

**Concurrent Session J**  
**Wednesday 14 September 2016**  
**11:10am – 12:00pm**



**Session 2**  
**Partnering – Bridging the ‘Great Divide’**  
**Helen Hume, Dr Yvonne Cheng**  
**University of Technology Sydney**

*Helen Hume is currently Faculty General Manager in the Faculty of Science, University of Technology Sydney. She has extensive experience in the tertiary education sector, starting in a governance role at the University of Queensland and including significant time in the UK, including nine years at the University of Manchester. She has been involved in major change projects and having led the Student System Office in Manchester at the time of implementation of a new system, she has an interest in business improvement projects and the interplay of IT systems and streamlining business processes. Helen oversees a large portfolio in her current role, ranging from space management to forecasting workforce profiles. Her role sees daily collaborations with her academic and professional colleagues, creating numerous opportunities to forge new ways of working to make the Faculty of Science a leader in implementing many of UTS’s strategic projects.*

The ‘Great Divide’ between academics and administrative staff is notorious in University circles – the creativity and individualism of academics leading to comparisons with herding cats and the bureaucracies of the professional services being likened to Big Brother states.

However, the paradigm of the academic leader being drawn from amongst the ranks as a ‘first among equals’ has been overtaken by the increasing demands for academic leaders to act as Executive Managers. Increasing numbers of roles are recruited via external search processes, including use of specialist recruitment consultants. Simultaneously, professional services have developed more specialist roles, leading to professional staff with expertise in fields such as project management, research development and organisational development. This has led to increased collaboration between professional and academic staff to deliver strategic and essential projects.

At the University of Technology Sydney, the Faculty of Science has undergone a substantial period of change and restructure. Commencing in November 2013, the Faculty set about consulting on, and achieving a restructure, which by April 2015 came to fruition with the establishment of two large multi-disciplinary Schools. Having established a structure that could underpin cultural change and enhanced research performance, the Faculty embarked on a new program of works under the umbrella of the ‘Academic Excellence in Science’ project.

Through the Academic Excellence in Science project, the Faculty of Science has reviewed and updated its academic workload allocation scheme; established academic benchmarks for performance at each level; overseen a reinvigorated work planning process; and is now overseeing projects on workforce planning and professional development for academic team leaders and other academic staff.

After a brief survey of the literature on the changing nature of the relationship between academic and non-academic staff, this presentation will focus on the case study of the academic/professional services partnerships that have developed through the Academic Excellence in Science project. This presentation will explore how a small to medium-sized Faculty of Science deals with and manages

change, future planning and external impacts in a collaborative manner involving both academic and professional staff.

Particular emphasis will be focused on the experience of key professional staff in gaining the trust and respect of their academic peers to establish a partnership of equals. This has allowed academics in the project team to act as 'champions' to successfully promote the changes to their academic colleagues, and importantly get 'buy in' at the local level.

This success was underpinned by effective and methodical project management techniques that ensured appropriate governance; open consultations for staff feedback on the changes proposed; and implementation within short timeframes.

The Academic Excellence in Science project illustrates that effective partnerships can be built between academic and professional staff to deliver significant and culture -changing projects that allows the Faculty to respond proactively to external impacts.