

Collegiality and Integrity Steering Committee's Report



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COLLEGIALITY AND INTEGRITY IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

BACKGROUND:

In the January 17, 2003 report from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, it was recommended that Pasadena City College, "provide evidence that all campus constituents are working to restore collegiality and integrity in their relationships." To explore the issues surrounding collegiality and integrity, the Institutional Planning and Research Office conducted focus groups and one-to-one interviews with various campus constituents. An individual report was written for each focus/interview group. Each constituent group then validated their report. Based upon the individual group reports, a college-wide summary report was written. The summary report identified seven common themes concerning collegiality and integrity. The themes were: environment at the college, communication, input into decision-making, fairness and respect, unions and collective bargaining, receptiveness of the environment and the management style of the college leadership. Possible responses to the identified concerns were also presented in the report. See Appendix 1 for descriptions of how each theme manifests itself at the college.

In June 2004 a consultant facilitated a retreat. The retreat had three purposes:

(1) To review the college-wide summary report and individual constituent group reports and either validate as adequately and fairly representing the aggregate perceptions of the college or modify the report as needed, (2) come to some common understanding of what collegiality and integrity mean to PCC and, (3) identify a process the college can use to begin addressing the issues in the college-wide summary report. Invited to the retreat were the members of the college's Strategic Planning Team, a shared governance group and the presidents of each union, the Management Association, and the Board of Trustees.

At the retreat, it was concluded that:

1. The college-wide summary report accurately reflected what people would say about collegiality and integrity given the questions asked of each group.
2. The college-wide themes would likely stay the same even if everyone across campus were interviewed for the report.
3. People should be given another opportunity to express their opinion. Therefore, it was directed that a one-page summary be prepared (see Appendix 1) and sent to all employees asking for their comment. The one-page summary was to be sent out twice, first in the summer and then again in the fall 2004 term. (These distributions were done as directed. Comments were received from seven individuals).
4. A steering committee was created. The committee was charged with the task of developing recommendations to improve collegiality and integrity at the college.

In October 2004 the steering committee began to meet weekly. The seven themes, described in the one-page summary that was distributed college-wide in both the summer and fall of 2004, were used to structure the discussions of the steering

committee. Each college-wide theme was sequentially discussed with the purpose being to develop a list of possible ways to address the themes (see Appendix 2). This brainstorming approach developed a list of 43 ideas to improve collegiality and integrity. There was considerable overlap or similarity among many of the ideas. The committee then reviewed and discussed the list of 43 ideas with the goal of combining similar concepts and eliminating redundancy. The result was a list of twelve recommendations. The recommendations that were developed fell into two broad categories: 1. communication/information exchange and 2. Training.

The following are the results of the steering committee's deliberations. Each section is organized into two parts, first some general comments or observations and then specific recommendations. The item number in parentheses following a sentence refers to the reference number assigned to each item in the Committee's Comments on Each Collegiality and Integrity Theme (see Appendix 2).

Communication and Information Exchange

General Comments:

Appropriate information and clear communication are vital to the college. When information is lacking, rumors, imagination and suspicion fill the void. Good communication can dispel rumors; it can provide the reasons behind a decision or lay out the pros and cons that lead to a decision (Item #2). Clear communication can help managers and staff understand each other (Item #9). When managers and employees do not communicate with each other clearly and politely, adversarial relationships can develop which will harm collegiality. However, no matter how good the communication becomes, PCC must accept that there will always be some people who never will "buy-in" or accept a decision, even after everyone has had input and a decision has been made fairly.

The topic of the collective bargaining process came up many times during the committee's deliberations. The process is perceived as not working at PCC. This is documented by the fact that negotiations have repeatedly gone to impasse. It was generally agreed that much of the perceptions about collegiality and integrity at the college comes from the collective bargaining process and the hostility the process generates. Improving the communication that occurs around the collective bargaining table will improve the perceptions of collegiality and integrity at the college.

Recommendations:

- 1) Create opportunities for face-to-face communication. These could include town hall meetings and/or round table discussions at which college administrators and senate presidents could brief the attendees on issues of the day. While some departments are already holding periodic meetings to discuss current issues of concern, all offices should be encouraged to hold such meetings (Item #1). If they were still in existence, institutional flex days could have been used to hold the town hall meetings or round table discussions (Item #2,3,6,36). These types of meetings would be useful when an important decision is under consideration or has been made. If a meeting does focus on a decision, then pro and con information about the issue should be distributed before the meeting.

- 2) Written communications on a regular basis from the president on campus-wide issues or the “hot topics” of the day would be informative and dispel rumors (Items #5,2).
- 3) Department/Division meetings should be used to communicate about college/division/department/office issues. These meetings should include classified and/or adjunct employees (Item #1).
- 4) Managers who use an “open door policy” i.e., staff members can talk to them at any time, promotes communication. When a manager and staff listen to each other with open minds, it can help build mutual respect. It does not mean the manager must do what employees say, only that managers should keep employees informed on issues and listen to their comments (Item #17).
- 5) When a new procedure or a significant change is being considered, the individuals affected by the decision should be involved in the decision. At a minimum, affected individuals should be informed of the decision (Items #17, 40).
- 6) Managers need to anticipate who or which offices maybe impacted by changes in another office. A notebook of which offices are responsible for what functions could facilitate this. But, ultimately the manager in the office that is making a change must take the initiative to notify the office in which an impact is anticipated.
- 7) In terms of the negotiation process, both sides of the table need to explain to each other what authority they have and don't have. (Item #23) Both sides need to come to an agreement on what a “tentative agreement” is and what it is not (Item #26). Negotiations need to be done in a timely manner (Item #24). The entire process needs to become less contentious (Items #20, 22). An outside consultant, who is familiar with collective bargaining and colleges could examine the process at PCC and make recommendations for its improvement.

Training

General Comments:

Collegiality and integrity will both be improved if everyone follows established policies and procedures. When procedures are not understood by all employees or are not consistently followed by all offices across the college, it leads to feelings of not being treated fairly and a perception of reduced integrity and collegiality. Therefore, if policies and procedures are uniformly followed it will help improve collegiality and integrity at all levels of the college. Too often an individual with an issue skips procedural steps to get an expeditious resolution of the issue or because no response was received at the appropriate lower level step. Conversely, school officials, in their desire to help solve an issue become involved prematurely before the appropriate lower level procedures are followed. When the established procedures are not followed, the individuals in the skipped steps seem to feel that the integrity of the system is harmed and feelings of collegiality are diminished.

Perceptions of not being included in the decision making process sometimes come from disagreements about whether a topic is within the jurisdiction of a shared governance group. Similarly, it is not always agreed when something falls within the jurisdiction of collective bargaining and when it does not. These jurisdictional issues should be resolved and then relayed to college employees (Items #10, 11)

Employee evaluations are another important area that, if not consistently and properly done, can detract from the collegiality and integrity of the college. Keeping incompetent employees rather than letting them go during their probationary period harms collegiality and faith in the integrity of the system (Item #12). Keeping a balance between helping employees develop and improve while getting rid of poor employees requires that employee evaluations be done regularly and skillfully (Item #13).

Proper training of all employees should help everyone perform their jobs at the highest levels of competence. Therefore, all employees, especially managers, need training in their role and responsibilities.

Recommendations:

- 8) All new employees, especially managers, should receive training/orientation to PCC that expands what is already being done. One possible way to do this would be to assign a mentor to each new employee. While this has a personal touch, mentor training can be inconsistent in quality and is limited to the knowledge of the mentor. More structured training would provide more consistent content. Formal training could occur as part of flex day sessions (if flex days still existed) or a semester-long series of training sessions similar to those provided to new faculty (Items 33,34 and 35). Possible training topics could include:
 - i) College policies and procedures and how to find an existing policy or procedure
 - ii) For managers, training on:
 - (1) Employee evaluation procedures. Specifically, the importance of evaluating new employees during the probationary period and how to do a good evaluation (Item #14).
 - (2) The roles and responsibilities of being a manager at PCC (Items #14 and 31).
 - (3) How to acknowledge employees who do a good job and “go the extra mile”.
 - iii) Due process procedures at PCC.
 - iv) The hiring process and its confidentiality as practiced at PCC (Items #38).
 - v) Training for performance consistency of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Representatives along with a clear delineation of duties between the EEO and hiring Committee Chair.
 - vi) Anticipating who or which offices maybe impacted by changes in another office. A notebook of which offices are responsible for what functions could facilitate this.
 - vii) Collective bargaining and negotiation procedures. Both sides of the negotiating table need to understand each other’s perceptions and expectations for the process (Item #23).
- 9) A primer on what shared governance is needs to be created and distributed on the campus. It should specify who is involved in shared governance, who is not involved, examples of the topics that are included in the domain of shared governance and what topics are not included or are the domain of a union.
- 10) Make the college’s policies and procedures accessible to all. This could be done by:
 - i) Making the online policies searchable to make policies and procedures easier to find.

- ii) Because not all employees have available computer access, a hard copy index of policies and procedures with a brief summary of the subject matter could be distributed.
- 11) Related to the item above, all employees need to follow established procedures and not attempt to skip steps. If a higher manager feels a procedural step has been skipped, the manager should not get involved but instead refer the individual to the appropriate step (Items #28, 29 and 32).
 - 12) The Board of Trustees is valued in their role of providing a broad visionary perspective that focuses on college policies and strategic directions. However, the Board members need to avoid becoming “tactical” and focused on procedures which is perceived as micromanaging and which undercuts the integrity of the college managers and operations (Item #37).

SUMMARY:

The Steering Committee worked for five months to create a list of recommendations, some of which are easier to do than others. It is not necessary to implement all of the recommendations; however, the more that are acted upon the more impact there can be on collegiality and integrity issues.

Perhaps the major challenge to the college is that collegiality and integrity are nebulous issues based upon perceptions, attitudes and behaviors. Behaviors can be changed most quickly; however, it will take a longer time for attitudes and perceptions to change. Many of the perceptions and attitudes about collegiality and integrity have their origins 5, 10 or even 20 years in the past. As proof of this, one of the commonly mentioned complaints in the college-wide focus groups was the resentment created by the lay-off notices issued in the mid-1980's. Therefore, people should not expect to see results immediately because the results will be seen only as rapidly as people change their own behaviors, attitudes and perceptions.

Appendix 1

STATUS REPORT

In response to the January, 2003 Accreditation Team's recommendation that, "the college provides evidence that all campus constituents are working to restore collegiality and integrity in their relationships," the Institutional Planning and Research Office (IPRO) developed a research project to enable the college to have a better understanding of the issues surrounding collegiality and integrity and to provide a starting point for a discussion as to how to restore collegiality and integrity at PCC. The project involved conducting focus groups and one-to-one interviews with seventeen campus constituent groups. The constituent groups consisted of: randomly selected groups of faculty, classified staff, managers or students; employee/student representative groups (Academic and Classified Senates, CTA, CSEA-facilities, CSEA-POA, ISSU, Management Association, Associated Students Board), plus the College Executive Committee, and the Board of Trustees. In total 120 individuals were involved in the focus groups and interviews. For purposes of a college-wide analysis, all like groups were collapsed together to form five groups, one each representing: faculty, classified, students, managers and the Board of Trustees.

Results

Participants were asked if they agreed that collegiality and integrity are problems at PCC? The project found that overall nearly 75% agreed or strongly agreed. Secondly, participants were asked what the underlying issues are that affect collegiality and integrity. Seven common themes emerged. To be identified as a common theme, at least three of the five groups had to discuss the issue. A list of the common themes and examples of how each theme manifested itself are presented in Table 1 below. Lastly, participants were asked to identify possible solutions that would help restore collegiality and integrity. The solutions were found to cluster into five themes: respect and acknowledgement of individuals, improve relations between unions and the Administration, improve communication, increase social activities, and listen to employees and get their input on decisions.

Table 1: Common Themes: Issues Affecting Collegiality and Integrity

| THEMES | MANIFESTATIONS OF THE THEMES |
|--|--|
| Environment at the college | All five groups expressed that PCC is a great place to work or study. Employees said collegiality and friendliness are abundant among college offices, lower and middle managers, among classified and faculty. However, collegiality is perceived as breaking down across the hierarchical structure of the college. All employees reported that they enjoy working with students, and students mostly reported positive experiences with faculty and staff. |
| Communication | Four groups reported that communication should be improved. Some groups reported that they do not know what is happening on campus. Many believe that information is not always passed down from higher Administration to middle managers and to the rest of the employees, especially in a timely fashion. Groups reported that communication between departments, within constituent groups, and from committees are also problematic. |
| Input into decision-making | While some people view shared governance as working well, others view it as not working because it does not influence decisions as much as they would like. Students, faculty, classified staff, and managers feel that they do not have sufficient input into the decisions made. |
| Fairness and Respect | Employees and students expressed that there is a lack of respect and fairness for individuals, especially between levels of the hierarchical structure of the college. Students reported a lack of respect between them and faculty. Employees reported that they are not sufficiently respected or acknowledged by their supervisor or manager for their contributions and are often not sufficiently supported in their jobs. People also perceive that there is a double-standard with some individuals not being held accountable for their actions and/or poor performance. |
| Unions and Collective Bargaining | All groups, except students, expressed the view that collective bargaining issues are the source for many of the collegiality and integrity problems on campus. Opinions were expressed that unions are uncooperative, not trustworthy, motivated by self-interest, and not representative of their constituent groups. Unions expressed concerns that management is anti-union and does not keep commitments. |
| Receptiveness of the environment | Employees at all levels express a fear of retaliation for speaking their mind or "making waves." Employees expressed concerns that they would be given undesirable assignments or work shifts, not be promoted, not receive tenure or lose their jobs if they speak up or contradict someone with authority or influence. |
| Management style of the college leadership | Many groups reported that there is too much micro-managing by both the President and the Board of Trustees. Some perceive a top-down management style at the college. Some indicated they would like to see the President be more visible on campus. It was reported that the Board of Trustees displays a lack of trust toward the Administration. Despite the complaints, many groups view the leadership as committed to PCC. |

On June 15, 2004, a retreat was held by the Strategic Planning Team (a shared governance group) that had been augmented by the Presidents of the collective bargaining units. Facilitated by external consultants, the group reviewed the college-wide summary report of this research project and began developing a process to work on restoring collegiality and integrity on campus. The complete summary report is available in the IPRO. **If you have any comments on issues you believe the project did not capture, please write them on the back of this page and send them to the Institutional Planning and Research Office in C-241.**

Appendix 2

Summary of the Committee's Comments on Each Collegiality and Integrity Theme

| Theme | Comments | Meeting Date | Reference Number |
|----------------------------|---|--------------|------------------|
| Communication | Departments could have a lunch meeting to encourage communication periodically (perhaps once a month). | 11/1/04 | 1 |
| | We could have a newsletter that focuses on how decisions are made that presents the pros and cons of major decisions | 11/1/04 | 2 |
| | We could have an open forum on campus, perhaps a lunchtime meeting when employees can ask questions of the top administrators. Managers should encourage their employees to attend. | 11/1/04 | 3 |
| | We should create activities that require mandatory attendance at these events have "ice breakers" or other techniques to force people to get to know someone from another college area or group. Managers should encourage employees to attend social events on campus | 11/1/04 | 4 |
| | The President of the college should do monthly one-page letters to all employees informing everyone of current issues and to dispel rumors | 11/1/04 | 5 |
| | Town hall meetings or Round Table discussions should be held to explore issues and collect input before a decision is made. Prior to a meeting that is intended to collect input into a decision to be made, a flier listing the pros and cons of the issue should be circulated. If the issue concerns "working conditions" then the unions' views should be included on the pros and cons flier. Town hall meetings could be scheduled one per semester to discuss what ever the hot topics are at the time | 11/1/04 | 6 |
| | It seems that adversarial relationships develop between individuals. When these are between a supervisor and employee it contributes to perceptions of intimidation and fears of retribution. The adversarial relationships often develop because people do not communicate with each other clearly and politely. In addition, people don't listen to each other. | 11/29/04 | 7 |
| | We could think about what's best for PCC and our students. | 11/1/04 | 8 |
| | We need to encourage management understanding staff and staff understanding management | 11/1/04 | 9 |
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| Input into decision-making | Perceptions of not being included in the decision-making process sometime come from disagreement on when a topic is within a group's jurisdiction. For example, the Academic Senate views the Student Benefit Index as an academic issue within their jurisdiction while administration views it as a scheduling tool within their jurisdiction. Similarly, it is not always agreed when something falls within the jurisdiction of collective bargaining and when it does not. | 11/8/04 | 10 |
| | The college needs to publish a description of what shared governance is, who is involved in it, who is not involved, what topics are included in the domain of share governance and what topics are not included. Generally, a primer on what shared governance is needs to be created and circulated on campus | 11/8/04 | 11 |
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| Fairness and respect | The fact that some incompetent people are allowed to remain in their jobs is perceived by the classified staff as not fair. It affects morale and leads to questions about the manager's integrity. The evaluation process | 11/15/04 | 12 |

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| | is so cumbersome that some managers avoid doing evaluations Managers are not doing their jobs when an incompetent person is allowed to pass probation. Therefore, it is recommended that Managers need to focus on doing evaluations at 3, 6, and 9 months intervals. Especially the 3 and 6 months. If the manager waits until the 9th and 12th months to do an employee evaluation, it is too late | | |
| | We need a balance between helping an employee develop and improve, versus getting rid of poor employees who are not performing, especially during the probationary period | 11/15/04 | 13 |
| | Managers need to be trained, when they are hired, on their roles and responsibilities and how to do employee evaluations. There could be a mentoring process to train managers. Then there is a need for built in accountability; part of a manager's evaluation should include how up-to-date they are on their employee's evaluations | 11/15/04 | 14 |
| | There could be another form used for problem employees. Similar to faculty evaluation forms, forms could contain check boxes for "retain," "do not retain," or "needs improvement." However, you wouldn't go from "needs improvement" to "do not retain" without documentation | 11/15/04 | 15 |
| | Manager evaluations need to be improved so that employees get some feedback, especially if a behavioral change is suggested | 11/15/04 | 16 |
| | Managers need to seek input from employees before a decision is made and employees should support the decision once it has been made. How do we get managers to talk to their employees first | 11/15/04 | 17 |
| | The proposal for a career ladder in facilities may not work because of the legal code. Insiders can't move to an assistant journeyman or journeyman position. Maybe some kind of partnership could be arranged for the facilities problem with a career ladder. | 11/15/04 | 18 |
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| Unions and collective bargaining | Explain to the opposing negotiations team what authority the district's team has and does not have | 10/18/04 | 19 |
| | Make the collective bargaining process less contentious | 10/18/04 | 20 |
| | Work out a part-time faculty augmentation payment process that would pay in a consistent and timely manner | 10/18/04 | 21 |
| | We should change the us against them mentality between the unions and management | 11/1/04 | 22 |
| | The District's bargaining team should receive training in the bargaining process and the teams on both sides of the table should teach each other the process they each follow in the bargaining process. | 11/22/04 | 23 |
| | All parties need to negotiate in a timely manner. Negotiating team members should be required to show up for all meetings. Negotiating for years on the same item needs to stop. If negotiations are going nowhere, an impasse should be declared sooner. | 11/22/04 | 24 |
| | The District and unions should be up-front with what they want and what they can give. Each team needs to have parameters within which they can negotiate | 11/22/04 | 25 |
| | The District and unions need to come to a clear understanding of exactly what a "tentative agreement" is. | 11/22/04 | 26 |
| | In response to misinformation put out by the union, the President should have a newsletter that goes out on a regular basis to give factual updates. | 11/22/04 | 27 |
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| Receptiveness of the environment | PCC tends to be managed by "personalities" rather than by rules. People need to follow procedures. Individuals with a complaint should not be | 11/29/04 | 28 |

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| | allowed to skip a procedure level or step. For example, a student or faculty with a complaint should not be allowed to skip the first level manager and go straight to a Vice-President. If this happens the person should be referred back to the step that was skipped. | | |
| | Whenever an adversarial or potential conflict situation arises, due process steps must be carefully followed. Some of the conflicts and deterioration of collegiality and integrity occur because appropriate due process steps are not followed. Training needs to be provided on the correct due process steps for various situations | 11/29/04 | 29 |
| | A union or senate representative may need to speak to a Vice President if there is a report of intimidation or retaliation by a manager against a constituent. (Question: How does this second suggestion fit with the first suggestion of following due process?) | 11/29/04 | 30 |
| | New managers should not implement changes immediately, but should first learn the context at PCC. The employees affected should be aware that a change is coming and, within reason, understand why the change is being implemented. | 11/29/04 | 31 |
| | Need to communicate to everyone about the negative impact and micromanaging effect when procedural steps are skipped. There should be training for new managers. (New faculty and new classified already have one). | 11/29/04 | 32 |
| | In the fall, start a new employee orientation that combines together faculty, classified, managers for general college issues. Then separate sessions for unit specific topics. (Riverside had new employees meet weekly for a semester) | 11/29/04 | 33 |
| | PCC needs an orientation for all employees, which cover rules and regulations. We could set aside a full day of orientation with half of the day designated for everybody and then the other half of the day designated for classified sessions and faculty sessions. This fall would be a good time to do this kind of orientation | 12/06/04 | 34 |
| | Both the faculty and classified staff have handbooks. We need to do a better job of disseminating these handbooks to employees. Perhaps the notebooks could be put into one binder. | 12/06/04 | 35 |
| | We need to have an institutional flex day again. This is a time when everyone can come together. It should be one of the days leading up to the start of the fall semester. It could even be a half-day of the entire college and the other half meet within our areas. Round Table discussions that have a specific theme, such as collegiality or communication, could be for part of the day. | 12/06/04 | 36 |
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| Management style of the college leadership | The Board of Trustees was micromanaging the hiring process. They intervened in the case of two managers and a faculty member being hired. However, lately they seem to have started changing some of their micromanaging behavior. | 12/06/04 | 37 |
| | The confidentiality of the hiring process should be followed | 12/06/04 | 38 |
| | Recognize individuals when they "go the extra mile" | 10/18/04 | 39 |
| | When new procedures are being considered individuals who will be affected by the procedures should be included in or at least informed of the discussion | 11/1/04 | 40 |
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| Environment at the college | Most people understand that the college has limited resources and that you can't use one-time money for raises. There is some sympathy for the District when dealing with the State budget. | 11/22/04 | 41 |
| | Shared governance has helped to change some of the perception problems between faculty and classified employees | 11/15/04 | 42 |
| | Actual retaliation is more prevalent in the business world and other colleges than at PCC. | 11/29/04 | 43 |

