



Inaugural
Issue



CHANGE HE
DATA QUBED

Change H.E.

e-zine

Welcome Note

Issue
Jan 2025

This e-zine is inspired by Change H.E. Conversations, a series of discussions where HE professionals come together to share challenges, lessons, and ideas for making transformation more meaningful and manageable.

Each issue will build on these rich exchanges to deliver tools, stories, and inspiration tailored for you.

Let's shape the future of HE transformation - together!

“

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has

Margaret Mead

SPOTLIGHT: INAUGURAL CHANGE H.E. CONVERSATION

When I first envisioned Change H.E., I hoped it would create a space for real conversations about the challenges of higher education transformation. It's safe to say our first conversation exceeded all expectations! We had professionals from across the UK - Dundee to London, Milton Keynes to Manchester - come together to share insights, stories, and a desire for real, sustainable change.

This is just the beginning. Together, we're building a supportive community to exchange ideas, tackle challenges, and co-create solutions. Whether you attended the first session or are reading about it here for the first time, you're part of this journey. Let's shape the future of change in higher education together.



“

“I think it's really good to be part of a conversation where we're talking about actually how to effectively communicate, manage and lead change because you know, it has to happen.”

- Helen McCormick



These 3 words

Our inaugural Change H.E. Conversation was bursting with energy, insights, and honesty. From academics to professional services staff, IT specialists to senior leaders, attendees shared their experiences and challenges with transformation in HE.

Three themes emerged as critical pillars of meaningful change:

HONESTY

Change only works when we're upfront about the real challenges and the true purpose behind the effort. Whether it's addressing change fatigue or cultural divides, honest conversations are the foundation for solutions that work.

STORYTELLING

Behind every transformation are human stories. Understanding that change is hard for people and sharing our experiences - what worked, what didn't, and what we learned - helps build empathy and collective understanding.

EMPOWERMENT

True change happens when everyone has a voice and the power to act. Change isn't just for leaders; it's a collective effort.

The importance of honesty in university change

Kanika Selvan, a higher education change and transformation specialist, emphasises the importance of **honesty** in university change, urging the sector to confront uncomfortable truths. She points out that many change programmes, especially those around student systems, are often more about improving processes for professional services than actually benefiting students. This **disconnect** can take a **personal toll** on those involved in the change process, with impacts on mental health and work-life balance.

She advocates for more **transparent** conversations, where the **human** side of transformation is acknowledged, and the real benefits and challenges are openly discussed. Kanika believes that until the sector faces these uncomfortable realities, it won't be able to fully realize the potential of its change efforts.

Furthermore, Kanika advocates for bringing in cross-sector thinking to enrich the conversation around change. By expanding the dialogue and centering the focus on the real-world impacts on staff and students, she believes the sector can begin to drive more meaningful, sustainable transformation

“

“We need to be really honest about where we are with change now... and how well we, as a sector, do it”

- Kanika Selvan

The role of 'storytelling' in university change

Craig Clark, an experienced data governance and data protection and security specialist, highlights a significant issue in the sector: many change initiatives are pursued without effectively communicating the why behind them. He believes that too often, organizations rush into change for the sake of progress without **clearly explaining the reasons and benefits** to everyone involved. Senior executives, in particular, struggle to **articulate the need for change** in a way that **resonates with all levels** of the organization, making it harder for teams to get on board.


Craig suggests that a key solution to this is **storytelling**. Drawing from his own experience, he emphasizes the power of simple, relatable stories to make complex changes easier to understand and follow. He advocates for creating scenarios and narratives that illustrate how to get from point A to point B, helping people navigate change without feeling overwhelmed by complexity.

He stresses that while change may be challenging, it can be made smoother and more accessible with clear communication and engaging stories.

"Change is really hard, but it doesn't have to be made hard for everyone"

“

- Craig Clark



Story Telling



More empowerment in change in universities

Rosie Downen (IT Project Delivery Manager) and **Rob Dunford (Head of Business Change and Project Support)** both emphasize the importance of **empowerment** in driving successful change in higher education. Rosie shares a pivotal moment when she questioned whether a project should continue, saying, “Should we really be moving forward?” She believes it’s crucial to empower people to recognize **when a change is no longer right**, whether due to timing, misalignment, or a flawed solution. **Being able to stop** or pivot a project is a powerful tool in ensuring resources aren’t wasted on ineffective initiatives.

Together, **Rosie** and **Rob’s** contributions stress that successful change in higher education requires both empowerment - the ability to recognize when to stop or pivot - and an awareness of the cultural and power dynamics at play. Empowering the right people to make decisions and openly address resistance can lead to more sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful change.

Rob, on the other hand, highlights how empowering stakeholders to embrace change can **shift power dynamics** and **create a positive atmosphere** around change. However, this empowerment also led to resistance from traditional authorities who were accustomed to controlling change. Rob connects this to the cultural challenges in higher education, where deep-rooted power structures and governance models can resist new approaches, no matter how positive they seem.

“*It’s important to build in the strength and support for people to say stop when it’s either the wrong change, or where the moment has passed...*

- Rosie Downen



Change H.E. Chuckle



USERS REALLY WANT
THIS FEATURE



BE HONEST



IT'S HIGHLY REQUESTED



BY WHOM?



THE CEO



THANK YOU

What's coming up?

More Change H.E.
Conversations!

**SIGN UP TO THE
SERIES**

Keep up to date
with us

**FOLLOW US ON
LINKEDIN**



 **Get Involved!**

Have ideas for future discussions? Want to share your story or lead a conversation?
Email: suhasini.kulkarni@dataqubed.com.