Sustaining Strategic Innovation in Higher Education: Can Insights from the Corporate Sector Help?  
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As a sector, higher education is at the low end of innovation rankings. While start-up institutions often seek to break new ground in teaching and learning, few have been able to sustain a strategic intent in innovation over time. Sustaining more strategic innovation in our higher education institutions may be critical to addressing the many challenges facing us – changing demographics, diminishing government support, the need to equip students for an uncertain future of work.

Experts in teaching and learning in higher education have suggested that lessons learned in the corporate sector could be adapted to our context. “Higher education will not figure out its future by only thinking about higher education. We need to look outside academia, and – where possible – use these examples to think about our possible higher ed futures.”

In this session, we will describe our research to adapt insights from a two-decade long research program with corporate sector leaders in strategic innovation. This research has demonstrated how strategic innovation can be sustained through development of specific organizational capabilities that support strategic innovation initiatives, creation of professional development and career paths for innovation staff and the management of the innovation portfolio to align with the organization’s strategic intent.

We will outline three aspects of this research:
- how we selected insights from this corporate research for potential adaptability to foster strategic innovation for teaching and learning in higher education;
- the process and results from our initial proof-of-concept tests, using scenarios for sustaining strategic innovation in two region-serving comprehensive universities;
- our current plans to apply the results in prototype tests across a range of institutional partners, on issues arising from their current strategic intent for innovation in teaching and learning.