

<b>Question 1 Why are you seeking this public office? (Please be brief)</b>	
<b>Nora Comstock</b>	I am seeking public office because I recently retired as president/CEO of Las Comadres Para Las Americas, an organization I built into an international online community. I served the organization for 16 years and was ready to do something different. I have a Ph.D. in community college leadership and it seemed fitting to round out my public service as trustee for Austin Community College.
<b>Douglas Gibbins</b>	Being part of our community means more than just living here. For Austin and Central Texas to be and become the place we want to live, I believe we should give our time and talents to our community where they can do the greatest good. I have been doing this for ACC for about eight years in the capacity of advisor to outgoing 12-year Trustee and former Chair of the ACC Board of Trustees, Jeffrey Richard. I was appointed to the Highland Campus Advisory Committee at its formation. Presently, I am the Highland CAC Vice Chair. I understand the ACC board and how it works from the inside.
<b>Sean Hassan</b>	My mom worked in a Laundromat for 15 years, unable to make ends meet despite working extremely hard. Her life and ours changed when she was able to attend a publicly-funded job training program to become a vocational nurse, because for the first time in our life we had a steady, predictable, living wage income coming in to our home. As such, I know how transformational job training programs can be, but I am also familiar with the challenges that working parents and other working adults experience when trying to access job training programs. I am running for ACC Trustee to bring down those barriers for current and potential ACC students.
<b>Thomas Miranda</b>	I am the product of public schools (SAISD, Community College, UTSA), dealt with several financial, physical & emotional obstacles during that time including taking care of a terminally ill father with cancer, living in apartments shared with section 8 residents, and taking out student loans to achieve a dream. I overcame insurmountable odds to nearly achieve my dreams through Silicon Valley based tech employers (STEM based career) and believe that #IAMACC - my years as a community college student, years of nonprofit board governance, years of professional experiences and passion compel me to run for this seat in 2016.
<b>Anthony Schoggins</b>	I have worked on higher education funding in the Texas Senate so I know how the dollars flow down to the colleges. I want to expand access to ACC's economic opportunity engine without raising taxes or tuition - legislative experience is a must.
<b>Guadalupe Sosa</b>	I want to continue my work to make ACC more accessible and affordable, especially for the low income and underrepresented communities, and to help increase the number of students graduating with a degree or certificate. Additionally, I want to increase the diversity in the administration and faculty ranks to reflect the diversity of the population we serve.

<b>Question 2</b>	<b>Please tell us why you are seeking the endorsement of SDA. Do you have a history of involvement in Democratic politics and/or LGBTQ issues? If so please briefly describe this history.</b>
<b>Nora Comstock</b>	I have voted as a Democrat for 50 years. I have been peripherally involved in politics. I created the Texas Public Policy and Civic Engagement Program for Las Comadres to prepare Latinas for public office and advocacy. I started this program in 2007.
<b>Douglas Gibbins</b>	If elected I will represent our entire community, fairly and respectfully. I am not beholden to special interests seeking to sway ACC so as to unjustly benefit some at the expense of others. Hence, as part of my campaigning, I will and have met with and spoken to every group who has been gracious enough to have an interest in this race and willing to have me.
<b>Sean Hassan</b>	I worked as a Get out the Vote Director for the Obama Campaign in Reno in 2012. I was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte in 2012 and to the state convention in San Antonio in 2016. I have canvassed for Democratic candidates at a variety of levels including Senator Bill Bradley, CA State Assembly-Member David Chiu, Congressman Ami Bera, among others. These are but a few examples of my involvement in Democratic politics. I'm seeking SDA's endorsement as I want it to be clear to SDA and others that I am not only fully committed to promoting full equality of LGBTQ students and staff at ACC, but that I will be a strong advocate for ACC LGBTQ students and staff.
<b>Thomas Miranda</b>	I'm a second generation Mexican American citizen and come from a family who lived through difficult, racially charged times in the lower Rio Grande Valley during the 40-50's. Inspired by Henry Cisneros in my youth, I have been active throughout my life with democratic and SDA causes aligned to equal rights, social equity and justice and am proud to bring fairness and equality to all of my professional and nonprofit governance/employment actions including hiring, and equal pay.
<b>Anthony Schoggins</b>	I have worked with groups like Equality Texas for several legislative sessions in Senator Rodney Ellis' office to advance causes within the LGBTQ movement at the Capitol.
<b>Guadalupe Sosa</b>	I have been a Democrat for decades, and was given the Yeller Dawg award by the South Austin Democrats in 2008 in recognition of my steadfast Democratic values, which means, among other things, fighting for respect and equal treatment for all minorities, including the LGBTQ community.

<b>Question 3</b>	<b>Our By-Laws require that we only endorse Democrats. Did you vote in the 2016 Democratic Primary? If not, do you consider yourself to be a Democrat?</b>
<b>Nora Comstock</b>	Yes.
<b>Douglas Gibbins</b>	I voted in the 2016 Democratic primary, have supported and do support Democratic candidates, and was inspired by the Sanders campaign.



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<b>Sean Hassan</b>	I voted in the March, 2016 primary but the Travis County Elections department not only does not have record of me voting in the March primary, it has no record of me voting at all. I moved from Austin ETJ in Williamson to Travis County in January, 2016, and so I was provided a limited ballot in Travis. That ballot was still a primary ballot. I'm not sure why the Travis County elections office has no record of me voting in the March primary. They do have a record of me voting in the May 24th primary. To provide comfort, I will forward my voting history from California so that you can see that I have voted in every Democratic primary there. I have voted exclusively in Democratic primaries ever since I was eligible to vote.
<b>Thomas Miranda</b>	Yes, have voted Democrat since 1992. I may be the only 100% consistent democrat in place 5.
<b>Anthony Schoggins</b>	Yes.
<b>Guadalupe Sosa</b>	Yes, I am a Democrat, and yes I voted in the 2016 Democratic Primary.

<b>Question 4</b>	<b>Do you believe LGBTQ individuals should be protected against discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression?</b>
<b>Nora Comstock</b>	Absolutely.
<b>Douglas Gibbins</b>	Yes. We all deserve to be treated respectfully and with the same rights. No one should have rights denied just because someone else thinks they are a little different or not agree with them.
<b>Sean Hassan</b>	Absolutely.
<b>Thomas Miranda</b>	Absolutely! As a former Employee Resource Group Texas Chapter President for Cisco Systems, I personally take pride in diversity in the workplace and consider myself a leader and trailblazer in ensuring the highest level of ethical treatment of human beings in the workplace.
<b>Anthony Schoggins</b>	Yes: all Texans should be able to work without fear of being fired or punished simply because of who they love or who they are.
<b>Guadalupe Sosa</b>	Yes.

<b>Question 5</b>	<b>What proposals would you suggest to make coming out on the job safer for LGBTQ employees?</b>
<b>Nora Comstock</b>	I do not have specific proposals but would look to guidance from LGBTQ employees.
<b>Douglas Gibbins</b>	Teach tolerance. Provide our HR department with information to conduct training and to give information on LGBTQ issues and emphasize tolerance. Coming out is a personal decision for each individual. No one should be forced out of the closet. That being said, if someone is "outed" and treated unfairly because of it, they should have protections.
<b>Sean Hassan</b>	First, I would speak with LGBTQ organizations like Equality Texas and HRC, folks at the Stonewall Democrats, and LGBTQ students and staff at ACC to learn what they think are best practices in making coming out at the job safer for LGBTQ employees. At the absolute minimum, for example, I would insist that ACC make it publicly known to all employees that ACC is an inclusive workplace for LGBTQ students and staff. We can make this publicly known through commemorating Pride at ACC both on campus and beyond, hosting networking events between students and faculty, and holding speaker events, relevant screenings, and so on. And, for each of these activities, it is critical for ACC leadership including Board Trustees and ACC Administration to be present and vocal at these events.
<b>Thomas Miranda</b>	Empower employers to share how inclusive and diversity practices help their bottom line and share best practices across industries to demonstrate the power of gender, sexual and ethnic diversity make companies, business and society healthier.
<b>Anthony Schoggins</b>	The culture of ACC must be accepting and understanding. I believe that adding a formal policy that has clear and specific language will give our administrators guidelines about what "safer" feels like.
<b>Guadalupe Sosa</b>	There are several Board Policies that address and prohibits discrimination, or sexual harassment, that could be monitored for compliance by college staff and administration, and appropriate action taken if concerns are expressed. Some that come to mind are Policy C-10 states the District will not tolerate, and thereby prohibits, sex and or gender discrimination, including on the basis of gender orientation, gender identity or gender expression, and Policies F-1 and F-2 address protections against discrimination and in employment.

<b>Question 6</b>	<b>Do you think ACC is doing enough to ensure equality for its LGBTQ employees? For example, how would you address organizational issues such as transgender employees transitioning on the job?</b>
<b>Nora Comstock</b>	I do not know of any specific issues nor have I heard anyone from ACC comment on these. Again, I would seek input from the LGBTQ group or individuals.
<b>Douglas Gibbins</b>	Frankly, I do not know. I hope enough is being done to ensure equality for all employees. I want this to be true. I am open to meeting with you and other organizations providing services to LGBTQ youth. I am willing to listen and take action on LGBTQ issues. Transgender transitions should be treated just like any other major life event and/or medical procedure. They should be treated fairly, like any other employee.

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<b>Sean Hassan</b>	Again, I would consult with credible organizations who have formulated best practice. Here are some thoughts: 1) A documented policy, 2) An advocate among senior management, 3) Ability to use the restroom of their choice, 4) Ensure the benefits are applied equally to transgender individuals as to non-transgender, 5) Have appropriate training and communication plans in place.
<b>Thomas Miranda</b>	ACC does have employee groups, resources and supports LGBTQ employees and recently supported Pride Week. I don't know explicitly how many policies are in place but feel they do an ok job and if not, I will support strengthening any inquiry across the diversity spectrum.
<b>Anthony Schoggins</b>	The current grievance process at ACC is slanted too far in favor of the supervisor. I will work with the various faculty associations to ensure that an employee is always represented by an advocate to prevent organizational or systemic bias. I will also work with the trans community to develop policy language to meet the specific needs of someone transitioning on the job.
<b>Guadalupe Sosa</b>	Personnel actions are under the purview of the President, but he is required to follow Board policies to resolve issues in accordance with Board direction, however, I would advocate for policies to be revised or amended if not sufficient to help the President address these issues.

<b>Question 7</b>	<b>Are you familiar with the organization Out Youth? If elected, what would you do to help this organization and others that provide services to LGBTQ youth?</b>
<b>Nora Comstock</b>	I did not know about the organization but I read about it on the web. I would do anything I can to help these youth. They deserve our support.
<b>Douglas Gibbins</b>	I am familiar with Out Youth through my daughter's involvement.
<b>Sean Hassan</b>	As an elected official, I would be a public and vocal supporter of organizations like Out Youth.
<b>Thomas Miranda</b>	Yes, I believe that is important for human beings to live in a place where they are loved, acknowledged and accepted for who they are. I work towards a society where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and allowed to pursue their dreams to the extent of the law and where they are capable.
<b>Anthony Schoggins</b>	I am not very familiar with this organization, however, I would ensure that this and other similar organizations are allowed to be a part of our on campus community.
<b>Guadalupe Sosa</b>	I am not familiar with the organization. The college has specific process for getting student organizations on campus provided a group of students are interested in forming and running a chapter with a faculty sponsor.

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<b>Question 8</b>	<b>Describe a step you would take, or have taken, or a proposal you would make, or have made as a member of the Board of Trustees that would <u>specifically</u> benefit LGBTQ students.</b>
<b>Nora Comstock</b>	If such a proposal is needed, I would seek input and then present it to my colleagues on the board.
<b>Douglas Gibbins</b>	(No response given)
<b>Sean Hassan</b>	One step I might consider is to take part in an initiative like the Campus Pride Index so that we are measuring how we are doing at being an LGBTQ inclusive community – what we are doing well and should keep up, and also where we should improve.
<b>Thomas Miranda</b>	I would appoint key members from the LGBTQ community to an equity committee and would first look to assess at ACC what LGBTQ equity gaps exist and see if there is any data on inequity or disparity. I would then work to influence awareness and policies to achieve parity inclusive to producing resources and materials that enable a diverse and inclusive environment.
<b>Anthony Schoggins</b>	As Trustee, I would work with the LGBTQ movement to draft clear non discrimination language regarding both coming out and transitioning; and, ensure proper implementation of this policy by strengthening the employee's position in the grievance process.
<b>Guadalupe Sosa</b>	My work in the Board has been focused on making education accessible and affordable for all students, and in making their experience at ACC one that helps them to attain their educational goals in the most efficient and effective manner.

<b>Question 9</b>	<b>Do you believe that public schools should institute rules and policies to prohibit harassment and discrimination against LGBTQ students?</b>
<b>Nora Comstock</b>	Absolutely.
<b>Douglas Gibbins</b>	Yes. Whether a person is LGBTQ or not, they should not be subject to harassment or discrimination. Everyone should be treated equally and with fairness.
<b>Sean Hassan</b>	Absolutely.
<b>Thomas Miranda</b>	Absolutely! I personally faced significant racial circumstances in elementary and middle school in the 80's and expect to have a modern and inclusive set of operating procedures in our ISD's in 2106 and beyond.
<b>Anthony Schoggins</b>	Yes: while many Texas school districts, including Austin ISD, have non-discrimination policies for LGBTQ students and staff, far too many districts do not.
<b>Guadalupe Sosa</b>	Yes.

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<b>Question 10</b>	<b>Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and others have indicated that a top legislative priority for them in the next session is to prohibit transgender youth from using facilities that correspond to their self-identity. Would you be willing to testify against any such legislation?</b>
<b>Nora Comstock</b>	Yes.
<b>Douglas Gibbins</b>	There should be legislation and enforced laws that prohibit discrimination and harassment in schools. Period. This should not be restricted to just LGBTQ youth but to all who may feel like they “don’t fit in.” As a public citizen I would testify to this. As a Board Member for ACC I likely would be prohibited from doing so. By Texas statute ACC is a non-legislative and a non-partisan government entity.
<b>Sean Hassan</b>	Absolutely!
<b>Thomas Miranda</b>	I fell that we have som many education, healthcare and transportation issues among many others to focus on and feel that his focus is shortsighted in 2016. I would be against any such legislation and would lend my time to testify against such legislation.
<b>Anthony Schoggins</b>	Absolutely, this type of legislation is not only absurd and offensive but it distracts from the real conversation Texans should be having about public schools.
<b>Guadalupe Sosa</b>	It takes a certain amount of expertise to effectively testify before the Legislature. I am not an expert on the subject.

<b>Question 11</b>	<b>The Texas Democratic Party recently adopted a plank in their 2016 Platform that reads, “support the right of all people to use facilities and participate in all aspects of life in a manner that is consistent with their gender identity, irrespective of the gender they were assigned at birth”. How would you advance or further the goals of this Platform plank in Austin and how would you work with other jurisdictions to advance or further the goals of this plank?</b>
<b>Nora Comstock</b>	I am not informed of specific ways that I could work to further advance the goals of this Platform plank but I am willing to become informed and to work on advancing the goals.
<b>Douglas Gibbins</b>	As a member of the ACC Board of Trustees, I will work within ACC to support, implement and enforce policies in keeping with this plank. ACC is not a political lobbying organization allowed to invest resources (shifting taxes from one taxing entity to another) to influence other government organizations or jurisdictions. ACC is prohibited from being a legislative governing body. To the extent that other candidates say they will act in official capacity or use the ACC to lobby or “work with” other jurisdictions demonstrates either their lack of understanding of the scope of ACC’s authority or their willingness to give campaign promises that cannot be kept.
<b>Sean Hassan</b>	First, I would make sure that ACC has “gold standard” practices so that we are furthering the goals of this platform plank. Secondly, I would be a vocal advocate as an elected official in Austin for this plank of the platform. Thirdly, I would work with other elected officials in the Austin area to advance the goals articulated in this plank across multiple institutions, so that we spur others to follow our lead.

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<b>Thomas Miranda</b>	I would look to share global and national case studies that support and add to the plank and then start to build awareness and understanding of regional jurisdictions to further build on its human significance and importance.
<b>Anthony Schoggins</b>	I will appoint members of the LGBTQ movement and community to be members of the campus advisory committees to ensure that all facilities are utilized appropriately and future campuses are designed with this plank in mind.
<b>Guadalupe Sosa</b>	As a proud Democrat, I support the Platform of the Democratic Party. The administration of facilities is a function of the College President, but the Board is always alert to situations where new or revised policies are needed to help students and employees feel valued and respected.

<b>Question 12</b>	<b>If elected, how would you stay informed of the concerns and interests of your LGBTQ constituents?</b>
<b>Nora Comstock</b>	I hope that involvement with the Stonewall Democrats and other such groups would keep me apprised of the issues. You know them better than anyone else.
<b>Douglas Gibbins</b>	Just as with my candidacy, I'm willing to meet with anybody, attend their meetings, listen to what is said and have discussions.
<b>Sean Hassan</b>	I can do an even better job of keeping plugged in to organizations like Equality Texas, Transgender Law Center, the Human Rights Campaign, and others, such as Stonewall Democrats.
<b>Thomas Miranda</b>	I would look to appoint key leaders from the LGBTQ community to committees to help provide me with information and knowledge to help balance the decision making policies related to LGBTQ issues.
<b>Anthony Schoggins</b>	I will continue to be involved in the LGBTQ movement as an ally whether I am elected or not. My mother owns an Austin based same sex wedding company that she has operated for more than five years. I have been a partner with the LGBTQ community pushing for progress and will continue to do so in any capacity I am fortunate enough to serve.
<b>Guadalupe Sosa</b>	I have tried to consistently attended most student forums, and as many employee group meetings as I can, to be aware of what issues are important to them, and have brought some of these concerns back to the Board Dais where solutions are considered and changes made. In the spirit of open communication, LGBT issues brought up by the students have initiated positive Administration response and action.

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<b>Question 13</b>	<b>Have you attended functions in Austin's LGBTQ community and, if so, which?</b>
<b>Nora Comstock</b>	No. My focus prior to retiring was largely outside of Austin.
<b>Douglas Gibbins</b>	Yes, most certainly. I came to Austin in 1986 as a UT student and have lived here most of the time I don't know where to begin listing the functions.
<b>Sean Hassan</b>	I facilitated a panel on LGBTQ issues featuring Chuck Smith of Equality Texas, Jan Soifer, and Celia Israel. I attended a commemoration of the one year anniversary of the SCOTUS marriage equality decision and a vigil for the victims of the Orlando shooting.
<b>Thomas Miranda</b>	Austin Pride.
<b>Anthony Schoggins</b>	I marched in this year's pride parade with the Austin Valkyries Women's Rugby team. Last year I attended the Pride Festival in Fiesta Gardens and attended several planning sessions to coordinate the event. I also marched in the NYC Pride Parade with NYC Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito in June 2015, just two days after the landmark Supreme Court decision - The first time I saw the Stonewall Inn.
<b>Guadalupe Sosa</b>	I don't think I have.