



OH Strong Start to Finish // May 20, 2019

Creating the Conditions for Cross-Silo Collaboration

Virtual Clinic Series

About Sova

Mission Driven Focus on Building Capacity for Student-Success Change Efforts

Accelerating the pace and improving the quality of complex problem solving in higher education and workforce development;

Helping higher education leaders move from strategy to action, from solution to implementation, and from pilot to scaled intervention;

Specifically, helping higher education leaders with change leadership, process improvement, and business planning for large-scale student-success focused work

About Sova

Our Approach

High-quality innovation that is evidence-based, sustainable, and scalable;

Attention to both the technical and human dimensions of change;

Clear-eyed attention to resource allocation and business modeling;

Rigorous focus on process design;

Planning for meaningful engagement of critical stakeholders;

Improving collaboration between groups to make work better, to build will for change, and to drive progress on key initiatives.

Topics for today

The **inescapable necessity** of silo-spanning

Building the **skills** required for effective silo-spanning

The difference between silo-spanning and “**silo-busting**”

The role of the **leader** in cross-silo collaboration

Silo-spanning **practices** to move your work forward

Level Set: Why a Focus on Cross-Silo Collaboration?

- When the *student* and the *student experience* are placed firmly in the center of the institution's mission, vision, and strategy, silo-spanning isn't optional – it's a *necessity*.
- Silo-spanning is not something an institution completes, it is part of the *ongoing work* of becoming a *truly student-focused enterprise*. It is not work that ends.



Key Question

What are the skills necessary for effective silo-spanning and how do you build them in yourselves (and support their development in your colleagues)?

Insights are based on:

- On-the ground work in dozens of institutions
- Implementation Science & Healthcare Research
- Deliberative Democracy



Silo-busting vs. Silo-spanning

Full-blown restructuring is costly, confusing, slow and rife with unintended consequences (it can be done well, but implementation is a significant barrier... and it's not the only option)

Silo-Spanning: A World of Bridging & Gluing

- Requires a transformational/adaptive view of leadership (relationship-driven)
- Dependent on a growth mindset (resilience)
- Requires a subset of people at every level who are comfortable with liminality (the ability & willingness to think across boundaries & live on multiple sides of a barrier)
- Less about culture change, and more about cultural exchange

Casciaro, Edmonson, Jang (HBR, May-June 2019)

The Basics of Silo-Spanning: Cooperation vs Collaboration

Cooperation isn't enough to accomplish transformation; success depends on collaboration.

Cooperation is...

- Short-term
- Transactional
- Focused on independent goals

Collaboration is...

- Long-term
- Relational
- Focused on shared goals



Ashkenas (HBR, May 2015)

The role of the leader in silo-spanning

Leaders Working to Inspire Cross-Silo Collaboration Must

- **Make the specific goal clear:** What silos need spanning and to what specific end?
- **Set the vision & paint the picture:** What will look like/feel like to the student when we've got the ideal in place?
- **Develop & support silo-spanners** in multiple forms: Identify, develop, unleash “Bridgers” & “Glurers”
- **Model the behavior**
 - learning about others & relating to them
 - attending to process & nurturing collaboration

Essential Practices

“New insights fail to get put into practice because they conflict with deeply held internal images of how the world works.”
—Senge

Learning & Relating

- Inquisitiveness
- Empathy
- Active perspective-taking

Attending to Process & Nurturing Collaboration

- Ask better questions
- Have better meetings
- Map your processes with humans in mind



The Art of Inquiry: Asking Good Questions

Don't...

- Start with yes/no questions
- Ask overly general questions (“What’s on your mind?”)
- Assume that you understand what people are saying
- Assume that the collaboration process will take care of itself

Do...

- Start with open-ended questions that minimize preconceptions
- Ask questions that focus on specific issues, but leave lots of room for people to elaborate
- Check your understanding by summarizing what you’re hearing and asking explicitly for corrections or missing elements
- Take the time to ask questions to help people share their experiences with relationships/processes (What can we be doing to work together more effectively? What makes it easier and harder for you to bring your best to your work?)

Gino (HBR, Sept-Oct 2018)

Meetings Matter (and most fall short of their potential)

Good meetings have...

- Clear, achievable goals
- Right people at the table
- Skillful facilitation
- Honest appraisal of barriers & opportunities
- Clear outcomes with actions attached
- Time dedicated to communication & engagement implications

What's Next

- ✓ Take stock & identify specific priorities for silo-spanning
- ✓ Commit to the discipline associated with better meetings
- ✓ Take time to generate the right questions & to listen carefully
- ✓ Skill-up in facilitation (Sova Facilitation Guide is a free, user-friendly resource available through OH SSTF)
- ✓ Reject easy answers & the “fundamental attribution error” as you make your way
- ✓ Identify where you may benefit from neutral situation-analysis or outside facilitation training



Thank you.

SOVA

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