Welcome from the PCC Foundation

Thank you for attending the Chancellor’s Conversation with the Community. The PCC Foundation believes it is critical for PCC and its constituents to engage in a constructive dialogue that provides context and insight at this critical moment for the College.

Today’s event brings together a diverse mix of leaders representing business, government, education, and community groups. We are united in acknowledging the significant improvements that PCC has made in the past year, and are confident the College is on an upward trajectory that will result in better meeting the needs of our community.

I can attest to PCC’s power to change lives through education, through scholarships and through tuition reimbursements that have helped some two dozen employees at my firm advance their studies. The College has been a Pima County cornerstone for 45 years, helping our neighbors achieve their goals and creating a more stable, prosperous community. For our region to thrive, the College must remain strong.

Robert D. Ramirez  
Board of Directors, Pima Community College Foundation  
President/CEO, Vantage West Credit Union

Welcome from the Chancellor

Over the past year I have had conversations with hundreds of people who make this remarkable area their home. I have met many of you, listening to your concerns about PCC, as well as your expectations and hopes. I have acknowledged the College’s shortcomings, and pledged to make us a better school. I have shared my vision for a new PCC: a premier community college that fulfills its mission through universal access, measurable student success, consistent community engagement and commitment to diversity.

The eve of the visit by a team from the Higher Learning Commission is an appropriate time to renew the conversation. The visit is a milestone in the reaccreditation process, not an endpoint. We have made major strides to earn back the trust of the HLC and the public, but there is plenty left to do to remake PCC into a leader on the local, regional and national level.

I would like to thank Robert for moderating our discussion, and the PCC Foundation for organizing this important event. Most of all, I want to thank you for attending. It is a new day at PCC, and there is a lot to talk about.

Lee D. Lambert, J.D.  
Chancellor, Pima Community College
Agenda

7–7:45 a.m.  Registration, Continental Breakfast
7:45–8:40 a.m.  Conversation with the Chancellor
8:40–9 a.m.  Questions from the audience

During the conversation, you may write questions on the cards available at each table. Hold the cards up for staff to collect and forward to the moderator.

Video of today’s event will be available at www.pima.edu/probation.html

Accreditation: Frequently Asked Questions

On April 6, 2013 Pima Community College’s accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), placed the College on probation.

Who is the HLC and what is accreditation?

The Higher Learning Commission is one of several regional and national organizations that accredits institutions of higher education such as PCC. It is a private educational association, not a government agency. Accreditation is an important indication for current students, prospective students and the community that a college is operating acceptably and can do so in the future.

What is probation?

Probation is a sanction that the HLC can apply to the colleges and schools it accredits. According to the HLC, probation indicates an institution is not in compliance with one or more of the commission’s Criteria for Accreditation, and must demonstrate within the time frame allotted it has remedied problems that led to the sanction.

Why did the HLC put PCC on probation?

In notifying PCC, the HLC said it was putting PCC on probation “because of concerns related to integrity, financial management, personnel policies and procedures, shared governance, Board oversight of the institution, and systemic and integrated planning.”

What has been the College’s response to probation?

The probation sanction set into motion an Institutional Self-Study, an unsparing self-examination that sought not only to bring PCC into compliance with HLC standards but also served as a comprehensive examination of College processes, policies and goals. Over 300 employees, students and community members have been conducting the Self-Study for more than a year. This evidence-based inquiry identifies precisely where the College is out of compliance with HLC criteria, benchmarks the College against peer institutions, incorporates best practices and describes our progress to close gaps and be held accountable. The Self-Study Report documents the process.
Our progress

- The College has created a strategic plan, based on extensive input from community members, faculty, staff and administrators, to guide its major initiatives over the next three years.
- The PCC Governing Board has revised its policies and bylaws.
- The College has developed and implemented sexual harassment response and prevention training for the Board, administrators and employees.
- The Board has formed a Finance and Audit Committee to provide additional oversight of PCC’s financial, audit and investment-related performance, policies and procedures.
- The Board has formed a Human Resources Advisory Team to review the performance of Human Resources.
- The College is improving faculty oversight of curriculum.
- The College is redesigning developmental education to improve student success, is adding faculty and plans to hire a developmental education leader to provide overall direction.
- The College has improved policies and procedures regarding complaints and grievances, and has created an Office of Dispute Resolution to address public or employee concerns in an independent, fair and objective manner.
- The College has paid off the last of its long-term debt.

What’s next?

- September 15-17: The HLC site visit team visits PCC.
- October: The HLC will provide a site visit report to the College.
- November: PCC will submit an institutional response to the site visit report, to correct errors of fact only.
- December: PCC will send a team to attend a hearing of the HLC’s Institutional Actions Council.
- February 2015: PCC receives formal notification of its status from the HLC

Interacting with the HLC evaluation team

During its visit Sept. 15-17, the HLC evaluation team will schedule time to meet community members and groups. For the most up-to-date-information about those meetings, and for other information about the site visit, check www.pima.edu/about-pima/probation.

The HLC evaluation team tentatively has scheduled an open community meeting for Monday, Sept. 15, from 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. in the Community Board Room (Room C-105) of PCC’s District Office, 4905 E. Broadway.

To learn more

The Self-Study Report:
www.pima.edu/about-pima/accreditation/selfstudy-2014/index.html

PCC’s response to probation:
www.pima.edu/about-pima/probation/index.html

The Higher Learning Commission:
www.ncahlc.org