

Wayne State University Governors 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?

John Akouri, Republican

Did not respond in time for publication.

Andrew G. McLemore, Jr., Republican

Did not respond in time for publication.

Debbie Dingell, Democrat

A Michigander all my life, I have been an active business, civic and community leader in Michigan for more than thirty years. I received my undergraduate degree and masters from Georgetown University, and have spent 29 years at General Motors in various positions. I have been involved in many projects and activities over the years particularly focused on women and children and currently serve on a number of boards focused on children and young adults.

Wayne State University is critically located to be at the forefront of technological advances which can help transform Michigan’s economy. As we work to diversify and strengthen the state’s economy, it is imperative that we develop a more skilled workforce to recruit and fill the high-tech jobs that are vital for Michigan’s future. Wayne State University’s history of providing accessible, affordable, and excellent education plays a critical role in the economic revitalization of Michigan.

Universities must ensure that higher education remains accessible and affordable to all. I believe Wayne State University’s history and tradition of serving people of all ages and incomes is critical to providing an opportunity for all who wish to pursue higher education. To maintain this tradition, I will fight to keep education affordable and will fight to ensure that all Michiganders are considered fairly and equally for educational and job opportunities.

I will fight to secure Wayne State University’s share of state government funding. Additionally, I will make it a priority to support efforts to increase research grant dollars from both the public and private sector to keep Wayne State University at the forefront of groundbreaking research and technological advances.

Eugene Driker, Democrat

BA in mathematics and JD, both from WSU; first WSU graduate in Attorney General’s Honor’s Program; worked for Robert Kennedy in Washington. Since 1964, has lived and practiced law in Detroit. Recently described as “Michigan’s preeminent business litigator.” Recipient of numerous awards, including McCree Award for the Social Justice. On WSU Board of Governors since 2002. Supports increasing enrollment, improving instruction, enhancing research, making WSU catalyst for economic growth. Led campaign that raised \$19.4 million for law school.

WSU should play a substantial role in the economic development in Michigan. WSU now receives more than \$200 million a year in research funding and actively pursues ways of translating that research into marketable products and services. In the last several years it has launched TechTown, a high technology park just north of the campus, with the expectation that this will serve as an important launching pad for new technologies, new businesses and jobs.

WSU’s most pressing issue is to remain as the “portal to the American dream” for new generations of students, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college. Declining state support has to be reversed if WSU is to help restore economic health to Michigan. Simply increasing tuition is not a solution and, instead exacerbates the problem we now face: too few of Michigan’s citizens have a college education.

I support making WSU more cost-sensitive and efficient by merging academic units, shedding underutilized programs and insisting on better management. These steps, alone, will not overcome the effects of declining state appropriations. I support a tax structure that will adequately fund all schools, K-12, community colleges and four-year colleges and universities. I’m a strong believer in the importance of private philanthropy, and I have been involved for decades in raising funds for WSU.

Margaret Guttshall, Green

I have worked as a waitress, typesetter, museum worker and law librarian and been involved in movements since 1968 – the anti-Vietnam war movement, the movement against the war on Iraq, and movements for money for jobs, schools and healthcare, not war. I am married and have a 25-year-old daughter, an instructor and poet. I graduated from Wayne State in 2003 with a Masters in Library Science where I also worked in the law library.

The university should play a role in developing the world economy and the economy here as part of it. It should provide professors and students with the best possible materials to give and get outstanding education. Professors and students, in collaboration with workers and people from oppressed communities, will play a critical role in developing industry, agriculture, and culture.

Are we going to keep spending money on bombing the peoples of Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine? Or are we going to stop this and start spending money for jobs, schools, healthcare?

Spend the \$8 billion that Michigan has been giving to the war, on education.

Michael Merriweather, Green

My name is Michael Merriweather. I’m a student at WSU where I major in Media Arts & Studies. I’m a political activist, including membership in M.E.C.A.W.I., S.D.S., The Michigan Green Party and volunteer work with Free Detroit.

Wayne State University should play a role in the economic development of Michigan, by creating within itself the opportunity for students to both learn and work. By creating a cultural and economic environment where education is valued as work, Wayne can encourage and spur the innovation in the arts & sciences necessary to bring the Michigan economy into the 21st century.

The most important issue is the rising cost of tuition. The importance of education is too high to place the burden of its cost on the student. The university through conservation and sustainability, using its resources to fund research and development instead of buying administrators the newest computers and office technology can solve this problem and provide the wider and cheaper access to education needed to make our economy and democracy function.

I support measures of environmental conservation and sustainability aimed towards decreasing the operating costs of the university. I support investing in employment opportunities for students within the university and the community. There is no reason why the university can’t both meet the public service needs of the community and provide its students with the experience and networking of interacting with that community.

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Philip Johnson, US Taxpayers

BA, Political Science, Constitutional Law. MBA, International Business. ScD, Computer Science.

None. Their sole purpose should be to give their students the best education possible. Anything else is a misuse of student and taxpayer’s money. It is the place of the graduates of the university to be involved in economic development.

Education. My position is that universities should return to the proper definition of education as found in the MI. State Constitution, Article VIII Section 1: “Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged”. Education must stop being an end in itself and to do that we must add [Christian] religion and morality back into the equation with knowledge.

Federal statistics show that private and religious education costs approximately half as much and produces twice as many educated students as public schools. It is not the economic climate that threatens the quality of this university, it is the corruption of knowledge and the omission of truth, which if dealt with justly will enable the university to excel no matter what the economy does.

Robert Van Bemmelen, US Taxpayers

B.S. in Pharmacy '72, U of M. On the College Pharmacy curriculum committee as an undergraduate I have been a pharmacist for 34 yrs. with management experience in the retail market in both independent as well as chain pharmacies. Also have hospital experience from the U of M and was involved in their “Total Quality” development program. Married with four daughters, all have or are currently attending public universities in Michigan.

The purpose of a university is to educate its students to take an active contributory role in the society around them. It is important that a state funded school be particularly sensitive to and work closely with the leadership of that state by providing educational opportunities that will not only benefit the students but also serve to contribute to the economic success of the state.

The most important issue facing this public university is to do whatever it takes to graduate students who are not only qualified to take their place in the work force, but are sought after for their excellence in achievement. This must be done within ever tightening budget constraints. This is a challenge that requires the utmost cooperation and understanding between, administration, faculty, staff and students.

Although WSU is a public institution, receiving public funding, I believe funding from the private sector is much more effective in targeting specific needs. The reciprocal benefit is an educated trained workforce more willing to return in kind to the source of it support. This condition of reciprocity now becomes a win win situation for all concerned maximizing the benefit at the local level.

Thomas W. Jones, Libertarian

Michigan citizen and Elector.

All universities should be sold to the highest private bidder so that there is a direct connection between what is taught at such universities and the *real* economy. There must be a total separation of education and government (the state).

The devastating collapse of Detroit around WSU since 1953 due to decades of high taxes and insane government spending schemes for the benefit of special interest gangs. Cut taxes and government spending in Detroit (and the rest of Michigan) to allow a free market economy to operate.

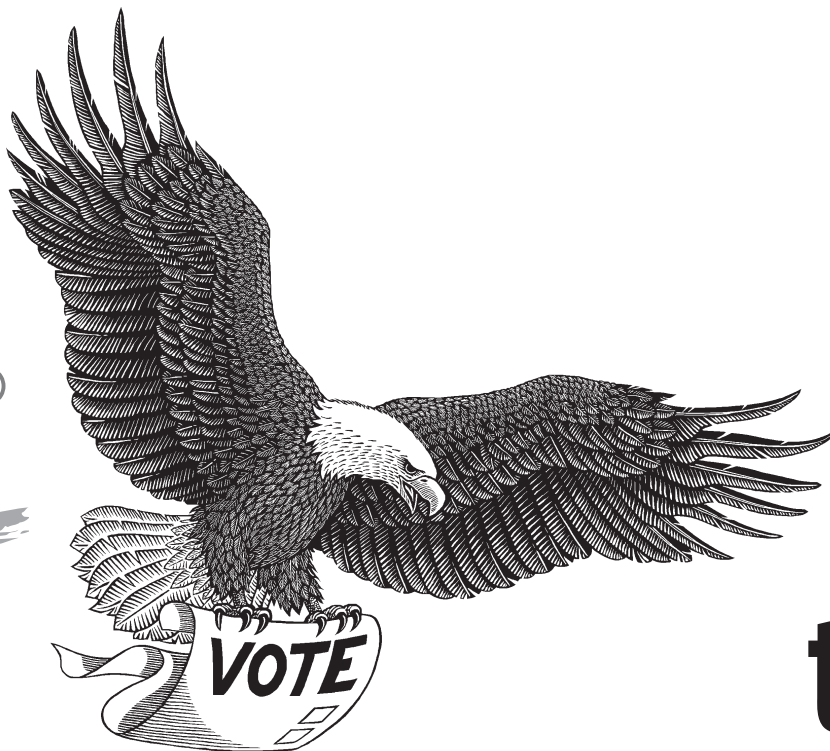
Sell it to the highest private bidder – after all mention of public education is removed from the Michigan Constitution – since such public education is totally unaccountable regarding productivity – i.e. actually educating persons to be in the actual economy.

Bob Schubring, Libertarian

Did not respond in time for publication.

Tara C. Stegner, Natural Law

Did not respond in time for publication.



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