

In April 2013, Pima Community College (PCC) was notified that they were placed on probation by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). This sparked a crisis throughout the college. In addition to the Chancellor and a number of senior leadership leaving because of a number of questionable circumstances that stemmed during their time at PCC, the college was in huge trouble. Their accreditation was on the chopping block and could result in PCC no longer being able to offer federal financial aid, students' credits not transferring to other colleges, and a huge threat to their reputation.

Some of the short-term actions that need to be taken by the next Chancellor and senior leadership is to make some immediate changes to their processes and policies. First, their admission policies need to be changed so that they are not admitting students who are not prepared for college level work. This can be done by evaluating the current process and making the admission criteria stricter and similar to what other community colleges are doing for their admission criteria.

I would also recommend that they immediately update their personnel policies, especially those related to sexual harassment and place a 'no exceptions' rule to these policies where if any of these regulations are broken, the employee (no matter how high up they are) would be fired. I believe this would set an example for others at the college. Personally, I don't think this should ever be an issue at a college and I'm very surprised that PCC experienced all of these issues. From my experience, only for-profit colleges usually experience these kinds of issues with the threat to their accreditation.

Based on Northouse (7th Ed.), I believe the college should exercise both transformational leadership and authentic leadership approaches.

The transformational leadership approach would allow the employees to feel empowered again because their leadership would be in full-support of brining the college back to an acceptable place where PCC's probationary period could end. This is a process that transforms people because it's "concerned with emotions, values, ethics, and standards, and long term-goals" (Northouse, 2015, pg. 161). This approach is known to work because it looks at the needs and motives of employees and treating them right. In addition, this approach allows the leader to engage "with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower". This

would be very helpful because the employees need to come together to get back on their feet and make things work so that the college can be successful in the future.

The authentic leadership approach would help the employees trust their new leadership because this approach is all about determining if the leadership is genuine. Northouse stated it perfectly that “people feel apprehensive and insecure about what is going on around them, and as a result, they long for a bona fide leadership they can trust and for leaders who are honest and good” (Northouse, 2015, pg. 194). This is exactly what the employees at PCC feel, so it’s important that the new leadership express that they are genuine and are motivated to bring PCC back on its feet. The way the new leadership can do this is by expressing that 1) they understand PCC’s purpose, 2) they have strong values about the right thing to do, 3) they establish trusting relationships with the employees and the students, 4) they demonstrate self-discipline and act on their values, and 5) they show that they are passionate about their mission.

I believe if the new leadership of PCC take exercise these leadership approaches and implement those short-term changes, they can be back into good standing with the HLC. It’s just a matter of being real about what needs to change, taking action, and showing others around you that you care and are serious about making a positive change to the college.

Reference:

(7th ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Leadership: Theory and Practice Northouse, P. G. (2015).