

Executive Level Leadership Development Report

Executive Summary

Portland Community College

5/24/2013
Innovative Growth Solutions

Portland Community College Executive Level Leadership Development Executive Summary

Purpose

The Portland Community College (PCC) Board identified a need to plan for succession for executive level positions because of the potential for turnover in this key group and need for continuity in leadership. PCC engaged the services of an external consultant, Innovative Growth Solutions (IGS), and appointed a Steering Team of PCC leaders to define an executive level management assessment and development process to leverage existing leadership development programs and to strengthen professional development planning for potential executive level leaders.

Business Case for Succession Planning

Turnover rates at the CEO level – in both public and private sector organizations - are at a historic high as members of the baby boomer generation are now reaching retirement age. It is predicted that community colleges will lose over 75% of key leaders over the next decade (American Association of Community Colleges 2013). A shortage of qualified leaders, competition for talent, and barriers to advancement – such as rigid career ladders - make planning for leadership succession a priority for organizational sustainability and institutional effectiveness.

PCC's Approach

PCC's Steering Team (including representatives of Cabinet, Human Resources and Staff and Organizational Development) worked with the consultants to define the project approach:

Strategy

- Be strategic – Link the leadership development plan to the organization's strategic outlook.
- Define leadership competencies to bridge from the present realities to future possibilities.
- Honor the essence of the organization – Nurture development of key organizational values in future leaders.

Process

- Start with the top levels of the organization to address the greatest risk to leadership continuity.
- Determine core competencies needed to meet future challenges and possibilities.
- Research 'crucible experiences' of current executives – breakthrough experiences that resulted in significant leadership growth - and incorporate learning from these experiences to supplement the traditional approach of training and mentoring future leaders.
- Build the bench by developing a leadership pipeline of potential candidates.
- Identify and mitigate organizational barriers to learning, development and promotion.

Scope of Work

It is the intent of the College to conduct an initial small-scale pilot program focused on developmental planning targeted at *executive* level positions. Learning from this project may provide PCC with insight on potential developmental activities for other leadership positions in the future. An overview of the project schedule follows:

Phase One: Develop Program

Dec. 2012 - June 2013

- *Form PCC Steering Team to guide program*
- *Define competencies of executive level positions*
- *Conduct research of best practice in planning for succession*
- *Recommend program enhancements*
- *Communicate to Cabinet and provide status report to PCC Board*

Phase Two: Implement Program

June 2013 – Jan. 2014

To be determined based on phase one - may include:

- *Communicate to constituents*
- *Engage potential leaders in creating developmental plans*
- *Provide training and coaching for managers and potential leaders*
- *Identify gaps and recommend strategies*

Phase Three: Evaluate Program and Recommend Next Steps

Feb. – March 2014

Methodology

The consultants conducted research to identify best practice in community college leadership succession planning, interviewed current PCC executives to understand core leadership competencies, compared PCC's current developmental program against best practice and identified opportunities to leverage existing programs to support developmental planning. Following is a summary of findings and recommended next steps.

Best Practice in Community College Leadership Development – Findings

PCC has in place a fairly robust leadership development strategy, supported by a number of innovative, effective programs that model community college best practice. Following is a brief description of best practice compared to current PCC programs. A more thorough gap analysis is presented beginning on page 19 of the attached report.

- **Commitment from Board and executive leadership team.** The PCC Board has articulated support for executive level leadership development, and executives have demonstrated support by participating in and/or sponsoring PCC's leadership development programs.
- **Identify key positions that are critical to meet future need.** The Steering Team has identified 8 key executive positions that are critical to meet future need. (See page 6)

- **Identify leadership competencies.** PCC has adopted the AACCC core leadership competencies and executives have provided feedback to identify the most critical competencies.
- **Identify potential candidates – create individual developmental plans.** The Steering Team has identified approximately 20 ‘feeder positions’ of potential leadership candidates to participate in a small-scale pilot program to create individual development plans as a supplement to the management assessment process.
- **Create and implement leadership development programs.** PCC has in place an excellent array of leadership development programs that model best practice.
- **Create ‘applied leadership’ opportunities.** PCC offers applied leadership opportunities through a variety of resources, including The LEAD Academy, Leadership Internship, and PEAK programs. There may be future opportunities to leverage these programs further and to make a more conscious link to PCC’s strategic initiatives.
- **Assess effectiveness of leadership development programs.** Leadership development programs are regularly evaluated and adjusted based on feedback from participants and executives.

Perspectives of PCC Executives – Key Themes

The consultants interviewed PCC executives to gain their perspectives on executive level leadership development strategies needed for PCC. Following is a summary of common themes:

- **AACCC Core Competencies are a relevant description of competencies needed for executive level leaders at PCC.** Executives emphasized that Communication and Collaboration are the most important competencies and go hand-in-hand with Vision, Strategy and Advocacy.
- **Experience is the best teacher.** Consistent with findings of best practice research, executives confirmed that experience is the number one factor in development of leadership competencies.
- **‘Crucible’ experiences are key in developing leadership qualities.** Executives consistently provided examples of significant growth and development gained by either *responding to* or *seeking out* challenging experiences.

Conclusions

The need for strategic leadership development is paramount to ensure organizational sustainability and institutional effectiveness. Best practice research indicates that a successful formula for leadership development includes developmental planning, training, coaching/mentoring and experience gained through challenging assignments that develop leadership skills. PCC has in place a strong framework of leadership development programs and opportunities that model best practice. Given the potential for turnover in key leadership positions, PCC would benefit from enhancing its current programs by building the pipeline of potential candidates for top leadership positions. The following themes from the research should be considered in planning enhancements to PCC’s current programs.

- ***Continue to stress importance of leadership development from the top - link to strategic plan.*** Continue to advocate leadership development from the top and link to the strategic direction of the college. Engage executive leaders in fostering a ‘developmental mindset’ throughout the organization by creating a network of support for leadership development, which may include appropriate committee, project and interim assignments to provide cross functional development and/or coaching of potential candidates.
- ***Value and leverage the programs already in place.*** PCC has best practice features for a successful leadership development program already in place and functioning well. PCC would benefit from heightening the awareness of these programs.
- ***Emphasize individual drive as a key success factor.*** Continue to emphasize that leadership development is a partnership in which the individual provides the impetus and the organization guides and supports development.
- ***Have a reasonable tolerance for risk.*** Provide strategic opportunities for leaders to take on challenging assignments, with support from executive level leaders, to boost growth and development. Have a tolerance for calculated risk and continue to support potential leaders – even when everything doesn’t work out as planned.
- ***Encourage diversity in thought and clear the way for innovation.*** Continue to encourage staff to think creatively and bring their innovations to the table in support of strategic initiatives.

Recommended Next Steps

Given the potential for turnover at the top levels of the College, PCC will need to accelerate development of potential leaders to ‘build the bench’ of candidates prepared to meet the leadership challenges of the future. To this end, it is recommended that PCC supplement its solid foundation of current leadership development programs by offering developmental planning and coaching targeted for potential executive-level leaders. In addition, it will be important to engage the executive team in collectively leveraging the College’s leadership development programs and creating a network of support for leadership candidates across the District. The following next steps are recommended:

- ***Pilot developmental planning for leaders.*** Through implementation of a small-scale pilot program, create intentional developmental plans and provide coaching for potential executive-level leaders. The proposed program:
 - Creates a partnership in which executives coach and support leadership candidates identified for the pilot program in creating and implementing individualized developmental plans. The initial pilot group is proposed on page 6.
 - Engages executives in sponsoring the pilot program. It is proposed that executives work collectively to provide support for leadership candidates. This may involve supporting developmental goals and collaborating on appropriate developmental opportunities (such as committee, project and interim assignments) that may provide cross-functional experiences to develop connections and relationships across the District.
 - Develop a managerial skill set in coaching and developmental planning that can be applied in the future to support continued development of the leadership pipeline at all levels.

At the conclusion of the pilot program, participants will assess the results of the pilot and suggest appropriate next steps for PCC.

- **Leverage current leadership development programs.**
 - Executive leaders provide support, guidance and visibility for leadership development programs. Integrate leadership development with organizational strategy by linking applied learning projects (such as LEAD Capstone, leadership internship, and PEAK) to the College's strategic initiatives.
 - Expand support for conferences and other opportunities to develop networks, learn from best practice and influence the national education agenda.
 - Support participation in external executive development programs as appropriate for potential leaders who have availed themselves of PCC's developmental programs.

Future Considerations

The consultants also identified potential future considerations for further enhancement of PCC's leadership development programs. The following enhancements are not included in the scope of work for this project, but may be appropriate for consideration following completion of the initial recommendations.

- **Emphasize core leadership competencies in current in-house programs.** PCC's LEAD Academy is already framed by the AACCC core competencies listed in this report and confirmed by PCC's executives. Learning from interviews with executives can be incorporated into future offerings of the LEAD Academy and will provide valuable insights for participants.
- **Continue the learning.** Expand on currently offered leadership workshops to provide ongoing opportunities for leadership development.
- **Provide increased visibility for leadership development.** Engage executives in defining ways to raise the profile of PCC's leadership development programs and provide increased opportunity and visibility for leadership candidates as well.
- **Support HR in continuing to addressing the challenges identified** – classification, pay, interim assignments – and ensure that the perspectives of HR, Staff and Organizational Development, and Cabinet Executives are considered in making any revisions to organizational policy or practice.
- **Be strategic in making developmental and interim assignments** – Executives and HR work collaboratively to leverage developmental and interim assignments for greatest impact and success.

**Roster of Key Positions
Pilot Developmental Planning for Executive Level Leaders**

Selection Criteria:

The PCC Steering Team developed the following criteria to select positions to participate in a pilot program of developmental planning and coaching to build the pipeline of executive level leaders:

- Direct Report to Cabinet Level position.
- Oversees District-wide program with broad scope.
- Executive Level leadership is potentially in career path.

SUMMARY ROSTER OF KEY POSITIONS BY CLASSIFICATION 5-24-13					
<i>Tier 1</i>		<i>Tier 2</i>			
Classification - Executive		Classification (Non-Exec) - P		Classification - O	
Position	#	Position	#	Position	#
District President	1	Assoc. VP Int. Adv.	1	DOI Sylvania	1
District VP	1	Assoc. VP Finance	1	DOI RC (<i>interim</i>)	1
Acad/Student Affairs VP	1	Assoc. VP Technology	1	DOI Cascade	1
Admin Services VP	1			DOI SE	1
Campus Pres. Sylvania	1			DOS Sylvania	1
Campus Pres. SEC/ELC	1			DOS RC	1
Campus Pres. RC (<i>interim</i>)	1			DOS Cascade	1
Campus Pres. Cascade	1			DOS SE	1
				Dist. Acad. Affairs Dean	1
				Dist. Stud. Affairs Dean	1
				Dist. Libraries- Director	1
				Dist. Bond Program Dir.	1
				Dist. FMS Dir. (<i>interim</i>)	1
				Dist. HR Director	1
Subtotal	8	Subtotal	3	Subtotal	14
Total Tier 1 Positions = 8		Total Tier 2 Positions = 17			
Total Tiers 1 and 2					25
<i>Tier 3</i>					
Classification – N		Classification – M			
Position	#	Position	#		
Dir. Affirm. Action (<i>vacant</i>)	1	Dist. Grants Dir. (<i>vacant</i>)	1		
Dist. Inst/Effect. Director	1				
Dist. Aux. Services Director	1				
Subtotal	3	Subtotal	1		
Total Tier 3					4
Total All Positions					29

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