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# UT alumna Randi Shade kicks off council campaign

**By: Anita Avram**

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City councilwoman Jennifer Kim's January airport controversy snaked into a Tuesday night speech by the woman challenging her in the May elections.

Kim, a Texas A&M graduate, will square off against former UT student body president Randi Shade in a heated race for City Council Place 3.

Critics said Kim tried to use her status as a council member to bypass the security line at the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport.

Shade said in her campaign kickoff event Tuesday that she would be "happy to wait in line at the airport with all the rest of you."

"The truth is, the incident at the airport revealed to me ... that the incumbent sees serving on the council as a privilege that entitles you to special treatment," Shade said. "I don't see things that way."

Kim said in an e-mail that she was asking for clarification about airport policy when the story took on a life of its own. She said a city memo led her to believe council members did not have to wait in the airport lobby to greet special guests. She was meeting representatives from the Ford Foundation, she said.

"Unfortunately, there is still a misperception of what I was asking for, simply a clarification of the policy. Again, I never wanted any special treatment," she said.

Shade said she wants to be more accessible, attentive and accountable to the public.

She commenced her campaign Tuesday at Nuevo Leon Mexican Restaurant on East Sixth Street, raising more than \$10,000 and talking to more than 100 supporters, said Mark Nathan, a political consultant working on her campaign.

Shade is more focused on talking about why is she running against the incumbent than her position on most local issues, Nathan said.

"This is a big step to run for city council and to challenge an incumbent," Shade. "But I guess I just felt like we could do better."

Her top priorities are transportation, the environment, managing Austin's growth, achieving a strong economy and working on providing basic services for Austin, Shade said. She helped launch the Austin Clean Energy Initiative, a group of professionals who promote clean energy development in Austin.

"I love this city and I wouldn't live anywhere else," Shade said. "I'm committed to making it the best it can be."

Shade, an 18-year Austin resident, received a Plan II Honors Bachelor of Arts degree from UT and an MBA from Harvard Business School.

"The experience that I gained from being a leader on campus at UT is incredibly applicable to what I'm embarking on now," she said.

The student population and its concerns during her time here, she said, are as diverse as the challenges she is facing today.

Government and Plan I senior Marcus Cenicerros, founder of Randi Shade's Facebook group, said her undergraduate experience and student leadership position at UT is one of her most attractive features.

He met Shade at various

Student Government events through his previous post as vice president and said she has kept in touch with students since she has graduated.

"I think that she has a really good sense of what students who are living here in Austin need from the city council, and being a student, that's really important to me," Cenicerros said.

Shade cited affordable housing, the infrastructure, taxes and construction as top concerns for UT and Austin in general.

Regarding student housing, she said the problem wasn't just with apartments but also with institutions. Shade pointed to current tax bills that are making it difficult for fraternities to maintain their space.

"One of the biggest challenges we are facing is how to manage our growth while maintaining a community that's affordable and quality of life that we want to maintain," she said.

Shade said that while she believes existing roads should not be tolled, she does not oppose toll roads as a transportation method.

There are some instances where a toll road would be necessary when there is no other way to fund construction, Shade said. She added that there are many components of transportation that have to be looked at, such as the buses and bike lanes.

Kim, who opposes toll roads, said she is centering her efforts on being a council member.

"This is a very busy time for the city and that is where my attention is," Kim said. "As the campaigns kick off, I look forward to discussing my work on affordable housing for families and children and for small businesses."

Shade founded CharityGift, a nonprofit Internet charity in 1999. The company is still operating today.

She was the founding executive director of the Texas Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service. Shade worked for two governors and served on the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce and Central Texas Better Business Bureau boards.

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