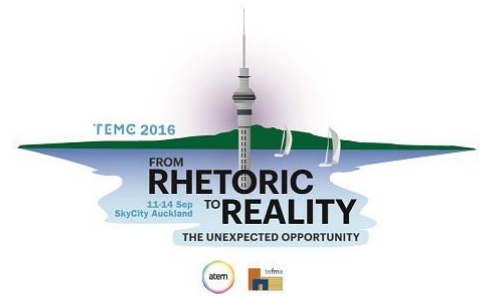


Concurrent Session C
Wednesday 14 September 2016
1:00pm – 1:50pm



Session 5
From Rhetoric to Reality - One Team to Lead Them All

Ben Evans, Karla Gotting, Clare Caruana

University Of South Australia

Ben, Karla and Clare are experienced Higher Education Managers currently working within the University of South Australia's Division of Information Technology Engineering and the Environment (ITEE). Passionate about the benefits of bringing of people together to work as one team for the achievement of strategic goals, they are now working together on behalf of the Pro Vice Chancellor to bring about a genuine culture shift and process improvements through consistent best practice, with a focus on personal development.

One Team to Lead Them All - The Unexpected Opportunity

What if, when you were reviewing your division (faculty) and school procedures and processes to ensure consistency and best practice, you accidentally on purpose enabled your workforce to be fully transient/mobile, and it worked? Join us while we take you on our journey that started as a discussion around culture improvement and consistent best practice, then morphing into a professional staff project that not only supports staff development, but can also create the ability to transfer skills and resources across an entire campus. Through education, consultation, leadership and effective project management, can we turn our rhetoric into a reality?

In 2015, under a new Pro Vice Chancellor and a revised strategic plan and vision, a project was launched to synergise professional staff services within the University of South Australia's Division of Information Technology, Engineering and the Environment. The aim, to improve organisational culture, create greater consistency and increase proficiencies in managing professional staff. It has been five years since processes and services went through the largest review in the University's history. Overarching University processes and systems still remain in place and, as they were intended, however, rebel forces have established themselves in local areas and have commenced working under their own local, internal procedures. This is resulting in central units tailoring their own services to suit the practices of individual schools, leading to self-implemented workarounds, and inequities regarding workload and opportunities for staff. In short, the Shadow of Mordor is covering the evolution of a positive culture, inhibiting the achievement of strategic goals and undoing service improvements from the inside.

So we asked ourselves 'Can we create a culture where; cross skilling is a priority and opportunities are plenty, where the days of falling behind while trying to recruit for absent positions are behind us and teams are united in a common cause of providing best service and practice, regardless of the unit they work within?' Enabled by a new team in the Pro Vice Chancellor's office and a vision for a vibrant and positive culture on the horizon, the 'Synergy Team' have put on their Elven Cloaks and said 'yes'. Tackling the challenge and taking the opportunity to shape a new way of working by collaborating with the areas they want to bring together, establishing 'One Team' to rule them all.

Having now read the rhetoric, join us in our presentation during the conference and hear about the reality. A reality that will be unfolding during the course of 2016 and concluding before the conference commences. So far the 'Synergy Team' has searched far and wide across the Division to gather input from as many professional staff and division leaders as possible through surveys,

meetings and brainstorming workshops for each of the three schools. We've explored the issues and challenges as well as the best practices that might usefully be applied more widely. Now the results are in and it's time to move in to the constructive phase of turning our rhetoric in to a reality. How will we empower staff to design and implement best practices in student and academic services across the Division? Will they be inspired to improve and sustain more effective communication strategies and stronger working relationships across teams? And, can we really pull off bringing staff from different teams in to a single transit office, to work side-by-side, on a daily basis? Like your very own reality show but without the unusual dishes, spectacular dance routines and if you are lucky, less Lord of the Rings puns. We would like anybody that comes along to benefit from the success, the failures and the lessons learned on our unexpected journey.