations and grants from individuals and corporations.

3. See Question 2

David H. Raaflaub, Libertarian

Lifelong resident of Michigan: Plymouth, Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. Graduate of Plymouth High, University of Michigan, AB in philosophy, Wayne State Law School, Juris Doctor. Retired from law practice. I quoted in a Court of Appeals motion a client’s allegations that a Jackson County judge and prosecutor had committed crimes in his son’s case. Instead of investigating the allegations the system disciplined me and suspended me from practice. A similar case involves Geoffrey Fieger.

MSU can develop research and education to: a. end the political gerrymander b. institute proportional representation c. de-monopolize the practice of law and repeal the law against non-State Bar members providing legal services. The result would be a stronger economy.

Lack of democratic process in politics and monopoly of the professions.

The University would do well to liquidate its investments, buy hard commodities and prepare for the collapse of the American economy in the light of, as the New York Times a few days ago highlighted, the bankruptcy of the American economy.

Katherine Dern, Natural Law

Resident of Michigan for 40 years married with 3 sons and is secretary of the Natural Law Party for 5 years. Kathy has surpassed her 20 year anniversary milestone at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Michigan where she is a Sr. Systems Analyst Project Leader. “I have seen the challenges of our families throughout my years in our state and in the health insurance field and understand the importance of our future in education”.

In today’s economy the challenges of our sons and daughters attending a university has greatedened. The university must continue to meet these challenges and promote education within our state starting at the grade school level to ensure that our children can attain their dreams. We cannot let our children fail to understand the importance of planning for the future and in knowing the opportunity that is there for them at university and in Michigan.

I believe the biggest challenge is the financial ability for our students to attend the universities of their choice. More and more parents are struggling to send their sons and daughters to a university and may elect a community college or one closer to home unless we meet these challenges by ensuring our parents and students know of the availability and take full advantage of scholarships/grants/etc.

Promote scholarship awareness for new and current students. Support academic awareness of all government – it is not Democrat vs. Republican it is awareness of all parties. Promote environmental awareness – growth in our education of alternative fuels, organic farming & healthy living.

