

Blinn College Board Candidates Questionnaire – 2023

Brenham/Washington County, Texas

Allison Bentke – Precinct 3

1. Why have you decided to run for election at this time?

I value education and have always considered Blinn College a pillar of both the Washington County community and higher education in Texas. After leaving the public school classroom in May of 2021, I wanted to further my involvement in the community and could not stray far from education. When the opportunity to serve as a Blinn Trustee came along, I was honored to be appointed. Having already served on the Board of Trustees for a little over a year, I carry forward a working knowledge of how the Board operates. I know that I have more to learn and ways to deepen my involvement, but I believe in my time served I have already made a positive contribution and would like to continue the progress that we are making.

2. What key competencies do you feel you possess to be a board trustee? Briefly describe your background in areas such as financial analysis, leadership, effective communication, understanding of educational system issues, ability to contribute to strategic planning and initiatives, and consensus building.

I believe the competencies I possess that allow me to positively contribute to the Blinn Board of Trustees include my understanding of the educational system, leadership, and communication skills. My background from 28 years of experience in K-12 education has given me the perspective of an instructor and has allowed me to understand how students can learn and thrive in education. I believe this point of view is valuable in influencing the decisions that we make at the Board level that affect the classroom. I currently serve as the chair of the Blinn Board of Trustees Budget, Audit, Investment and Finance Committee, which affords the opportunity to review in greater depth the college's financial status as well as provides me the opportunity to work with external financial and program auditors to continue to strengthen the long-term security and viability of the college. My experience expands beyond education to other roles in the community where I have served in leadership roles for the Washington County 4-H Parent's Association, Washington County Aggie Moms, Washington County Cattlewomen and Zion Lutheran Church. Involvement in various organizations and years of teaching also have led to my ability to excel in communication through learning how to connect and relate with people in different industries and from varying backgrounds, whose experiences may not be the same as mine. Effectively expressing my views while relating to others' opinions allows me to help in finding a solution that works best for all involved.

3. What is your vision for post-secondary education in this community?

Education is truly a gateway to opportunity – but that doesn't necessarily have to be through a traditional four-year degree. I believe Blinn College is positioned uniquely to serve a wide array of student needs that result in a high demand for our students entering the workplace with the ability to find careers right here in our own community. The City of Brenham and Washington County are experiencing significant growth which comes with a need for a variety of skill sets and educational paths. Blinn College can fit this need by providing students with workforce and technical training for immediate entry into fields like nursing, HVAC, and welding. For students seeking further education, Blinn can provide an affordable Associate's Degree and transfer opportunities for students looking to pursue a four-year degree.

4. How do you feel Blinn College impacts the local economy? How can the Blinn Board of Trustees make a positive impact on local economic growth?

Blinn College positively impacts the local economy in multiple facets. The most recent Blinn College economic impact analysis conducted by Emsi in 2019 calculated a system-wide economic contribution of \$370.1 million in added income, annually. This number is the combination of alumni wages, operations spending and student spending. According to the Washington County Economic Development data, Blinn College ranks as one of the largest employers in the county. As a Blinn Trustee, it is our responsibility to create a learning environment and workplace that is desirable to instructors, employees, and students. The ability of Blinn College to make a strong positive economic impact on the community is a testament to the quality of students that we are able to attract year after year. Continuing to find ways to increase our marketability and raise the bar of our educational standards will only further the already large economic impact that Blinn College has on the Washington County community.