

ROI Roundup

Resources for Evaluation of Return on Investment in Higher Education Projects

Higher education institutions are investing in student success initiatives and in teaching and learning initiatives to better serve their students. These initiatives take advantage of new technologies and best practices that enable institutions of higher education to improve student outcomes, increase student access, and leverage resources more effectively.

Decision-makers who are exploring where and how to invest need to evaluate and compare the impacts of different initiatives. The table below lists ROI evaluation resources for three key types of initiatives: digital learning, developmental education and student advising.

Initiative	Resource Description	Who Should Use This Resource?
Digital Learning Digital learning is technology-enabled instruction that gives students and faculty greater flexibility in how, when and where learning occurs.	“Making Digital Learning Work,” by Arizona State University and Boston Consulting Group, looks at the ROI from digital learning implementations at six institutions. The report introduces the concept of ROI being composed of three components—access, outcomes and economics—and includes data on how digital learning implementations impact those three components across different institutions. It also includes seven promising practices for digital learning implementation.	Academic leaders who are considering implementing digital learning and are seeking to understand how it can help their institution achieve goals related to access, outcomes or economics.
Developmental Education Developmental education programs help students who are unprepared for college-level courses become equipped for postsecondary success.	“Understanding Impact,” by Strong Start to Finish, looks at the impacts of developmental education reforms on three components of higher education ROI: access, outcomes and economics. The reforms included are compression, placement, pathways and pedagogy.	Institutional leaders who are weighing different developmental education reforms.
	The Strategic Investment Impacts series in Strong Start to Finish’s Resource Library provides resources to guide calculation of potential inputs to an ROI analysis.	Business analysts who are reviewing costs and returns of developmental education.

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<p>Student Advising</p> <p>Student advising is a planning and information sharing process that guides students in making decisions about their academic paths to help them achieve their goals.</p>	<p>EDUCAUSE's Return on Investment Toolkit, developed with RPK Group, includes a suite of digital resources for thinking about and calculating returns on investment from changes in advising. This toolkit recommends three shifts to make when looking at student success initiatives through an ROI lens: considering people and time as part of the cost of an investment; looking at per-student costs rather than total costs; and connecting student success with financial sustainability. The resources include a road map, case studies, and an ROI calculator spreadsheet that allows users to input costs and information on student credit hours to generate ROI from an intervention.</p>	<p>Business analysts and project managers who are seeking guidance on the process of implementation and a resource for calculating costs per student and ROI.</p>
	<p>"Turning More Tassels," by Boston Consulting Group and NASPA, looks at the impacts of advising reforms on different components of holistic ROI—access, outcomes and economics. The report focuses on advising reforms at four institutions and shares the impacts that those institutions have experienced through their advising reforms. Tips for implementing reforms at an institution are also included.</p>	<p>Leaders in the area of student success who are considering implementation of advising reforms. The report provides information on impacts plus high-level tips for success.</p>