



July 13, 2015

Board of Governors
Pima Community College

Members of the Board:

On July 9, 2015, Erica Holmes and Dan Berryman met with AFSCME officers to inform them of Student Service Staff position changes. The following information was presented:

- Student Service Specialist and Advanced Specialist academic requirements will change from Associates degree and/or experience to a Bachelors degree.
- Change of degree requirements is based on HLC policy action
- Employees must have a “degree up” from that of the institution. For example: if the institution is a two-year college, the staff member must possess a Bachelors degree.
- The College is in no position to question HLC; “we have to do what we have to do”.
- Benchmarking other institutions
- Employees are not to question have no recourse due to HLC mandate
- Employees would not be eligible for “grandfathering” of their positions
- Employees may possibly be re-purposed for those not meeting the degree deadline of 2017.
- Ms. Holmes provided a copy to AFSCME of an email sent to her from Chancellor Lee Lambert relating to the HLC action (Exhibit #1)

On July 10, 2015, Chancellor Lee Lambert presented to Staff Council the following information:

- Employees are to follow a plan of action (to meet completion of degree)
- Degree has to be completed by September 1, 2017
- He will work with the leadership to make sure employees are supported by supervisors towards meeting goals. Every employee will be worked with.
- He is going to try to save everybody’s job.
- He is going to ask HLC if the employees could have more time to complete the degree

In addition to the above document, we have reviewed the document (Exhibit #2), “Determining Qualified Faculty: Guidelines for Institutions and Peer Reviewers”. Per this guideline Core Component 3.C. states, “The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services”. Neither of these documents mentions any degree mandates for Student Service positions. The HLC required action pertains solely to faculty.

Also, please refer to the “Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation Visit” to Pima Community College on September 15-17, 2014 for The Higher Learning Commissions composed by the Evaluation Team (exhibit #3). The only mention regarding Student Service staff members is listed under Core Component 3C-Subcomponent 6. It states, **“Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development”**. Team Determination: Core Component is met with concerns. The evidence provided (to the concern) relates to faculty ratios and qualifications.

Furthermore, this action is in violation of the following Common Policy for All Employees:

Section II-Employment B. Competitive Employment for Regular Positions

Background: In the spring of 2014 the Standard Practice Guide (SPG) 4201/BA, titled Filling Authorized, Vacant Regular Positions, was comprehensively reviewed and revised by all employee representative groups (ACES, AFSCME, PCCEA and Administration). The resulting revisions were vetted through the College’s policy review process. In keeping with this collaborative effort to continually improve the process contained in SPG 4201/BA, the administration and employee representative groups will jointly review this process every two years (beginning in the spring of 2016) or more often if requested by any employee representative group. Due to the substantive changes to SPG 4201/BA, this review will occur in addition to the standard SPG Review Process. **AFSCME has made no request to such change.*

In closing, it is determined that the planned changes are NOT HLC mandates for Student Service’s staff as presented by Ms. Holmes, Mr. Berryman and Chancellor Lambert. Rather, a misapplication of guidelines that are intended for faculty. This action has brought much unwarranted chaos and fear to Student Service staff members throughout the District. Therefore, all actions as set forth by Ms. Karrie Mitchell must cease immediately (Exhibit #4). We look to you as Members of the Board to do what is right and support the College’s Front Line, Non-Exempt, Hourly employees on this matter. These employees have continued to serve the students of Pima Community College diligently throughout the HLC investigation. They had no part in the College’s HLC violations, yet they are now victims of an unjust administrative act. It is important that you consider the hardship and serious implications that such action will bring to the affected employees, which many are older and working mothers as well. If further information is needed, please contact me at either 520 571-8884 (office) or 520 419 2410 (cell phone).

Sincerely,

Arlene Muniz
AFSCME Local 449, Organizer

Cc: Sherry Van Horsen, AFSCME Administrator
AFSCME PCC Officers
Chancellor Lee Lambert

