

Case Stories

A re-organized and re-purposed university services team seeks to become well formed and highly functional

TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Situation

Many Australian Universities have been undergoing significant structural changes to improve their efficiency and effectiveness. Among other things, faculties have been merged into a fewer number of Colleges each with their own professional services groups supporting the academic staff.

Professional services supply the administration, planning, resources and facility management to newly formed Colleges. The so called services team was not a team, but a collection of individuals just organized together.

Challenge

A newly formed College of Science and Engineering was struggling to bring together its new professional services team as one. Many staff were long-serving and had loyalties to their own specialist central team, rather than the College. The academics too were comfortable with the 'old ways' and many not keen to embrace the changes. Moreover, the administrative systems and tools required to facilitate working together were in the early stages of development. And the group charged with developing and delivering these services was undeveloped as a team.

Our Approach

Dalmau Consulting partnered with the Director of College Services, and following preparatory information-gathering interviews with some staff, a workshop was held,

- > For leaders to get to know each other better.
- > To understand how the Professional Services group contributed to the overall strategic plan of the College.
- > To share perspectives and challenges in the current situation.
- > To clarify how they were going to operate as a team.
- > To create a social contract amongst themselves to explicitly establish.
- > Negotiate the behaviors they wanted.
- > To understand what they needed to do with their teams to continue.
- > To engage them in the change process to decide the next steps for the group.

Outcomes

Feedback as a result of the work included ...

- > We have built a shared foundation, become aligned and confident that we have the same objectives.
- > My confidence has returned - the University is rebuilding after massive change.
- > I now see opportunities for synergies and collaboration.
- > I feel refreshed and positive, looking forward.
- > Seen we have a great team and as we work in this new way I am very confident we will deliver superior services.
- > We have definitely build a new way of working together to deliver our services.