Chancellor Lee Lambert
Interview on “Wake Up Tucson” Radio Program
February 25, 2014

[Narrator] The Voice

[Audio clip from the movie “Stripes”]

[Male voice] Where the hell have you been soldier?

[Bill Murray] Training, sir!

[Multiple male voices] Training, sir!


[Bill Murray] Army training, sir!

[Multiple male voices] Army training, sir!

[Bill Murray] Razzle-dazzle

[Multiple male voices] One-two-three-four

[Male voice] So am I to understand that you men completed your training on your own?

[Bill Murray] That’s the fact, Jack.

[Multiple male voices] That’s the fact, Jack.

[Host] Dr. Lambert will never come back on the show again.

[Laughter]

[Host] Hey we’re on with Dr. Lee Lambert from Pima Community College. He is the chancellor. He has been here for 8 months – it feels like a year

[Chancellor Lee Lambert] Yes, or longer maybe [laughter]

[Host] One of the things, you guys recently had what you call your Futures Conference. You had over 200 people, students, business owners, a whole cross-section of the community. What were the topics and what were some of the things that you learned from sitting down with these folks?

[Lambert] I think what the Futures Conference represents is a critical turning point in the future of Pima Community College. We are not the same college today as the one I arrived at back on July 1. I think
seeing the level of engagement from the community – their interest in our success really resonated that day. I think the issues that we are all talking about also surfaced again around the focus and connection to business and industry as an example of that. The need to align better with K-12 and the universities is another important part of that - to regain trust and support of the community - to really start thinking about cradle to career as a concept and focus on student success. All of these things started to really resonate and reinforced for me that that’s what folks really want to see happening at Pima Community College. We really have a unique but wonderful opportunity to get back on the right track. I think the Futures Conference represents getting back on the right track.

[Host] Speaking of track, there is the probation from the accrediting agency. How long does that last or do you reapply? What happens?

[Lambert] So what’s going to happen is - the probation period is typically a two year window or cycle if you will where you either can come off of that or go into another category that’s even worse

[Host] Double-secret

[Lambert] Even worse – where you are on the cliff now [laughter] and so you don’t want to end up in that zone. I would say that we are actually in a great position right now. We’ve been facing up to our challenges and putting in place

[Host] A lot of the critique is around governance and that is one of the first things you all did was come in and look at governance.

[Lambert] So if you look at the over 100 areas that we have to look at as colleges and universities, and Pima going in and doing its self-assessment, we determined that there are 19 areas that we have to do better at. We call them red zone areas, and governance is one of those areas. But that was identified for us as an area. We’ve also realized that there are other pieces that we can do better in. Our Board has stepped up to work on the governance issue. They’re putting in place a framework that is going to have better accountabilities built in to them for the chancellor – where the chancellor will be evaluated. The Board will also evaluate itself. They are calling for monitoring reports on key expectations that they have for the performance of the institution. They are starting to reach out better to the community. One example of that is they held an environmental scanning session with the automotive sector of our community. We’re looking at doing one in the healthcare arena as well. So you are starting to see changes in that governance piece. We’re also creating a governance council which will bring together our faculty, our staff, our administration, our students in the day-to-day running of the institution. These are all positive signs that we’re moving in the right direction.

[Host] The fact that you’re here – this is your second or third interview

[Second Host] Second at least, yeah

[Lambert] In-studio

[Host] We never had that conversation before with prior chancellors so that’s a big part of it.
And I think a big part of what I bring, among many things, is I understand the importance of connecting with the community. That’s a big role of a community college, but also the chancellor has to be the face of that and if he or she is not willing to do that you have to ask serious questions about does that person understand part of what their role is. I get it, so that’s why you’ve seen me out there connecting with the community, inviting them in to be part of helping shape the direction, in this case the Futures Conference.

[Host] Change is good. You got a guy from Michigan who was there for 58 years – change is sometimes a good thing. Fresh ideas.

[Second host] 790-2040 is the number and let’s go to Laurie on line 2. Laurie you’re on with Chris, Joe and Dr. Lee Lambert. What’s up?

[Laurie] Hi Dr. Lambert. I have a sophomore who is finishing her sophomore year at Pima and is plans to transfer to the U of A, and I have another incoming one here going to start in the Fall.

[Host] How do they like the process. How’s the process been going, Laurie?

[Laurie] It’s been good for both of my kids. Financially we couldn’t afford 4 years so we’re doing the 2 years and the 2 years.

[Host] Yep. Many, many people are in that same boat, Laurie.

[Laurie] Yep. And my daughter, we haven’t used any of her college funds at this point she’s gotten scholarships for all of the semesters that she has been there. She’s working on 4 scholarships this year.

[Host] That’s awesome.

[Laurie] So my question, or my comment actually is to make your aztransfer website much more knowledgeable, much more available and get it out there to the kids early. My daughter just learned of that website. So make that more prominent.

[Host] What’s the purpose of the website so that people know.

[Laurie] So you know exactly what credits transfer to the universities – whether it’s ASU, U of A, NAU.

[Lambert] Laurie I appreciate that suggestion and as we move to improve what we do at the college, getting comments and suggestions from folks like yourself are going to be important so that we can continue to improve what we do to make it easier for our students to understand how to move through Pima. But more importantly, to go an pursue their dreams and in this case, for your daughter, to go on to the University of Arizona. So thank you for that.

[Laurie] You’re welcome. She has one counselor that she’s been going to, Adrian, a gentleman out there, who has been wonderful with her and has taken the time and is not short and is not, you know, it’s not like he doesn’t really care. He appears that he is very interested and wants to get her on the
right track. But also, if you could also color-categorize your catalog to where all of your credits that transfer would be in one section.

[Lambert] OK.

[Laurie] That may be something else so that these kids that are coming over right from high school can go, “OK if I want to take another class, these are all the others.” These are the classes that I need to know. And then so to the aztransfer so that they know within their own major what they need.

[Host] Right

[Lambert] Those are wonderful suggestions and I will have my team take a serious look at how we can improve the aztransfer website as well as our catalog.

[Host] Laurie. Thanks, for the good call, dear. Go Adrian.

[Host] As an NAU grad, at Northern Arizona, as long as the community college class had beer in it, we’ll take it – there’s a 100% chance we’re going to take it.

[laughter]

[Host] Let’s go to Ingrid on line 3. Ingrid you’re on with Dr. Lee Lambert from Pima Community. What’s up?

[Ingrid] Good morning Dr. Lambert.


[Ingrid] Regarding the classes themselves, what kind of program do you have for people who want to start their own businesses rather than just be part of a pool for existing businesses to select from.

[Lambert] Recently I attended an event that we hosted in which we’ve been an important part of helping to foster and develop the entrepreneurial community or the small business community here in Tucson. We offer programs and a curriculum that support small business and entrepreneurial efforts and I hope that we can continue to strengthen our ability to do that. One of the challenges has been that we received a grant that allowed us to really build out that curriculum. The challenge is going to be to continue to sustain that once the grant resources start to fade away. I’m hoping that we can continue to invest and make sure we can support those important aspects of our community.

[Ingrid] So you actually have classes that students can enroll in now.

[Lambert] So we were offering those, yes.

[Ingrid] OK. Thank you.

[Host] Thank you Ingrid for the call. Alright – the tough question now – top 3 local restaurants before we let you go. This is going to be tougher than being on secret-double probation.
[laughter]

[Lambert] So I like Takamatsu

[Host] Nice

[Lambert] As you probably know my mother’s Korean so I have a passion for Korean food.

[Host] What do you get a Takamatsu?

[Lambert] So we love to have the Korean barbeque

[Host] OK.

[Lambert] But I also lived in Japan part of my life and I love Japanese food and they also offer that, but I haven’t really eaten from their Japanese menu yet. Also, I think it’s called Zivaz.

[Host] Zivaz. Good call.

[Lambert] Yes, yes I like that restaurant.

[Second Host] They won the best hamburger in Tucson and I never had their hamburger – I didn’t even know they sold hamburgers.

[Lambert] Oh, I didn’t know they sold hamburgers.

[Host] They won the recent poll so we’ve got to check that out.

[Lambert] Then, you know, I had a ZinBurger and it’s hard to have any other hamburger after you have a ZinBurger

[Host] It’s awesome, very, very good with their sweet potato fries. I highly recommend it.

[Host] Dr. Lee Lambert, thanks for all that you are doing and best of luck. You have a little bit of an uphill climb but it seems that you’re getting a hold of things.

[Lambert] I enjoy a good challenge and more importantly I love - this community has been so warm and welcoming to me so my transition from Seattle to Tucson has been pretty seamless.

[Host] Awesome. Alright we’ll see you again soon.

[Lambert] Thank you

[Host] That’s Dr. Lee Lambert, Pima Community College. We’ve got Steve Walker. He is the sand volleyball coach of the U of A on coming up next. Wake-up Tucson 1030 The Voice.

[Music]