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## Finalists for Seattle Colleges chancellor diverse

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By **Emiri Aoki**

Northwest Asian Weekly



From left: Gale Gibson Gayle, Mark Mitsui, and Shouan Pan

The Seattle Colleges Board of Trustees announced the finalists for a new chancellor on Feb. 23.

The new chancellor is going to take over for Jill Wakefield, who is retiring in June 2016, after seven years.

The finalists are:

- Gale Gibson Gayle, president of Essex County College, N.J.
- Mark Mitsui, deputy assistant secretary for community colleges for the U.S. Department of Education
- Shouan Pan, president of Mesa Community College, Ariz.

Gibson Gayle is president of Essex County College. Since she was named to the position in 2011, she has increased the school's graduation rate from 5 percent to 10.3 percent and its fall-to-fall retention rate from 46 percent to 58 percent.

After participating in several White House initiatives, Gibson Gayle works to assist low-income students, providing opportunities for their higher education.

Mitsui is deputy assistant secretary for community colleges at the U.S. Department of Education.

Before his current role, Mitsui was president of North Seattle College. Also, he was vice president of student services at South Seattle College (SSC). There he led SSC to become one of the six colleges in the country to receive the designation of an Asian American, Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution.

Pan is president of Mesa Community College. His other executive positions include Florida State College at Jacksonville, Community College of Philadelphia, Broward College. South Campus in Florida, and Green River Community College in Washington state. He is also on the Arizona Commission of Postsecondary Education.

Jeremy Jordan, a student at Seattle Central College, is hoping for the new leader to be an optimist. He commented, "The college should offer more classes when it comes to how the school can be improved."

"What I look for in a leader is someone who's strong, caring, but smart," said Seattle Central

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student Jonathan Yao. They need to know when to be aggressive or hold back. Personally, I think Seattle Central needs tighter security and better resources for international students.+

The chancellor is the chief executive for the Seattle Colleges System. The position is responsible for multiple, district-wide administrative services, such as education, safety, workforce environment, business and finance, and web operations. It also has responsibility as the district's representative to other local and national organizations.

The Seattle Colleges District is the largest college district in Washington state. The district consists of North Seattle College, Seattle Central College, South Seattle College, Seattle Vocational Institute, and four specialty centers. Asian and Pacific Islanders consists of about 20 percent of the student body, and Black students are about 15 percent among the district's student population.

The chancellor finalists are going to participate in open forums held at North Seattle College, Seattle Central College, South Seattle College, and Arthur Siegal Administrative Center in the coming weeks.

They then have interviews with the board of trustees. The trustees are going to evaluate the candidates based on the forums and interviews. (end)

**Emiri Aoki can be reached at [info@nwasianweekly.com](mailto:info@nwasianweekly.com).**

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