

Deep Dive 1 - Better Together: Connecting Service Providers Across Cornell

Have you ever needed a service but weren't sure who to contact? Submitted a request only to discover it belonged to a different department, with no clear path to the right one? Wondered about the status of a ticket and had no easy way to track its progress or know when to expect a response? Or, as a service provider, struggled to resolve an issue because it depended on another system and you couldn't determine who owned or supported it?

These experiences are common across large organizations and often stem from disconnected processes, tools, and information. Our goal is to work with service providers across Cornell to reduce this friction, making it easier for both customers and providers to find information, collaborate, resolve issues, and deliver a more seamless experience.

The Challenge of Scale

Cornell is a complex and highly decentralized institution. Across the university, hundreds of teams provide services that support teaching, learning, research, administration, healthcare, facilities, and technology. These services are delivered by dedicated professionals who work hard every day to support students, faculty, staff, alumni, and visitors.

While this diversity is one of Cornell's strengths, it can also create challenges.

Different organizations may use different terminology, processes, support models, technologies, reporting methods, and customer engagement approaches. Many of these practices have evolved independently over time to meet local needs, and often they work very well within their own organizational boundaries.

The challenge arises when services cross those boundaries.

A customer may need help from multiple service providers to resolve a single issue. A service provider may depend on another organization's systems, data, or expertise to support their own service. When information is difficult to find, ownership is unclear, or tools do not work together, customers and providers alike experience unnecessary frustration.

The Customer Doesn't See Organizational Boundaries

When a student cannot access a service, they rarely know—or care—which department owns the application, who manages the network, who supports authentication, or who maintains the underlying infrastructure.

They simply know that something is preventing them from accomplishing their goal.

The same is true for faculty trying to teach a class, researchers accessing critical resources, or staff attempting to complete administrative tasks.

Customers experience Cornell as one university, not as a collection of separate organizations.

Every handoff, transfer, delay, or dead end becomes part of their overall experience.

This is why improving service delivery is not just about individual services. It is about improving how services work together.

The Provider Perspective

The challenges are not limited to customers.

Service providers often encounter obstacles when trying to support the services they own.

Consider a support analyst attempting to troubleshoot an issue. They may discover the problem originates in another system, but struggle to identify who owns that system. They may need information from another team, but have no visibility into that team's processes or priorities. They may even discover that multiple groups are solving similar problems independently because there is no shared view of services, capabilities, or ownership.

These situations create delays, duplicate effort, and operational inefficiencies that impact everyone involved.

Most service providers have experienced some variation of:

- Not knowing who to contact for assistance.
- Receiving requests that belong elsewhere.
- Spending time routing tickets rather than resolving them.
- Lacking visibility into the status of dependent work.
- Recreating information that already exists in another system.
- Managing services without a clear understanding of upstream or downstream dependencies.

The result is more effort for providers and a less consistent experience for customers.

Better Together

The Cornell Experience Modernization Initiative (CEMI) presents a unique opportunity to address many of these challenges.

Rather than focusing solely on individual systems or projects, the Service Management workstream is examining how Cornell can better connect service providers through shared practices, common data, enabling technologies, and collaborative ways of working.

This effort is not about centralizing every service or forcing all organizations to operate identically.

It is about identifying the areas where greater alignment can create value for everyone involved.

Examples include:

- Shared approaches to service management.
- Consistent methods for requesting and supporting services.
- Improved visibility into service ownership and dependencies.
- Better reporting and analytics.
- Common knowledge-sharing capabilities.
- Integrated customer support experiences.
- Enterprise service portals.
- AI-powered virtual assistants and self-service capabilities.
- Technology platforms that make collaboration easier across organizational boundaries.

By improving these foundational capabilities, service providers can spend less time navigating complexity and more time delivering value.

Any Customer, Any Service, One Experience

The vision guiding this work is simple:

Any Customer, Any Service, One Experience.

This does not mean every service will look the same.

It means that regardless of which organization provides a service, customers should have a consistent experience when they need information, request assistance, track progress, or seek support.

Likewise, service providers should have the visibility, tools, and partnerships needed to collaborate effectively across organizational boundaries.

The more connected service providers become behind the scenes, the more seamless the customer experience becomes.

Your Success Is Our Success

The Service Management workstream exists to support service providers, not to dictate how they operate.

We recognize that the people closest to services understand their customers, challenges, and operational realities better than anyone else. Our role is to listen, learn, identify opportunities, and help establish the shared capabilities that can benefit the broader Cornell community.

We are excited to meet the individuals and teams who make Cornell's services possible. We want to understand your services, your customers, your challenges, and your goals.

Together, we have a unique opportunity to use this period of transformation to create a more connected, efficient, and customer-centered service ecosystem—one that reflects Cornell's commitment to excellence and delivers a better experience for everyone we serve.

Because when service providers succeed together, customers succeed as well.