

INFRASTRUCTURE

9. Continue to create convening spaces that bring actors in the student experience field together across silos to build connections, share and apply knowledge, and develop shared agendas

In the input we gathered, people highlighted the value of SERN **convening actors across silos** to achieve meaningful [advancements in research](#), coordinated action, and the [application of research-based knowledge](#) going forward. They emphasized the ongoing need for similarly generative and learning-oriented convening spaces, as well as new opportunities for **dedicated professional learning communities** in practice and research.

Engage in and support inclusive convenings of people and organizations across silos.

Host, contribute to, and participate in gatherings that bring together people across silos to extend the latest thinking and practice in the field of student experience, across (and within) research, practice, policy, and funding.

Such spaces require the ability to cultivate relational trust that can encourage generative dialogue and constructive disagreement. It can be helpful for funders to play a behind-the-scenes role or solely a financial support role, providing funding to cover organizing costs and following up with the host(s) afterward to learn about takeaways. Funding can also help participants explore potential partnerships and projects after convenings. Non-financial resources that field actors can share and solicit include thought partnership and recommendations and connections to speakers, facilitators, and venues.

When convening across silos, consider important factors related to inclusion and power, relationship-building, translation, and scaffolding all participants to be successful in that space. This includes being respectful of participants' time (and what can feel truly optional versus implicitly mandated) and being mindful of contributions and intellectual property, where relevant. Convenings should be hosted in response to genuine demand and

needs from the field and designed with participant input.

Develop your own skills and invest in those of your colleagues (e.g., staff, students) and organization at bridging across silos, including as a [facilitator](#) and participant. Fund and engage in professional learning in these areas.

Looking forward, individuals who shared insights with SERN saw a need for dedicated communities in both practice and research focused on ongoing learning in low-stakes contexts.

Invest in existing or new professional learning communities that help education actors “make the leap” from understanding principles from research on student experience to making changes in their work in response to the research, by providing low-stakes spaces to practice new skills, share knowledge, and provide mutual support.

Invest in similar professional learning communities for researchers studying student experience to develop identities as scholar “bridgers” and practice engaging with practice and policy audiences in a supportive context. Such communities are particularly important given that bridging work is [disincentivized by academia and presents unique challenges and costs for scholars of color](#), especially those engaging publicly on racialized topics.