

**Concurrent Session G**  
**Tuesday 13 September 2016**  
**1:50pm – 2:40pm**



**Session 3**  
**Unexpected Opportunities – The Highs and Lows of Secondments**  
**Katrina White**  
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*Katrina White is currently employed as the Enrolments Manager for the Western Sydney University. She has also worked as the Summer Operations Manager for the Academic Year Optimisation Project and as a School Manager for the School of Communication Arts. Katrina is a highly experienced project manager with an extensive understanding of Western Sydney Systems, data interpretation/analysis, policy and legislative knowledge, process development/reengineering and budget management.*

I commenced work with Western Sydney University in 2002 as the Graduation Coordinator. This was my introduction to the idiosyncrasies of the Higher Education Sector and what an ‘eye opener’ it turned out to be. Who knew that this sector had its own unique language?

I stayed in this role for 18 months and then decided to challenge myself and spread my wings, so moved on to become the Enrolments Coordinator. This can only be described as ‘jumping from the frying pan into the fire’. It was here that I discovered a totally new dialect that involved words such as Census, HECS, PELS, and EFTSL etc.

I remained in this role for some time and then moved on to become the Enrolments Manager, which has been my substantive role for the last 10 years.

In that ten year time frame I was offered an 18 month secondment as a School Manager. This was a whole new world for me and I felt like I had moved to the ‘other side’. The challenges this role presented went from one extreme to the other with the biggest challenge presenting itself on my first day in the role.

I returned to my substantive role for 2 years and was then offered another secondment as the Summer Operations Manager for a period of 2 years. This involved managing the operations of the Academic Year Optimisation Project which required high level negotiations with all Schools to encourage participation in the ‘growth’ of summer as an alternative for students who wanted to fast track their degrees or spread their load across the year.

So effectively I have worked in completely different areas of the same organisation and my experience and the knowledge I have attained has proven very useful due to my broader understanding of the whole University. It is these unexpected differences that provided many opportunities.

My presentation will look at the highlights and some of the lows of the secondment experience but more importantly I will focus on what I learned and also what I achieved. I will also look at some of the ‘funny’ experiences that I went through and how these were solved and what the outcomes were.

