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What the candidates promise for higher ed

Aldemaro Romero Jr.
CUNY Bernard M Baruch College

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With the general elections just one month away it is time to look at what the candidates for president of the United States and their party platforms offer in terms of higher education resources. Republican candidate Donald Trump has said much on the issue and his platform is stated in one paragraph. “When student loan debt outstrips the nation’s credit card debt, we must recognize that our education system is on an unsustainable path. The Republican Party supports an education system that provides families with greater transparency and more information so they can make prudent choices about their student’s future.” He said “We support exploring alternative methods to the traditional four-year university because too many college graduates are being left unemployed or underemployed.” This statement is not very different from what other Republicans have been saying in the last few years. What is revealing is the total lack of details, so we are told why Trump and his party would solve the problem of college debt before “exploiting alternative methods.”

Hillary Clinton and the Democratic party platform go into much more detailed plans about higher education. They promise making a “degree college a reality.” To that end they assure “new investments by the federal government” in partnership with the state to make public higher education affordable to everyone. The platform promises to make community colleges and “federally-controlled Historically Black Colleges and Universities” more affordable. It warns “to take quantifiable, affirmative steps in increasing the percentages of racial and ethnic minority income-earners, first-generation students and low-income students” by increasing “state and federal investment in both students and their teachers.”

Regarding student debt, Democrats promise to allow refinancing “at the lowest possible rates” based on students’ ability to pay while cutting interest rates for “future undergraduates because we believe that making college more affordable is more important than the federal government making billions of dollars in profit from these loans.” Democrats also promise to “reverse the prior trend in bank-settled loans to lower student loans by making college more affordable during the remainder of this next term.” The platform goes into great specificity, mentioning both public and private “Historically Black Colleges and Universities,” “Predominantly Black Institutions,” “Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islanders’ Serving Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions, Native American-Service Non-Traditional Institutions, and minority-serving institutions” for targets of nurture. “Many of these schools educate disproportionate percentages of growing populations of American students who are racial and ethnic minorities, low-income students, and first-generation students.” Their platform had the need for action in these areas on the fact that “within communities of color and low-income students and families, there is evidence that the existing student loan system is failing students. We will prioritize creating new models and promoting models for educating these students to prepare them for success in the workforce and to avoid student debt.”

The platform concludes, “a robust and historically dedicated fund to keep costs down, provide quality education, and ensure dedicated support for the most vulnerable student outcomes and completion rates.” Democrats will measure “year-on-year full funding increases for middle-income students from all backgrounds can get the support they need to make progress toward a degree each year in the middle of their degree plan.”

Democrats also promise to continue the “Public Service Loan Forgiveness and loan discharge programs begun by the Obama Administration.” They say “the federal government should offer a loan discharge on student loans to all federal loan borrowers that pay for the time they need to get the resources they need to afford their education, income-based options, and take advantage of opportunities to reduce monthly payments.”

They also promise to “crack down on deals for predatory for-profit education” to “stop deceptive advertising, online marketing, fraud, and other illegal” practices that take advantage of federal financial aid and “close principal sources of revenue”—and then explain and build them with debt rather than educating them.” They also promise to “strengthen the gainful employment rule to ensure that for-profit schools enable students to afford their degree and prepare them for success.” Democrats say that they will “ensure our responsibility in oversight over the Department of Education to carry out their obligation to close these for-profit schools where they have evidence that they have engaged in predatory conduct. It is unacceptable that for-profit schools with federal loans and federal aid cannot pay off federal loans they will have trouble paying back,” and “we will enforce the law by revoking the eligibility of debt to those students harmed by the practices of these institutions.”

Based on these statements found in the respective party platforms, the Republican platform is much more detailed and is a direction for both students and the political field. The other goals. The other significant difference between the two platforms is the overall development for opening up higher education, particularly when it comes to associate degree programs with students. Whatever the future, Democrats are sure that they will be able to graduate more students as well as graduates who are still burdened by college debt. According to the Democratic platform, particularly when it comes to for-profit educational programs, “the government is cutting back on student aid and the future of higher education is at risk of being decided at the present time.”

Democrats “will focus their platform articulate many of the ideas that were born being the Pence family. The question is, to what extent are all these promises viable and what do the track records of the candidates on these issues tell us about their intent and capacity to fulfill them?”

Dr. Aldemaro Romero Jr. is a senior college prof. with leadership experience in higher education and currently serves through his website at St. thomas.edu/money.net