Building Resilience & Protecting Progress
The Hard Work of Cultivating Culture Change
for Equitable Student Success

February 2021

Own Your Power

➢ Ground in purpose & build your capacity to ground others

➢ Practice culture-building & attend to the places where change falls apart

➢ Attend to culture-building as key to effective implementation of core priorities

What Grounds Your Work & Anchors Your Purpose?

Large-scale, equity-focused student success work is _deeply_ counter-cultural (even for colleges founded with an access mission)

Large-scale = moving beyond boutique programs to pursue evidence-based _redesign of policies, practices, procedures at scale_ to lower barriers to more equitable outcomes for today's students

Equity-focused = a clear-eyed, evolving understanding of structural inequity/systemic racism, and the _longstanding complicity of higher education in raising barriers_ for students from historically marginalized and/or minoritized communities

Counter-cultural = embracing key _ideas that are completely different from those that dominate_ both spoken and unspoken deeply held beliefs & norms of practice...

The Work of Shifting Mindsets & Changing Hearts

➤ From sorting to **supporting** (from goalie to guide)

➤ From the myth of meritocracy to meaningful **equity consciousness**

➤ From blame-game to honest **co-ownership**

➤ From best intentions to **data-informed decisions**

➤ From fixing to **dismantling**

➤ From unspoken assumptions about students' abilities to **critical interrogation** of the impact of those deep-seated assumptions on student outcomes & equity gaps

SOVA

The Day-to-Day Work of Building the Habits of Modern Change Leadership

Practice the essentials of clear & consistent communication

- ➢ Case-making *never* ends, it evolves
- ➢ Effective communication entails close listening to those closest to students & students themselves

Attend with great care to supporting those tasked with implementation

- ➢ The quality of support provided to mid-level managers and frontline faculty & staff will make or break your work
- ➢ Take realistic stock of capacity and do the hard work of prioritizing

Commit to the long-term work of cultivating strong & effective silo-spanning teams, and live it day-to-day

- ➢ Upskill in smart, engaging use of data & evidence, and have better meetings
- ➢ Do the hard, ongoing, <u>inward-facing</u> work of building meaningful equity-consciousness among faculty/staff/administrators

Having Better Meetings

Top 10 Plagues of Bad Meetings

1. Misaligned expectations
2. No clear, achievable goals
3. No progress
4. Poor use of data
5. People don't feel heard, respected
6. Collaboration encouraged but not supported
7. Unmanaged/unacknowledged interests or power dynamics
8. Lack of authenticity
9. Bad behavior
10. No outcomes

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

Silo-Spanning: A World of Bridging & Gluing

Spanning not Busting

➤ 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

➤ Less about culture change, and more about cultural exchange   Adapted from: Casciaro, Edmonson, Jang (HBR, May-June 2019)

From Ideas to Action

➤ Make the specific goal clear: What silos need spanning and to what specific end?

➤ Set the vision & paint the picture: What will this 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" & "Gluers"

➤ Model the behavior >>>>

Learning & Relating

➤ Inquisitiveness

➤ Empathy

➤ Active perspective taking

Nurturing Collaboration & Attending to Practice

➤ Ask better questions

➤ Have better meetings

➤ Map your processes with humans in mind

From Ideas to Action
Attending to Culture Building as a Vehicle for Accelerating Progress

- Help <u>everyone</u> connect the dots to see themselves in the student success priorities of the college by bringing coherence to the many initiatives/activities/priorities that guide your work.

- Make space for "working through" to build a sense of co-discovery & co-ownership as part of the work designing strong implementation plans for key priorities.

- Lead with empathy, even as you ground in data and purpose. It's people, not ideas that create sustainable change, and change most often falls apart in implementation.

- Remember that people don't fear change, they fear loss – and attend to perceived risk & threat (without falling into the "fundamental attribution error") as you create implementation plans.

- Own courageously where communication is falling apart in practice... and commit to continuous improvement as a core strategy for successful execution of priorities.

- Prioritize supporting HEROism (hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism) at every level and empowering leadership at multiple levels to support.

Implementation Climate & Culture Assessment

Sova's research-based Implementation Climate & Culture Scan tool and process helps leaders **improve the quality** and **accelerate the pace** of ambitious student-success work:

❑ Assess readiness for large-scale change
❑ Identify leading opportunities for accelerating progress on key priorities
❑ Unearth and plan for the mitigation of potential pitfalls & derailers
❑ Sequence strategic communications and faculty & staff engagement activities

➢ Grounded in implementation science, adaptive leadership studies, organizational development and social psychology
➢ Tailored to meet specific needs
➢ Informed by dozens of focus groups, hundreds of interviews, and countless hours of institution-based fieldwork with faculty, staff & administrators at more than 200 colleges & universities
➢ 15-20 key indicators in four domains

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