

# Identifying Impact + Value Guide



## Purpose

Guide to investigate and show the impact and value of an initiative to your institution and key stakeholders

## Who this is for

- Project Leads

## When to use

Researching and learning

Proposing the initiative

Planning and scoping the initiative

Considering renewal or scaling

Introduction

Tangible Impact Guide

Intangible Impact Guide

## Intangible Impact Guide

### Why is this tool important?

This guide helps identify and assess your initiative's less visible but crucial effects. Intangible impacts often relate to institutional aspects such as reputation, culture, climate, or student experience. Unlike tangible impacts, such as financial gains or physical assets, they lack a straightforward measurement method, making them more challenging to assess. Nonetheless, they can significantly influence long-term success and transformation within your institution.

## Demonstrating Initiative Value Qualitatively

Direct financial impact can be challenging to demonstrate, but the intangible benefits of your initiative can be more compelling if presented thoughtfully. Often, this can be a long list, depending on the initiative. The important thing is to frame your project as explicitly as possible to align it with your institution's/key stakeholders' strategic goals.

**Tip** Suggestions for what to highlight to bolster the case for your initiative include (1) enhanced **institutional or departmental reputation**, (2) improved **institutional culture and climate**, and (3) improved **student experience**.

### Capturing Qualitative Impact

Ask students, staff, faculty, etc., before and after an initiative for feedback. It does not need to be a formal survey, but collecting feedback and stories demonstrating impact can help make the case for an initiative's value. If possible, survey participants before, during, and after an initiative to track shifts in behavior and capture student voice/participant perspectives. You can do this using simple tools or use whatever survey instruments your institution uses.

#### Pre-initiative survey

Establish a baseline before intervention from participants enrolled in an initiative and those not enrolled but with access to it.

#### During initiative surveys

Temperature checks or check-ins throughout with participants involved in initiatives.

#### Post-Initiative Survey

Survey participants enrolled in an initiative and those not enrolled but with access to it.

- What did participants get out of the initiative?
- How did it impact their experience?

### Guiding Questions

#### 1 What intangible benefits or impacts might the initiative have on institutional reputation?

How can this initiative help boost institutional reputation, credibility, and prestige (external rankings, taxonomies, models, and scales) that can drive institutional marketing to students, partners, and external stakeholders?

Some suggestions to consider:

- Alumni engagement
- Community partnerships

What specific external rankings, taxonomies, scales, etc., can you leverage to bolster your case?

Some suggestions to consider:

- Economic and social mobility rankings
- APLU's Student Experience Project (Sense of Belonging)
- Career Readiness: NACE
- Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning
- Lightcast
- Steppingblocks
- CAMPUS Pride Index
- Enhancing Campus
- Climate for Racial and Ethnic Diversity

#### 2 What intangible benefits or impacts might the initiative have on institutional culture and relationships?

For example, budget stakeholders. Consider team members who are also responsible and accountable for this project's workstreams.

**How might your initiative promote the following?**

- Stronger campus climate
- Breaking down silos
- Improved morale
- Common vision/mission
- Shared values
- Strengthening alumni relationships and engagement
- Better employee retention
- Process improvements
- Policy improvements
- Equity improvements
- Improved staff morale

**3 What intangible benefits or impacts might the initiative have on student experience?**

**Examples intangible benefits or impacts**

- Developing more positive and rewarding student experiences can deepen student connection to campus and lead to greater alumni institutional loyalty (and giving!) down the line.
- Improved student morale can be measured (using well-being instruments)– or captured more casually through structured feedback and informal surveys.

**Critical question to consider: What is the framework or criteria you're using to ensure that the institution is aware of and responsive to the unique needs of different student subpopulations at your institution?**

For example:

- Access
- All students can achieve
- Diverse cultures and experiences
- Open dialogue
- Participation in programming that best addresses the needs of our students