

# ASCILITE 2024

## Navigating the Terrain:

*Emerging Frontiers in Learning Spaces, Pedagogies, and Technologies*

### Navigating university-OPMs: Challenging sociocultural norms of higher education to design and deliver spaces for online learning

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This panel focuses on the second theme of the conference, that is TEL Pedagogies: What can we learn from examples of success and failure in designing with and implementing old and new pedagogies enabled by technology? It explores Online Program Management companies' (OPMs) role in higher education partnerships to design and deliver spaces for online learning. Utilizing key theoretical frameworks such as Resource-Based View (Barney, 1991; Kero & Bogale, 2023; Prahalad & Hamel, 1990; Wernerfelt, 1984) and Holon IQ's Higher Education Digital Capability Framework (2020), the panel empowers universities to identify strengths, gaps, and strategic opportunities for collaboration. Barney (1991) suggests that by posing inquiries related to value, rarity, imitability, and organisation (VRIO), insights regarding competitive advantages, sustainability, and capability gaps can emerge, facilitating strategic decision-making. In the context of OPMs and university clients, VRIO offers a framework to comprehend the competitive advantage and sustainability of educational partnerships. Through discussion and debate the panel aims to challenge sociocultural norms, address challenges in transitioning to online formats, and propose effective partnership strategies.

*Keywords:* Online program management, university partnerships, quality, learning design, higher education

#### Summaries of key topics

##### **Theme one: Outsourcing in the university value chain and decision-making tools**

Universities must strategically assess whether to 'protect', 'make', 'buy', or blend services to effectively partner with OPMs. Utilizing frameworks such as Barney's Resource-Based View (1991) and Holon IQ's Higher Education Digital Capability Framework (2020) Nguyen & Gilmore will present 10 approaches in the OPM market's demand and supply, which empowers universities to understand their unique resources, identify gaps in their in-house competencies, and partner to enhance and diversify their in-house capabilities. By doing so, universities can position themselves for sustainable competitive advantages in the online education landscape (Otter, 2021).

##### **Theme two: Faculty and staff experiences working with OPMs**

The success of University-OPM partnerships heavily depends on faculty and staff cooperation. The panel analyses case studies from Australia (Abblitt, Smith), North America (Bouchey, Wilson, and Graham), and Malaysia (Vale, Nadarajan, and Fujimoto) to explore the dynamics of faculty interactions with OPMs. The panel delves into the challenges and opportunities encountered when transitioning courses from face-to-face to online formats, highlighting the significant time commitment and adaptability required for success, while acknowledging that working with OPMs brings new methodologies and technologies to the design and delivery of university programs. Educators and administrators need to understand these innovations to enhance the quality and effectiveness of their online offerings.

##### **Theme three: Building successful OPM-University partnerships**

The final panel theme will provide guiding principles for institutions looking to use partners to expand their online offering while remaining focused on the student experience. Through this theme the audience will hear about playbooks (Bouchey, Wilson, and Graham) to set up a revenue-sharing or fee-for-service approach or what resources and ways of working an institution needs to have in place to be confident about decoupling. Wijeratne and Ogilvie present a case study offering valuable insights into building trust, managing conflicts, and striking a balance between risks and rewards in partnerships. These insights can help institutions navigate challenges and maximize the benefits of OPM partnerships.

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### Proposed Panel Members

Dr Dawn Gilmore is Associate Professor, Academic Product & Student Experience, University of Melbourne

Dr Chinh Nguyen is Senior Advisor (Student Experience), University of Melbourne

Dr Stephen Abblitt is Academic Development Manager, Keypath Education (Australia & Asia Pacific)

Dr. Bettyjo Bouchey is Chief Officer, Professional & Continuing Education, University of Vermont, USA

Dr. Michael Graham is President of Valley College, USA

Veronica Wilson is Executive Director of Undergraduate Student Success and Adjunct Faculty at National Louis University, USA

Eamon Vale is a senior manager at Keypath Education APAC

Dr. Geetha Nadarajan is a Lecturer, Department of Marketing Strategy and Innovation, Sunway Business School, Sunway University, Malaysia

Dr. Yuka Fujimoto is a Professor of Business Management at the Sunway Business School in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Liz Smith is Director of Learning at Mentem by UNSW

Dr Aaron Wijeratne is Head of Academic Services, Boundless Learning

Ali Ogilvie is Associate Director, Education Innovation and Business Development, University of Western Australia

### 60-Minute Symposium Outline

#### I. Introduction (5 minutes)

- Welcome and Opening Remarks
- Brief Overview of the Symposium Topics and Objectives

#### II. Section 1: Outsourcing in the university value chain and decision-making tools (10 minutes)

#### III. Section 2: Faculty and staff experiences working with OPMs (20 minutes)

#### IV. Section 3: Building successful OPM-University partnerships (15 minutes)

#### V. Q&A Session and Wrap-Up (10 minutes)

### Strategies to Engage Attendees

- Interactive Polls and Surveys, Videos, Live Q&A, Case Study Examples and Audience Participation

### Intended Audience

- Higher education administrators and leaders, Faculty and instructional designers, Educational technologists, Policy makers and stakeholders in online education, OPM partners and representatives

### Expected Outcomes

- Outsourcing in the university value chain and decision-making tools
- Practical insights from case studies on faculty experiences in OPM partnerships
- Clear strategies and principles for successful long-term university-OPM partnerships
- Actionable playbooks for setting up and managing OPM collaborations or transitioning away from them

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### Key Takeaways

- The latest trends in OPM approaches and their implications for those working in universities
- Key faculty and staff's perspectives working with OPMs
- Strategies for maintaining and enhancing quality in teaching and learning through OPM collaborations

### References

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Nguyen, B.C., & Gilmore, D. (2024). Navigating university-OPMs: Challenging sociocultural norms of higher education to design and deliver spaces for online learning. In Cochrane, T., Narayan, V., Bone, E., Deneen, C., Saligari, M., Tregloan, K., Vanderburg, R. (Eds.), *Navigating the Terrain: Emerging frontiers in learning spaces, pedagogies, and technologies*. Proceedings ASCILITE 2024. Melbourne (pp. 164-166). <https://doi.org/10.14742/apubs.2024.1227>

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