

University Management: A Strategic Orphan?

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***Maree Conway** runs *Thinking Futures*, a strategic foresight practice that helps people in organisations think beyond the status quo. This is Maree's second career following almost 30 years as a manager across a range of areas in CAEs, TAFE and universities. Maree is about to re-start her PhD on the future of university management with a focus on emerging management models for the future, and new roles for university managers.*

The environment in which universities exist has been changing rapidly for some years now and university managers are living that change every day. In particular, the way in which learning and research experiences are designed and delivered in under continuing pressure from 'disrupting' forces pushing in on institutions and the staff who work in them.

These disruptive forces are connected and can't be considered in isolation – educational technology, leadership shifts, a mobile revolution, content curation, new ways of working and the rise of social are but some of these forces already affecting university management today.

While there are clear signals that these forces will continue to strengthen and change the shape and form of the future university, the roles of academics and the student learning experience, scant attention is being paid to those who manage universities, and the changes they will need to make to their roles to facilitate the delivery of new forms of learning and research in the not too far distant future.

The starting point in this session – for the purposes of discussion and pushing beyond status-quo thinking – is that the current way we manage universities is no longer useful. It is time to identify what we need to leave behind, what we need to take into new models of working and how we can take action today to begin to build those new models.

University manager's stand at a tipping point – they can choose to dive in to change flowing rapidly in front of them and work to shape and influence the outcomes or they can continue to tweak and band-aid systems and ways of operating that are failing. Will the university manager be an obsolete role or will it be a role truly integrated into the DNA of the future university?

The question we will start to answer is around how university management needs to change, rather than whether change is necessary. We are well beyond the latter question, and if we push aside, argue against and/or resist this disruptive change, we are wasting time and energy.

This session will be interactive, and deliberately futures focused. Starting from the challenges and disrupting forces we see today, we will explore ideas for new models of university management which will be needed to deal with the impact of change over the next 10 years.

This stance asks participants to come to the workshop ready to genuinely challenge their own thinking and contribute to a wide ranging discussion about re-designing their jobs for themselves and those who follow them.

One of the fundamental underpinning assumptions of the session is that each of us can start to make small changes in our individual work environments that can build over time and contribute to the design of the new ways of working that we will need in the future.