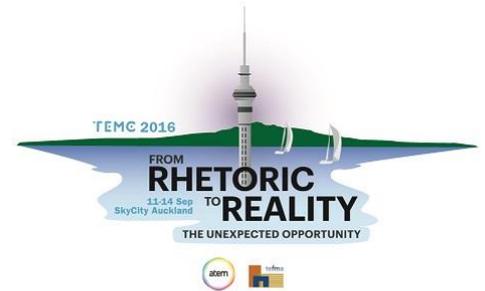


Concurrent Session I
Wednesday 14 September 2016
10:15am – 11:05am



Session 5
Rhetoric Versus Reality: Creation of New Professional Staff

Leaders

Julie Gray

University of Wollongong

Julie Gray is the Technical Services Manager in the faculty of Science Medicine and Health at the University of Wollongong. Julie manages a team of approximately 45 technical professional staff who underpin the research and teaching within the faculty. Julie has worked as a manager of technical staff for over 25 years and has a passion for both personal and organisational continuous improvement. She promotes career development in the team and business improvement where possible. Julie began her working career in Science, and in early years learned people management 'on the job'. Julie is an advocate for education of all staff, including managers, in Emotional Intelligence. Julie is also the chair of the UOW central WHS committee.

The tertiary sector is wrestling with novel issues and events. The only certainty is uncertainty - that is the rhetoric. The reality is that we must continue to operate in an environment in which almost anything might happen tomorrow. The change that is occurring is sometimes voluntary and sometimes forced. The only consistency is that it is happening everywhere.

The realignment of the faculties at University of Wollongong, forming five mega faculties, necessitated massive change in management structures. Science Medicine and Health was no exception. I became a new manager, in a new role, in a new faculty, with a large team formed of existing technical professional staff. They were drawn together from assorted faculties and schools.

Acknowledging a generalisation: - technical staff tend to be specialists who prefer to just get on with the job. Unlike some other groups of professional staff at universities they do not aspire to lead or to manage. They tend towards reticence, and if there is a sliding scale of change aversion, they are mostly located at the far end.

From within this newly formed group an internal structure was developed to create teams and team leaders. Existing staff groupings and the services being provided were taken into account. The new leaders were supported as they developed their interactions with each other and their teams. There was a focus on empowering all staff to think more outwardly; to consider anything new in a positive way, and to evaluate every situation before forming a response. A culture of leadership at all levels was the goal.

I will present some of the potholes that we struck, and some of the pitfalls into which we tumbled along the beginnings of this journey. It is still evolving. The large size of the group made the creation of an internal structure urgent. This led to a "Ready, Fire, Aim" approach and as a result there have been two years of reviewing and refining the teams. Some of my expectations of me, the team leaders, and the teams have been met, and some exceeded. Many are still a work in progress. Some team leaders have excelled.

There is continual change and churn; at the micro level, I feel my team reflects the sector as a whole.