# Programme and Project Management (PPM) Community of Practice

1st November 2018

# Launch

1. A word from our SMT sponsor – Tom Rowson

2. Meet the co-leads – Sarah Dowling, Sarah Earl & Dean Stokes

3. Learning from experience and Q&A – Michael Schuitevoeder

4. 'Crowd-solving' – Kate Higham

5. Wrap-up

# Community of Practice

A group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

# Purpose

To catalyse and deliver improvement at UCL through development of this Community and the staff within it, identification of best practice, knowledge exchange and collective problem-solving.

# PPM CoP co-leads

Sarah Dowing (PM, Division of Psychiatry)
sarah.dowling@ucl.ac.uk

Sarah Earl (PMO Manager, UCL East)
sarah.earl@ucl.ac.uk

Dean Stokes (Major Projects Portfolio Director)
d.stokes@ucl.ac.uk

# Five projects kicked-off on 1$^{st}$ August

➤ **Project Log**

   Register of UCL's projects

➤ **Communities of Excellence**

   Clarity around tools and methods, building on what we have already

➤ **Mentoring**

   Scheme tailored to the PPM Community

➤ **Training & Development**

   Associate PM qualification and career development framework

➤ **Launch**

   'Lunch & learn' and introduction to 'PPM Crowd-solving' on 1$^{st}$ November

# What We Will Cover Today

- A little about me to set the context
- A look at common challenges programmes and approaches for managing them
- A look at challenges that are personal to me
- A look at learnings I took from the Francis Crick

# A little about me

- Education: Management at undergraduate level, Medical Informatics at Masters Levels

- Started life as an IT programmer in agricultural research, then 18 years in the biopharmaceutical IT R&D in many positions from systems manager to global vice-president responsible for international R&D IT

- Last 14 years spent as an independent – across consulting in behavioural transformation, IT and business strategy, organisational transformation, and establishing new medical research centres (physical and organisational)

- Project and programme management a continuing theme for delivery throughout my career

# A Little About Me - Pivotal Career Moment

Moving out of global organisations into independent consulting

- Moving from a successful leadership career in FTSE 50 / blue chip companies to establishing a behavioural change practice in a very small consulting practice. Driver: Seeking to learn more about holistic and systemic change, enabled through people and their behaviours and how this relates to infrastructure investments

- Moving from "career" politics as a career professional to "project" politics as an independent. Learning: There is no life in projects that is politics free – just need different skills to manage different politics

# Literature: Major Challenges in PPM

1. Undefined / Poorly Defined Goals and Definitions of Success
2. Scope Change / Creep
3. Inadequate Skills to Deliver / Inadequate Resources
4. Lack of Clear Accountabilities
5. Poor / No Risk Management
6. Poor / No Contingency Planning
7. Poor Communication (Everywhere)
8. Unrealistic Deadlines
9. Poor Stakeholder Participation

# Challenges Largely Fit Into Different Categories

- Structural – Ensuring the strategies and management processes are in place. We have the tools and methodologies – need to keep reminding ourselves to use them

- Project Resources – We often don't have enough and capital assets (buildings, IT systems, other infrastructure) often easier for leadership to understand and justify than resources into organisational transformation and project oversight Focus on the highest areas of project risk when resources are constrained. Deliver the highest priorities.

- Cultural / Behavioural – Overcoming blocking from individual's personal concerns (political, emotional, pragmatic) and the organisational cultural approaches (the way things are done here) to realise the infrastructure delivery and organisational changes necessary to realise success Change / project leaders are process facilitators that highlight the challenges and provide methods for individuals and organisations to transform. Sometimes we can't change things – its then about influencing and flexing within constraints to deliver success

- Leadership Capacity – Difficulty in getting leadership focus on project priorities / questions / issues. Often driven by sheer demand on their time Take them proposed solutions – not problems. Understand the lack of attention is not personal

# Common Challenges and Categorisation

| Challenge | Category |
|---|---|
| Poorly Defined Goals and Definitions of Success | Structural / Cultural and Behavioural |
| Scope Change / Creep | Structural / Resources |
| Inadequate Skills to Deliver / Inadequate Resources | Resources / Cultural and Behavioural |
| Lack of Clear Accountability | Structural / Cultural and Behavioural |
| Poor / No Risk Management | Structural |
| Poor / No Contingency Planning | Structural / Resources |
| Poor Communication (Everywhere) | Structural / Cultural and Behavioural |
| Unrealistic Deadlines | Structural / Resources / Cultural and Behavioural (political) |
| Poor Stakeholder Participation | Leadership Capacity |

# Challenges Most Personal to Me

- Realising the value we set out to achieve

- Deliver what the sponsor needs / wants longer term

- Gaining trust from stakeholders

- Working with powerful line functional model – weaker programme culture

# Realising the benefits we set out to achieve

- As professional project people how often do we fully achieve the benefits we set out to achieve – and are often stated in business cases?

- After eighteen years in IT project delivery – I understood that this rarely happened with large infrastructure investments – and I was considered to be highly successful

- Reason I believe: Infrastructure provision – be it a new building or an IT system that are well delivered rarely bring about direct change. Associated people interventions are often needed, the infrastructure is a critical enabler.

- Approach I Use: Focus on the people and their change in line with realising the infrastructure deliver

# Delivering what the sponsor needs / wants longer term

- Project people move on – sponsors own the outcome

- Project focus is often on the next step – enabling infrastructure or immediate change – without thoughts on sustainability

- Projects can face unassailable operational challenges for leadership to address. All too often the reason for "project" failure

Focus on success beyond the initial delivery – deliver in the long term interests of the programme and the organisation

# Gaining Trust with Stakeholders

- Starting with a new group of stakeholders – often without a proven legacy in the organisation – will require the building of trust with senior stakeholders

- Do what you say you'll do

- Be transparent on project activity – the good, the bad, and the ugly. Trust will follow – projects are understood to rarely be smooth

# Working with powerful line functional model – weaker programme culture

- Many organisations have very powerful line functions – much weaker programme functions

- Often leads to conflict on project ownership and makes it difficult for the project manager to influence sufficiently

- Recognising where authority lies and wherever possible work collaboratively to influence rather than direct

- Take authority, push back to ensure success. Requires a tough skin – leadership can be a lonely place

# Francis Crick and Learnings for UCL

- Many Similarities to UCL IoN-DRI Programme:
  - Large scale building / infrastructure investment
  - Merging together disparate organisations
  - Creating something new with innovative ways of working
- Significant Differences
  - Crick is an independent institute that needs to provide all of its own operational services / UCL relies of central services
  - Crick is heavily core funded / UCL is heavily grant funded

# Francis Crick – Some Challenges I Faced and How I Addressed Them - Authority

- Role was a Transition Director – I was the 7th person in the role in under three years.
- Helped me understand the challenge I was facing – powerful line positions with programme viewed as another line function
- Built influencing relationships – the lines were powerful and programme management not well understand
- Created transparency on line / programme planning and delivery – no-one can argue with facts
- Positioned project team as enablers and partners – became a colleague rather than a challenge on line authority
- Developed a tough skin – took the blows and came back stronger

# Francis Crick – Some Challenges I Faced and How I Addressed Them – Stakeholder Trust

- Arrived with major concerns over delivery from funders

- Project running amber (bordering red) on government dashboards

- Moved to green in 18 months

- Immediately set about creating transparency and communicating where we were – warts and all

- Showed planning, delivery, risks, issues – and perhaps most importantly how these were being addressed

- Everyone became a stakeholder in addressing issues and ensuring delivery – trust quickly became the norm – and programme workstreams starting delivering more effectively in a transparent world

# Francis Crick – Some Challenges I Faced and How I Addressed Them – Resources

- Joined the Crick with a team of five

- Did the analysis and determined I needed twenty-four to deliver effectively

- Bartered a few more and started with eight

- Focused on addressing the most critical challenges/ addressing the most important risk

- Success begat success – ended up with a team of eighteen as requirements for scaling emerged from leadership and stakeholders

# Parting Thoughts

- Individually I have one approach based on personal bias, together we have many, which when used as holistically will result in better outcomes

- There are many ways to achieve success – none of us own the perfect route

- Putting our heads together to crowd solve can only improve the benefits we realise for UCL

# Q&A