

Office: Controller

Candidate: Ellen Spiegel

Party: Democratic

Campaign website: www.EllenSpiegel.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?

Spiegel: Nevada should continue to invest in programs that help students pay for higher education, including use of dual programs that enable students to earn credits towards a higher education degree while they are in high school. Additionally, there should be more efforts to build NSHE's endowment fund so that in the future, there are monies to supplement state budget expenditures.

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?

Spiegel: In addition to addressing stated reasons underlying vacancies, Nevada should capitalize on our competitive advantages when recruiting faculty and staff from out of state higher education institutions. For example, several states are reducing academic freedom and tenure within their public colleges and universities, while Nevada offers academic freedom and tenure-track opportunities.

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

Spiegel: 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.)

Spiegel: Yes

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

Spiegel: While the Controller's office does not set policy or have a direct relationship with higher education, the office does manage the state vendor database, pay debts incurred by the state and collect monies owed to the state, all of which could affect higher education's ability to hire and retain quality vendors and other partners.

One of my goals for the Controller's office is to increase collections of the millions of dollars of debts that are written off every year, which would give the state more money for priorities, such as higher education.

Additionally, the Controller is a member of the NDOT board, and activities by that board could impact faculty, staff, and student abilities to travel to Nevada's institutions of higher education.

Submitted 8/14/2022