WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW ABOUT PCC’S CULTURE(S)?

2015 In-service Breakout Session

Date: September 14, 2015
Facilitators: Traci Fordham and Kim Baker-Flowers
Scribe: Abe Proctor

How would you describe PCC’s culture or cultures?

- Complicated
- Stratified
- Siloed
- Holistic
- Collaborative decision-making
- Difficult to navigate
- Primed for thoughtful change
- Diverse and inclusive (students more so, faculty/staff less so)
- Student-focused
- Genuinely focused on students with developmental needs
- Unique campuses
- Decision-making is too “place-based”
- Faculty are collaborative by necessity
- Leadership changes frequently
- Increasing numbers of students with challenges; PCC is able to help them thrive
- Community colleges are increasingly a part of the social safety net; this reflects a national trend.
- It’s all who you know; very relational culture
- Warm, welcoming atmosphere
- Strong shared sense of purpose, but siloed culture impedes this
- Part-time faculty are left behind
- Lack of professional pathways means people get pushed out
- Paradoxical and unpredictable
- Centralized decision-making hurts creativity; there is a loss of shared governance
- Lack of “joined-up” thinking
- Institutional inertia leads to complacency, resignation, paralysis, lack of accountability
- Bureaucracy erodes goodwill, creativity
- Unspoken/unwritten rules are treated as policy; this leads to a culture of exclusion.
- It’s easier to ask forgiveness than permission.
- Much warmer, more accepting than the private sector
- Embraces sustainability
- Process and procedure-heavy
What would you tell a future employee about working at PCC?

- It’s a nice place to work if you have a class to teach.
- The organization is dysfunctional as it stands.
- Much institutional knowledge is not written down or shared.
- Faculty dedication must be to teaching; in general, it’s dedication to students that unites.
- PCC is a great place to work if you like independence and autonomy.
- Own your job—don’t be afraid to ask questions.
- It’ll take a few years to learn how everything works.
- You have to be an explorer. The best lessons don’t come from one’s own office/dept. Talk to folks!
- There are many divides: full-time/part-time; academic/CTE; student affairs/instruction
- Have fun! Ask questions—you don’t get penalized for asking!
- You cannot get rich here.
- It’s a big institution, and requirements for advancement have become harder to reach over time.
- Academic elitism will not help you at PCC.

What if that future employee was the President of the College?

- Respect human capital!
- Listen! Be humble, take it all in.
- All jobs are student-focused—even those that don’t work directly with students
- Be passionate, work hard!
- Understand that everyone is under-staffed.
- Future culture is largely undefined. Leadership can shape culture.
- Remember that all we do is grounded in student success.
- Understand our students.
- Success is not always defined the same way.
- Have confidence in your people.
- We need to invest in the things we say we value, esp. diversity.
- We’re family! “You mess with one of us, you mess with all of us.”