

Serving the Stakeholder's Interests¹

You've looked at the registration figures and you know that 65% the 200 students at your conservative religiously-affiliated college are able to attend only because they are sponsored by financial aid contributions from their home congregations. The college's hard driving president, Needmore Bucks, phones you in a panic late one soggy mid-November afternoon. "Fire that new humanities instructor," says the agitated president.

Ever mindful of the president's notorious temper, you dare to ask why. The president snarls his explanation. It seems that Pastor Wright Ring, the college's largest benefactor, refuses to give the college any more financial aid money nor send any more students from his congregation because the college has lost sight of its fundamental purpose.

Finally the source of the president's ire becomes clear. It would appear that "your" new humanities hire, an alumna who took your poor paying teaching job out of a sense of religious duty, was advising an exceptionally bright student from Pastor Ring's congregation. When the student indicated a growing interest in changing her major from mathematics, a program the college struggles to offer, to computer science, a program the college has neither the staff nor the equipment to offer, the new faculty member suggested that the student might consider transferring to Local State Poli-Mega University.

President Bucks tells you he's angry because unless the new faculty member is fired "and I mean right now!" the college not only is going to lose the future financial support of Pastor Ring and his congregation along with that important source of future students, but the college will also lose this particular very bright student -- and "all because of that fool instructor's obvious bad judgment."

Questions: You have your marching orders from the president, what do you do?

- 1) Who are the primary and secondary stakeholders, and what are their interests?**
- 2) What factors should you take into consideration, and how do you weigh them?**
- 3) How would you describe the problem which needs your attention?**
- 4) How do you determine which of your three or four best options to pursue first?**

¹All characters, situations, and stories described here are fictional. No reference to actual persons, events, or institutions is intended or assumed. Drs. Peter and Noreen Facione developed and refined these hypothetical cases based on the experiences gained through their many decades of service as faculty, administrators, workshop presenters, and leadership consultants to colleges and universities throughout the nation.