

Beyond the Oracle: Divining and Describing the Contributions of Professional Staff to Student Outcomes

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***Carroll Graham** has worked in higher education for 15 years and currently leads the professional and research operations, ongoing strategic development and business planning of the Institute of Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). Carroll is a highly motivated professional with a diverse range of experience in the higher and vocational education sectors, underpinned by several years experience as a professional engineer and by postgraduate studies in education and higher education. Prior to joining ISF, Carroll led faculty-level strategic planning, financial planning and management, business development, benchmarking and quality assurance reviews. Carrolls enthusiasm for working in higher education stems from the crucial role that universities play in developing and disseminating new knowledge, and in developing the leaders of the future. Carroll is also undertaking part-time doctoral research, investigating how professional staff contribute to positive student outcomes*

Two years ago, the Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management published a paper called "Hearing the voices of general staff: A Delphi study of the contributions of general staff to student outcomes". Based on the framework of 13 propositions derived by Prebble et al. (2004) for support of student outcomes, this study used the Delphi method to rank these propositions in terms of the contribution of professional staff. Whereas Prebble et al. (2004) focussed on the contribution to student outcomes by academic staff or "the institution", the Delphi study actively engaged professional staff (as they are now called in many institutions) and presented their perspectives. The same year, a presentation was given at TEMC 2010 addressing the contributions of professional staff in supporting technology for learning. A case study has now been completed, looking more generally at contributions by professional staff to student outcomes, and the findings are the subject of this presentation.

This presentation describes *how* professional staff at one university contribute to student outcomes, within the framework of the propositions (Prebble et al. 2004). It also presents findings that are beyond this framework, illustrating the changing roles and identities of professional staff in Australian universities. Some implications for professional staff and the sector are also discussed.