



World-Changing Glasgow Transformation

5 Questions for Dr. David Duncan

At this stage, what do you think is the most significant achievement or milestone in our transformation?

I believe we have made good progress in this first stage of our transformation journey. We have worked hard to set out our mission and vision across the institution and raise awareness of how important this agenda is for all staff and students. By emphasising the different opportunities available, we have already had some great engagement from our staff so far across different topics. Having said that, if you look across the six projects within World-Changing Glasgow Transformation, the one which stands out for me the most is Professional Services. Although we are at an early stage with this work, a significant amount of effort has gone into this project to ensure we are shaping the content properly and getting people involved from the beginning.

Large scale transformation is challenging- what lessons have you learned on the journey so far?

The key lesson I have learned is that you really do need to get people from all levels across the institution on board in order to make it successful. Our staff need to unite behind the bigger picture and vision, and to some extent, we have some work still to do on that. I feel there is still a reluctance at times to embrace change for fear of losing authority or responsibility.

Many universities are transforming- what do you feel makes our transformation unique?

In some ways, our transformation programme isn't unique, as we want to improve culture and streamline processes, which is the same as colleagues in many other institutions. I do think what will make our programme stand out is the context we operate in. This institution is different from any other institution, so we must take the University forward in a way that aligns with our values and our priorities.

As Chief Operating Officer, how do you champion transformation across the University?

I have a responsibility for all of University Services, excluding Finance, which provides me with an opportunity to influence a large section of staff at the University. I am keen to make sure people understand how supportive I am of the transformation programme and the projects within it. I also play an important role in SMG and the World-Changing Glasgow Transformation Board, so I try to understand the challenges our staff and students face so that when we have discussions, I know we are addressing the things which are important.

We have been asking staff to tell us one thing that would improve their daily working life. What would yours be?

I tend to worry about the big things I don't have control over. To give three examples, I fret about our NSS results, our position in various league tables and the impact of the Government's student visa policy. The challenge is to identify how, working together, we can address those challenges and make a difference wherever possible. We want the University of Glasgow to offer the best possible student experience, provide the best possible support for teaching and research, and maximise efficiency and effectiveness across all of our professional services. With the help of the World-Changing Glasgow Transformation Team, I am confident we will get there!