

# Ms. Karla Corres

23 August 2019

Monterey Peninsula Community College  
District Board of Trustees,  
980 Fremont Street,  
Monterey, CA 93940

Dear Ms. Marilyn Dunn Gustafson,

Upon review of the vacancy of Area 1 - Seaside and Sand City - as part of the Board of Trustees, I was committed to submit my application for the Board's and your consideration. With my experience in community involvement in the Tri-County area, advocacy for students in higher education, and for-and-non-profit experience, I feel confident that I can serve the community of MPC, Seaside, and Sand City. My experience can serve to assist in increasing graduation rates, allocation of grants and other funds to increase faculty diversity, and strengthening connections with students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding communities.

As a student leader at the CSUMB campus, as part of M.E.Ch.A. and the HSI co-op, I engaged in challenging conversations with staff, faculty, and other students about issues that Latinx and underrepresented students face across the education system. I advocated and provided tools and information for high school students to attend college. In addition, at United Way of Monterey County, and UNITE HERE (hospitality union), I worked closely with underrepresented communities with the goal of closing socioeconomic disparities.

As I relocated back to the Monterey area last fall I continued to educate myself and I am looking to continue serving my community as a public servant. With my work and education experience along with my interest to become a public servant, I believe I have the tools needed to perform as a trustee representing Area 1 of Seaside and Sand City.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KC' with a flourish.

Karla Corres

# Ms. Karla Corres

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## Public & Community Service

*\*Special Note: Information from this section will be published as part of the applicant's package for public review.*

### Organization

**Name** San Carlos Cathedral **Phone** (831) 373-2628

### Address

**Street Address** 500 Church St **City, State, Zip** Monterey, CA 93940

### Details

**Role** Church Member and Volunteer of the Hispanic Ministry **From** January 2017 **To** Present

**Responsibilities**

- Assist in fundraising events
  - Assist in any set-up and take down during church holidays or other events
  - Help collect and adjust singing books
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**Organization**

**Name** Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano/a de Aztlan (M.E.Ch.A.) de CSUMB **Phone** (831) 582-3000

Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano/a de Aztlan (M.E.Ch.A.) de CSUMB

**Address**

**Street Address** 100 Campus Center **City, State, Zip** Seaside, CA 93955

**Details**

**Role** Community Outreach Officer 2014 - 2015 and Member 2013 - 2017 **From** August 2014 **To** May 2017

Community Outreach Officer 2014 - 2015 and Member 2013 - 2017

**Responsibilities**

- Established relations with the local high schools
  - Organized the annual Raza Youth Empowerment Conference. This entailed responsibility for the event's speakers, workshops, and entertainment, and contacting staff and faculty.
  - Promoted activities and events as determined on a collective basis
  - Participated in organization's and other campus events
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**Organization**

**Name** CSU Monterey Bay - Hispanic Serving (HSI) Institution Program **Phone** (831) 582-3000

**Address**

**Street Address** 100 Campus Center **City, State, Zip** Seaside, CA 93955

**Details**

**Role** HSI Student Co-Op Participant **From** September 2014 **To** May 2015

**Responsibilities**

-Met bi-weekly with faculty and staff to discuss issues affecting Latinx students on campus and in the Tri-County area

-Collaborated with other student Latinx and minority organizations to conduct research and/or events

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**Organization**

**Name** Monterey High School **Phone** (831) 392-3801

**Address**

**Street Address** 101 Herrmann Dr **City, State, Zip** Monterey, CA 93940

**Details**

**Role** Volunteer **From** September 2014 **To** December 2014

**Responsibilities**

-Assisted English as a Second Language (ESL) class with under performing students

-Created a lesson plan for the day

-Closely worked with 4 ESL students to improve their vocabulary

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**If additional space is required to supply your public and community service background, please upload a separate document. (MS Word or PDF format required)**

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**Supplemental Questions**

**(Please limit your responses to 300 words or less.)**

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**1. Please state why you are seeking appointment to the Monterey Peninsula Community College District Board of Trustees.**

The biggest changes happen at a local level. I heard this said while I was an intern at the Panetta Institute for Public Policy from our former Secretary of Defense and Congressman Mr. Leon Panetta. I witnessed our legislative and democratic process firsthand through my Congressional internship with the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, D.C. This insight, along with my past experiences inspired me to continue serving my community as a public servant with the Monterey Peninsula Community College Board of Trustees.

I am a young Latinx (a gender-neutral alternative to Latino, Latina, and Latin@) college graduate with approximately ten years of work experience who has served underrepresented students and workers as an activist and a leader in the community. I had the privilege of graduating from CSU Monterey Bay with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and a minor in Global Studies, and I want everyone in my community to have the opportunity of attending college and graduating. I want to continue serving students, the Seaside and Sand City community, and other stakeholders by strengthening community relationships and engaging collaboratively through open discussions in order to achieve community and institution goals, student success, and more.

I am confident that my experiences and background outlined in this application serve as proof that I have the passion and interests of serving Latinx and other underrepresented communities in higher education. As a womyn (a nonstandard spelling of "women" adopted by a quantity of feminists, like myself), who comes from a minority group, I hope to empower other minority individuals to strive for their goals by taking part in organizations that serve the community.

**2. Please describe your willingness and availability to participate in MPC regular board meetings, MPC special board meetings, MPC events outside of scheduled board meetings, and trustee conferences.**

I have a full-time position as the Property Coordinator at the Del Monte Shopping Center. However, I have spoken to my manager and we discussed maintaining flexibility outside of my Monday through Friday 8:00AM-5:00PM schedule so I can be involved with the Board of Trustees. Outside of my work commitments, I will make sure to prioritize MPC meetings and events over my own personal commitments.

I am a young, dedicated, and driven person that is willing to learn as much as possible, inspired by Mahatma Gandhi "learn as if you were to live forever." One of the goals that the Board has for its trustees is to take part in professional development activities which is something I am very enthusiastic to be a part of and to share my knowledge with the rest of the community. I am an individual who even after graduating college, continues to educate myself by taking courses to learn a third language and to learn more about a piece in business that is both a science and an art: marketing.

My work schedule and personal life allows me to have the flexibility to explore my passions which is why I aim to join the Board of Trustees. I am eager to fulfill such passions as part of the Board of Trustees, and I look forward to being able to both learn from and apply my knowledge to all MPC related activities.

**3. Please describe your past and current involvement with MPC, if any.**

My first involvement with the MPC was in the summer of 2009. During my freshman year of high school (2008), I had been introduced to MPC as the community college that allowed high school students to take approved courses and earn college credits. I enrolled in a geometry class that summer to earn college credits. Although I did not pass the class, studying with more developed students helped me understand the work and time expectations of college level work. After my geometry class I volunteered at the child development center. I volunteered to expand my knowledge in teaching, give back to my community, and give back to MPC for allowing me to take classes at a low cost. Volunteering has allowed me to grow as an individual, increase my self-confidence and become a responsible citizen of my community. More recently, after graduating college in 2017, I moved to the San Francisco Bay area for approximately a year and returned to Monterey in the Fall of 2018. It was then that I decided I wanted to go back to school and enrolled in a French class at MPC for that same semester.

In addition, I have been involved generally with Latinx students in education. I was the Community Outreach officer for the student organization Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (M.E.Ch.A.), which is dedicated to educating and helping the younger Latinx community on the opportunities available to them to attain higher education. I was responsible for planning and executing a youth conference for 150 high school students. Raza Day is a youth conference for students that invites them to experience a day on campus at CSUMB and to give them information about the resources available to support them to apply for and attend college. The success of such outreach is evident by the fact that around 70% of the high school teachers were either former Mechistas, CSUMB alumni, or past participants of the conference, which shows that they believed in the work that we did and chose to bring the impact to their own classrooms. My involvement with Latinx in higher education and in my community is a valuable experience I hope to share with MPC going forward. I hope that by representing Area 1, I can strengthen relationships with faculty, staff, students, and prospective students from local high schools.

**4. Please describe your involvement with any other community or business activities that you believe are relevant to the role of a member of the MPC Board of Trustees.**

I have worked for both for-profit and non-profit organizations that have exposed me to community outreach and management. Community outreach is important as a trustee because you are reaching out to those communities you serve to identify needs and provide solutions to the community. It is important to provide solutions that are well managed to successfully allocate resources that ultimately serve the institution's goals.

Currently as the Property Coordinator for a shopping center, I am responsible for reaching out to tenants and other community members in order to successfully implement events and engage in an open dialogue about the needs and concerns that any managers may have. I was involved in overseeing different vendor bids, proposals, and scope of work. The Board of Trustees has the responsibility to establish agreements with companies that help furnish and renovate MPC. I believe that as a public servant you have a moral and ethical duty to ask the difficult questions and explore all the possible benefits and consequences such agreements may bring about. My business experience will serve in asking those questions and looking at the details.

In addition, after graduating college I took an entry level management position that taught me the importance of a balanced budget. I managed to allocate financial resources to improve the store's productivity and increase sales. While the goal may differ in government, the idea is the same: to allocate resources that serve the organization.

As an undergraduate student, engaging with the Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in an open and safe space allowed me to hear the challenges and needs that faculty, staff, and students face across the education system. In addition to this, I have advocated for the needs of union workers, student needs in M.E.Ch.A., and been an ally in movements such as #FreeTheCSU and #FeesMustFall in South Africa, where I studied abroad. I hope to continue advocating for students and the community needs in higher education, because access to quality higher education should be a human right.

As a member of the MPC Board of Trustees, I will fulfill my role as an advocate for students and higher education for all.

**5. What is your view of the role and responsibilities of a community college trustee?**

A community college trustee is a humble leader with the goal of serving student needs without looking for any personal gain. A trustee advocates for student needs and aims at closing any disparity or gaps between students, faculty, and the college administration. They advocate for quality higher education, taking into consideration the needs of the community when formulating and implementing policy, and overseeing the financial allocation to better service the college mission and vision for its stakeholders. Trustees are responsible for being accessible to the communities they serve and making decisions that reflect communities' needs and values to ensure inclusion and equity.

During my participation as a HSI student participant, I understood that some elements of my own upbringing, such as my family preparing me to fall into the role of a *mujer* (womyn) and not preparing me for college, were issues that other people in academia had faced and studied. I learned that Latin students dropout of college not simply because of a lack of money or intelligence, but because of their cultural expectations. Other students abandon their college career because there are roles in the Latinx community that men and women are expected to fulfill. Whether it be to form a family or to remain in their household to support their families, some of these cultural differences make a difference and affect Latinx in higher education. While the rest of the American culture might not conform, organizations need to adjust to their community needs. Therefore, in order to be a successful trustee, one must take into consideration the cultural differences that makes us diverse, to better serve students of any background and allow them to have a support system that not only focuses on education issues but also in bridging gaps from cultural differences.

**6. Please describe your experience with the Brown Act and parliamentary procedures.**

I have not been required by law to follow the Brown Act, as I have not been a member of any legislative body. However, as a member of M.E.Ch.A., we followed Robert's Rules of Order. M.E.Ch.A. had a constitution to abide by and it included that all organizational business was conducted under Robert's Rules of Order, to not deviate from our objectives as a national organization. A key objective was to undertake the responsibility of uplifting and mobilizing Chicanos and Chicanas through higher education. During my four years of experience as a M.E.Ch.A. member and officer, I had experience setting the agenda, making a motion, voting, and giving everyone a space to express their voice. Such responsibilities were key to the success of our meetings and retreats. Robert's Rules of Order was successful in assuring that we stayed on track as per our agenda, and that decisions were not made if a quorum was not met.

**7. What skills and experience do you have to help us achieve our Governing Board Goals for 2019?**

The three main skills that I can bring to the board are management, leadership, and interpersonal skills.

I gained my management skills from my educational background and work experience that taught me the importance of having a balanced budget to successfully allocate resources. While the term fiscal stability is different in government than in the for- or non-profit sector, the idea is the same: financial stability. I have the educational background and experience in understanding and managing a financially stable organization to assist the board in achieving fiscal stewardship and allow the community to invest in opportunities that will expand classes to reduce time to degree completion, and increase the number of full-time students.

My leadership skills were gained during my undergrad career as a student leader at CSUMB and a leader in the community working for nonprofits. I was invited to be part of the CSUMB HSI co-op, which is composed of students, staff, faculty, and other campus leaders. I engaged in conversations with professional staff, faculty, and students about issues that Latinx and minorities face across the education system. I learned that teachers and professors in higher education can engage in conversations with students in order to open up the space and allow everyone from every background to not feel excluded. For example, during a meeting we discussed that sometimes professors ask students "tell me what that means from a minority perspective or from a woman's standpoint." Small changes in conversations can be adjusted to establish a more inclusive space. Such changes not only benefit Latinx students but anyone who feels part of a minority group, ensuring their comments and concerns are heard and appropriate action is taken.

Similarly, I participated in two internships with the hospitality workers union, UNITE HERE. My interpersonal skills allowed to successfully interact with hotel management and hospitality workers during labor disputes and contract negotiations. During my time at the organization, I learned the importance of collective bargaining. It taught me that it is not "us" against "them," but rather opening up to a conversation about what is right. Everyone deserves to have one well-paying job with benefits.

While I do not have ten years of employment as desired for the trustee position, I hope that my academic background, my past experiences with student led organizations and other for- and non-profit organizations, and continued role of being a student, serve as proof of my drive and passion as well as strong ability to continue serving the underrepresented communities of the Monterey County.

#### **8. In your opinion, what are some of MPC's greatest needs and how would you help MPC meet those needs?**

In our shifting demographics of California, today's students are faced with having to work to afford education. In these same shifting demographics and in our local communities, many of Latinx are faced with cultural expectations. Part of the American culture is to go away for college, but it is different in the Latinx community. In Fall of 2018 at CSUMB 40% of its student population accounted to be from the Tri-County area, and nearly 75% of that segment is from the Monterey area. While this is not true for all, majority of Latinx are expected to remain close to home and support family. Latinx are disproportionately low-income and the first in their families to seek higher education, characteristics that make them more likely to abandon their studies.

During my time as part of the HSI co-op, I learned from different people in academia that there is not one solution to tackle the cultural gap of Latinx and underrepresented students in higher education, but that the institution can do different things simultaneously.

The fact that the Tri-County and MPC has a majority population of Latinx should not be a burden, but rather as an advantage. Given that not everyone leaves for college, it gives MPC and CSUMB an opportunity to serve more students and be a strong option to do so. In order to bridge the gaps between cultural differences and academia, the college needs to offer more class options in the late afternoons and evenings. While not everyone learns online, exploring the option of hybrid classes can be beneficial to transition students that are part-time to full-time students. A more diverse faculty needs to be present on campus in the various departments so that our students are directly impacted and the governance practices, planning efforts and other institution's efforts are more diverse where everybody feels part of their campus.

#### **9. How would you engage the community to understand the needs of the institution?**



Needs are the gap between what is and what should be. Every community involved with the institution has to be approached and engaged in different ways. Given that there is not one way to engage, transparent communication is key to starting any type of engagement. We need to engage in conversations where each community expresses their needs and concerns. I will engage with the community during the different meetings, activities, mixers, events, and with different organizations, groups, and other stakeholders. I will participate in open dialogue in order to fully hear and understand the needs of the community. Then, translate those understandings into advocacy with my trustee position to reach and involve students of all backgrounds to pursue higher education and see MPC as a strong option to do so.

At CSUMB, I was taught to participate in open discussions during classes, where I actively engaged and learned from my classmates not only my professor. I want to engage the community this way to understand what the institution is trying to achieve, but also to obtain a collective understanding as to what they and their communities need.

#### **10. What does diversity mean to you, and why is this important?**

The world looks to America as a country where people find their freedom. The freedom that their native countries neglect—whether it be financial, religious, or educational opportunities— is what brings people to this country and what makes the U.S. unique. I was born in Oaxaca, Mexico and lived there until the age of 11 when I came to the United States. While in college I studied abroad in South Africa for six months, which opened my eyes to a different way of life. Additionally I have traveled to nine different countries and each experience has helped me evolve professionally, mentally, and spiritually. Diversity to me is being open to what is different than myself, whether it be ethnic, cultural, gastronomical, linguistic, or simply different opinions. It is in those differences that I have learned other things about the people around me. Engaging with an ethnically diverse student body in South Africa allowed me to engage in challenging conversations which resulted in my ability to critically think about myself and others. In the same way diversity is important because it is the key to understanding our differences and learning to bridge such differentiation in order to have inclusive spaces.

In an institution, inclusive spaces serve as an avenue to become a more diverse campus, the more diversity the richer class conversations, assignments, course content, and academic ideas are. A diverse faculty and student body bring a voice to campus that has been historically absent. When we limit ourselves to what we know, we limit ourselves to new things and this can create more disparities amongst underrepresented students, which can permeate into our communities creating more problems than solutions.

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## **Supplemental Documents**

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**Please upload your cover letter addressed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, Ms. Marilyn Dunn Gustafson. (MS Word or PDF format required)**

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## **Disclaimer and Certification**

***I understand that I may not be an employee of the district and serve as a member of the board. I certify that I meet all eligibility requirements. [To be eligible, an individual: must be at least 18 years old; must be a registered voter in, and a resident of, Trustee Area 1 (Seaside/Sand City, California); and must not be disqualified from holding civil office by the Constitution or any law of the state.]***

**I agree with this statement**

# Karla Corres

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## *Additional Public and Community Service*

### **United Way of Monterey County**

(831) 372-8026

376 Main Street, Salinas CA 93901

Volunteer Income Tax Preparer

November 2013 - April 2014

- Took income tax classes to learn to prepare income tax returns
- Collaborated with a team of 15 people to provide excellent customer service to successfully process income tax returns
- Worked with clients to successfully prepare their income tax return and answered any inquiries

### **Del Rey Woods Elementary School**

(831) 392-3907

1281 Plumas Ave, Seaside, CA 93955

Volunteer

February 2013 - April 2013

- Read to K-1 classes
- Closely worked with under-performing students to improve their reading or writing skills
- Assisted teacher in checking student's homework and other work

### **Monterey Public Library**

(831) 646-3477

625 Pacific Street Monterey, CA

Library Circulation Aide Intern

December 2010 - March 2011

- Organized returned items such as: books, magazines, DVD's, CD's
- Prepared and organized book displays
- Assisted staff during library events

# Karla Corres

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## *Additional Public and Community Service*

### **Monterey High School**

(831) 392-3801

101 Herrmann Dr, Monterey, CA 93940

September - December 2010;

September - December 2011;

September - December 2012

Referee assistant

- Assisted referee during football games
- Assist officials with spot related fouls
- Held yardage markers at first and ten yard intervals

### **Monterey Peninsula College - Child Development Center**

(831) 646-4000

980 Fremont St, Monterey, CA

Volunteer

Summer 2009

- Prepared snacks and assisted kids in washing their hands
- Assisted teachers in preparing activities
- Coordinated with staff on kids' nap times

### **Salvation Army Child Development Center**

(831) 899-4911

1491 Contra Costa Street, Seaside, CA

Volunteer

January - June 2009

- Supervised kids in play area
- Assisted teacher in miscellaneous tasks
- Assisted in the decoration of classroom art