



World-Changing Glasgow Transformation 5 Questions for Christine Barr

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

There are multiple projects ongoing at this time with wide ranging agendas in terms of breadth & depth. The one that I would highlight relates to the Professional Services Review. A year ago, when a range of senior leaders from Colleges & University Services, met to consider the scope of the Professional Services Review, there were differing views on the best way forward with some quite polarised views on the extent of the ambition for this project, all of which were perfectly valid. It was hugely significant from my perspective that a shared vision on the ambition of the Professional Services project was presented at the most recent meeting of the World-Changing Glasgow Transformation (WCGT). One year on, there is a better level of understanding at the University of Glasgow of the need to change the way we work with each other and why we are focused on improving our processes and systems. Effectively, creating an environment where our staff and our students are enabled and empowered to do their best work. I genuinely believe our people will thrive if we improve our systems and processes to create the best experience possible, and where staff have access to appropriate development and career enhancement .

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

Throughout my career, I have learned that large transformation projects need to be led from the top with senior level sponsorship. There will be times when some decision taking has to be quite directional and I recognise that some people might find this concept quite challenging. My expectations would support this kind of approach where necessary, whilst providing a greater degree of autonomy and interdependence where there is scope for greater flexibility. When we position things, we have to acknowledge where the organisation is and the distance we must travel whilst meeting people where they are in terms of what is important to their experiences. We also have a responsibility to enhance the change capability of our teams so that we all feel more confident as we travel on this journey.

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

We have a dedicated team embedded within our University working with our teams across the institution making the change happen. Other institutions have utilised short term consultancy support for a concentrated period of time during which time existing staff are trained and developed in Transformation type tactics with a view to implementing the change. This can be daunting for many when they are trying to fulfil a day job simultaneously. It is wonderful to have dedicated support from the World-Changing Glasgow Transformation team working in partnership with functional teams across the University on all of our transformation related activities.

As Director of HR, how do you champion transformation across the University?

I have many opportunities to champion our ambitions and the projects within our Transformation portfolio throughout my day-to-day working life. I am obviously heavily involved in the HR Recruitment project and working hard to support other parts of the transformation through my role on Senior Management Group (SMG) and other leadership platforms. Focusing on the HR function, we, myself and my other senior HR colleagues, across the University, are regularly communicating and engaging with our respective teams to ensure our staff have a good understanding of the role they can play in contributing to transforming the University. People really are at the heart of Transformation, and it's my job, working in partnership with WCGT and other senior team players, to ensure that our longer term People & Organisational Development (OD) Strategy suitably reflects this reality aligned with the University's forthcoming 2020-25 Strategic Plan.

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

Every member of staff, including me, should ask ourselves what we can do to enhance efficiency, reduce bureaucracy and become more agile in our day-to-day work. If all of us alter just one aspect of our working practice, it will make a huge difference. A good example is email- don't send an email unless you really have to. Why not lift the phone instead or even better, go talk to our colleagues?