Kim is program coordinator for an UG degree program at a newly established branch campus of an Australian university. The program is in its third year with the first cohort of students nearing the end of the program. The introduction of the program had not been without difficulties and Kim has had to work hard to try to manage the difficulties. The main problems, as he sees them, have centred on employing suitably qualified staff, and poor student pass rates and progression.

Graduates from the program are expected to be much in demand locally and there is a high parental expectation on students to pass. However, the program discipline is demanding and students have found it increasingly difficult.

Two of the staff Kim employed specifically for the program had Bachelor degrees only and another two had Master degrees. Kim’s PhD was in a closely related discipline. However, because the arrangement was that the home campus course coordinators would send all materials, PowerPoints, assessments and marking keys, Kim has felt that the lack of depth and currency of knowledge of his staff would be minimised.

In the first year, Kim organised extra tutorials to support students as well as organising help with English if they could not easily understand the materials. He did not advise the home campus coordinators of this. The students tended to do reasonably well on assignments but many failed the final examinations. This brought a flood of letters from students and often their parents begging that they be passed. The staff, too, argued that students should be kept together through the program rather than have some being left behind their cohort. Kim approached the home campus unit coordinators of several units and asked that students’ marks be re-considered, but this was met with forthright rejection.

Throughout the next year, the new group of first year students had similar problems and despite the best efforts of his staff, students had a pass rate of only 65%, well below the pass rate of 85% on the home campus. The students in second year did not fare much better. The home campus program coordinator offered to send across several academics to do some of the teaching for a period and work with staff, but Kim declined the offer, stating that the staff had had a meeting and had put in place some strategies to improve the program. The home campus program director re-iterated the offer but did not pursue it.

The strategies which Kim put in place were to increase the extra tutorials and require that students come in early in the mornings for extra help in doing the assignments in the units they were finding difficult. He also provided food for students to encourage attendance. Kim, himself, was running those tutorials in his own time. He also worked with the staff to check more carefully how they had been marking the examinations and pointed out where he thought that they
were being too hard on the students. The result was an improvement in examination results as well as pass rate for students.

By the third year of the program, the staff were finding that their own knowledge and skills in the discipline were insufficient to be able to deliver final year units but they were unwilling to admit this. A visit by several UCs from the home campus resulted in considerable concern being expressed about the branch campus staff and concern that the all the extra instruction being provided to students was not comparable to that for students on the home campus.

There is to be a meeting of administrators from both campuses to try to resolve the issues.

**Discussion:**

* What, in your opinions, are the underlying issues?

* What type of leader is Kim?

* For the person given the task of resolving the issues, what type of leadership behaviours would be most useful?