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Capital City Community College: A Written Analysis

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EAD 867

26 June 2009

Capital City Community College (CCCC) has recently brought in a new President, Dr. Patricia Ming. President Ming has taken steps to launch a new online initiative. Dr. Thelma Miller, Dean of Instruction, chairs the Degree Requirement Committee, which will meet tomorrow morning to discuss approval of the new online degree program. President Ming has told Dr. Miller she is willing to fire current faculty and hire new faculty if the current faculty do not support the online initiative. Dr. Miller is unsure how she will face tomorrow's meeting. In this written analysis of the case problem, I will provide the facts of the case problem, identify the leadership issues and tensions in the case, explain why these are the issues and tensions, and present my views on possible next steps.

Facts

The facts of this case problem are extensive. To begin, Dr. Thelma Miller has been Dean of Instruction at CCCC for four years. Before that, she was a faculty member in the Business and Information Technology Department for six years. CCCC is a comprehensive community college with about 20,000 full and part-time students in a mixed urban, rural and suburban community of approximately 400,000. Moreover, CCCC is outgrowing its campus and does not seem to have possibilities for additional space. CCCC is currently facing competition from other higher education institutions. Additionally, CCCC is transferring students successfully but employers are not completely satisfied with the CCCC students they are hiring.

Dr. Patricia Ming has recently been brought in as the new president of CCCC. She came from a smaller community college and had used alternative delivery systems for education at her old institution. The Governor is a champion of education, particularly online education. He is putting money behind his initiatives. One of CCCC's trustees, Ted Aberfoyle, is friends with the Governor and would like CCCC to develop online programs. Another of the trustees, Bob Hess,

is not interested in following the Governor's plans. Chad Korman had come with President Ming to CCCC. He has a masters degree in Instructional Technology and is working to put CCCC classes online. Dr. Miller does not completely like Chad. President Ming has recently announced plans to offer the first completely online associates degree in the state. Some of her online efforts will cut all other budgets by 10%. This is one of her first and most important priorities. She is willing to fire current faculty and hire new faculty to make her plans happen.

Some of the faculty members, including Dennis Harbell (mathematics instructor and president of the full-time faculty member union) and Naomi Jacobson (biology instructor), are voicing disapproval of President Ming's online education plans. They are concerned that such plans will take away from the mission of CCCC. Myron Green, the English department senator, supports President Ming's plans. Dr. Thelma Miller chairs the Degree Requirement Committee which is meeting the next day to discuss approval of the online associate's degree. She is concerned about managing this meeting. Finally, Mike Mason, Dean of Student Affairs, was not informed of an online registration procedure that his unit would have to implement.

Leadership Issues and Tensions

As I begin my identification of leadership issues and tensions in the CCCC case problem, I want to explain my thinking on the issues I will lay out. I have decided to address any leadership issue that I find relevant, no matter the person involved. While the case problem was mostly written from Dr. Miller's perspective, I think it is not only important to identify leadership issues she faces, but also those major leadership issues faced by others in the case problem.

One of the leadership issues in this case involves De Pree's work. De Pree (1997) believes that one of the characteristics of a place of realized potential is that it is open to change.

From the portions of the CCCC story that we have heard, it seems like many of the CCCC faculty are not open to change, as evidenced by their opposition to the online programs.

President Ming will face a challenge if she wants to make CCCC a place of realized potential, in the definition of De Pree (1997). As being open to change is only one of the Du Pree's (1997) eight characteristics of a place of realized potential, and the case problem does not provide information on whether CCCC has all of the characteristics, it is difficult to judge CCCC completely. What I can say is that many people in the CCCC organization do not seem open to change.

Another leadership issue is that President Ming has not had time to develop enduring relationships. George (2004), in his article "The Journey to Authenticity", explains that establishing enduring relationships is one of the five dimensions of authentic leadership. Some of the opposition to President Ming's plans might be stemming from her lack of enduring relationships. This may be due to her short tenure as President, but also could be coming from the way she has worked with members of the CCCC organization so far. We can see that she has not communicated with members of her team well, from the example of Mike Mason. Without communication, one cannot have a relationship.

A third leadership issue in this case is faced by Dr. Thelma Miller. Dr. Miller is concerned about how she will manage the disagreements about approving the online degree program as chairperson of the Degree Requirements Committee. Dr. Miller is faced with a difficult dilemma. She is being asked by President Ming to move the online education agenda forward, but simultaneously feels a lack of agreement and support from many of the faculty. She has tension between her followership and leadership. From my point of view that leaders should adapt their leadership style to most greatly help with the particular situation, Johnson's article

“Emerging Perspectives in Leadership Ethics” provides a possible approach. I will address the next steps Dr. Miller could take in the next section.

Next Steps

From the previous section on leadership issues, Dr. Miller is facing a challenge regarding her leadership. In her upcoming meeting, Dr. Miller could think about modeling some of the tenets of Taoism by “[employing] ‘soft tactics’ (persuasion, empowerment, modeling, teamwork, collaboration, service”, “[demonstrating] creativity and flexibility”, and “[promoting] harmony with [...] others” (Johnson, 1999, p. 7). I think these approaches would serve her well in her meeting the next morning. What we don’t know, which would have great bearing on the next steps, is what kind of leader Dr. Miller is and if she is very adaptive.

A piece of advice from Wheatley’s “Innovation Means Relying on Everyone’s Creativity” could serve President Ming well. Wheatley (1997) suggests that leaders need to make a plan to invite every person that is going to be affected by changes to participate. I believe that she means that everyone needs to participate in discussion on the whys and hows of change. President Ming has made some serious errors as she has started her campaign for online education. Redressing the situation will be difficult, but it must begin by listening to other people’s ideas on the issue. Simply from listening, President Ming might be able to start a dialogue that helps others share in her vision.

Additionally, President Ming needs to think about building the enduring relationships necessary for being an authentic leader (George, 2004). She might do part of this by following the advice of Bugay from his article “TransformActional Leadership: Leaders Building on Trust”. Bugay (2001) advises that a leader brought in from outside should spend a few months carefully listening to the institution’s members, to build trust. President Ming might do well to spend

some more extensive time listening to her faculty members and getting to know them. With those relationships in place, she may be able to better move forward.

Conclusion

After analyzing this case's facts, leadership issues and possible next steps, I can see that there are major leadership problems at CCCC. I do not believe there is a quick fix, especially for the leadership issues facing President Ming. Perhaps Dr. Miller can utilize any and all leadership skills and qualities she possesses not only to be a good leader as chair of the Degree Requirement Committee but also in her followership. Dr. Miller has worked at CCCC as a faculty member and administrator. Perhaps she could help President Ming build those enduring relationships that are so necessary to moving forward as a good leader of CCCC.

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