

Nevada Faculty Alliance Questionnaire for
Candidates for Statewide Office

Office: Nevada Secretary of State

Candidate: Cisco Aguilar

Party: Democratic

Campaign website: www.cisconv.com

Q: Public funding of higher education has declined in relative terms over the past two decades while student fees and tuition have increased and student debt has rapidly expanded, both nationally and in Nevada. How should these issues be addressed?

Aguilar: Though the Secretary of State has little purview over these issues, I can commit to being an ally to higher education. My parents worked hard to make sure I had an education, and because of that work I was the first in my family to graduate from college. We need to ensure that ALL students have equal access to opportunities, and not transform education into something that's only available to those with means.

Q: The recruitment and retention of state employees, including faculty and staff in our public colleges and universities in Nevada, has become a crisis. Reasons cited for widespread vacancies include lagging compensation and cuts to healthcare benefits. What solutions do you have to restore and retain the higher education workforce in Nevada?

Aguilar: The Secretary of State doesn't have a direct impact on faculty staffing, but we know that across industries the political climate of a state can affect recruitment. If my opponent wins and is successful in overhauling Nevada's election system for the worse, it will become increasingly difficult to attract new talent. More and more extreme politicians will be elected, and anti-public education laws will be passed.

Q: Do you support collective bargaining rights for professional employees in our public colleges and universities?

Aguilar: Yes

Q: Do you support the principle of academic freedom that protects faculty members from political interference in their teaching and scholarship? (For more information see the AAUP 1940 Statement on Principles of Academic Freedom and Tenure.)

Aguilar: Yes

Q: Thank you for your responses. What else, if anything, would you like to communicate to NFA members?

Aguilar: I've been lucky enough in my career to work with individuals who care deeply about access to education, including Jim and Beverly Rogers. I was able to serve as Special Council to Jim when he was the Chancellor of NSHE, and was able to work alongside NFA members on some of their key issues. Due to that experience I have an understanding of the complexity of higher education issues, but also an understanding of how deeply everyone involved cares about students. I will always be an ally to education.

Submitted 8/8/2022