

Concurrent Session B
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11.45am – 12.35am



Session 3

Building Capacity to Compete Globally - OD Can Do That
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Lucienne Tessens is the Acting Associate Director Organisational and Staff Development Services, The University of Western Australia. Lucienne's role consists of designing, co-ordinating and delivering programs and workshops that meet the needs of UWA staff, leaders and business units, supporting organisational change and evaluating the impact of these services.

Lucienne also works as a consultant to external educational groups and has presented workshops on leadership, mentoring, career development, public speaking, resilience, MBTI, emotional intelligence and work-life balance.

In her research she has a particular research interest in staff development programs for women. She has published some articles and presented at conferences in Australia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and Europe.

Lucienne is the Chair of ATEM Western region.

Scott Partridge is the Human Resources Business Partner at The University of Tasmania. In his role as HR Business Partner, Scott works primarily with the Faculty of Education and the Australian Maritime College. Located on the University's Launceston campus Scott provides advice and support across the scope of HR dimensions from workplace relations to strategic workforce design.

With a strong interest in academic middle management's potential and capacity to impact the corporate university, this year's TEMC theme of Leading Locally, Competing Globally is of particular relevance.

Scott is the Deputy Chair of ATEM Bass region.

Organisational development is important in higher education to build organisational capacity and leadership. It is seen as a critically urgent practice because of the ever increasing challenges that organisations face. There is no longer a definite body of knowledge or mastery in specific skills that will be able to sustain employees over time as change can be assured. Universities face environmental changes with an increasingly diverse student and staff cohort, heightened national and international competition and mounting fiscal constraints. This therefore requires staff to engage in learning, and organisational developers to assist staff to manage change. According to Avery, Dahlin and Carver (2001), the development of individuals and organisations requires “a philosophy of purpose as well as a systemic view of the place of individual development within the whole of the management of human resources”.

Organisational development in the higher education sector has evolved from staff training which focused more on the individual, interpersonal and small groups of the organisation. In itself, the training and development field has experienced a virtual revolution in its methodology, moving from a didactic approach to a complex educational technology that relies heavily on experience-based

activities and self-directed learning designs. Organisational development is becoming more organised, is being applied to a wider range of staff and is taking on a much more strategically aligned approach in addressing a wider range of issues than ever before. Concepts of facilitation, mediation, changing cultural norms, improving team and individual capabilities, facilitating communication and learning are the tenets of organisational development (OD). OD also involves development of behavioural science theories, models, practices and interventions to facilitate organisational transformation and takes on a whole of organisation approach.

Informed by the findings of recent surveys of staff working in the OD space and the recent literature, this paper considers how the history of OD in the Australian higher education sector has shaped current paradigms and practices, what OD looks like in the sector today, and how it might look to provide maximum benefit to Australian Universities tomorrow. Data collected through written surveys, face to face and telephone interviews, and workplace observation has also been reviewed, interpreted, and conclusions drawn by staff representing all levels of the sector inside and outside OD organisational units.

'Fiscal constraint', 'sector deregulation', 'globalisation', 'market competition', 'change management', 'cultural agility' are everyday terms in today's organisations, and central to OD in both the challenges and the opportunities that present. Add in the cultural complexities of higher education in a corporatised sector and we have an OD environment that is at once brimming with the ripest fruit from which to make an enormous contribution and, on the other hand so dense it is hard to know where to begin. There is an immediate need for good, informed, and brave decision making – 'leadership'!

We ask the question, is the development of 'leadership' the key? Can the development of leadership, in the first instance within OD itself, unlock the potential of OD? Can we reconcile the demand for short term returns with the medium to longer term vision of OD programs, and how will we do this with an ever decreasing resource allocation?

The value that OD has to offer is so pervasive that there is opportunity for everyone, from the Executive Director of OD to the school administrator to engage in and demonstrate its power all day, every day. Our paper aims to present practical takeaways you can implement in your work tomorrow which will help you and your workplace towards being leaders in an increasingly competitive higher education sector.