

PART I: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE LEARNER

Making the case for determining the return on the investment of institutional resources in physical and virtual environments for learning can be calibrated from several perspectives: focusing on learners, institutional programmatic and pedagogical initiatives, faculty and budgets, and, finally, on the institutional image into the future.

MAKING THE CASE: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE LEARNER

- What difference will new/repurposed spaces have for the experience of the learner?
- What do we know now about how our students experience learning?
- If we are to establish baseline data from which to determine the impact of our planning on learners, what do we need to know as we begin?
- How can we calibrate the return on investment at the level of the individual student, on our graduates?
- What will be our measures of success for what our students have become, and are recognized for accomplishing in the world?
- How do we measure the return on an investment in spaces we have intentionally designed as a bridge into the future?

This image from an NSF publication illustrates the puzzling, complicated world our alumni and our campus communities and societies face. Recognizing this complexity, the Council on Competitiveness report (2005) *Thriving in a World of Challenge and Change*, set forth these goals for student learning:

We need a whole generation with the capacities for creative thinking and for thriving in a collaborative culture.... People are not born with inherent innovation skills, but they can learn them. They can acquire the social skills to work in diverse, multidisciplinary teams, and learn adaptability and leadership.

These goals are aspirational for learners in all disciplines in pursuit of making a contribution in the world in which they will live and work beyond graduation. They have been driving planning of repurposed and new spaces for learning on college and university campuses for many years (see: [spaces that work collection II](#)). There is an emerging body of evidence from the field about how attention to such goals helps realize spaces that work and some efforts to turn what we know from practice into theory. This will be a collaborative initiative, an important one.

Making the case from the perspective of the learner invites campus colleagues from Admissions and Alumni to the planning table.



National Science Foundation. *Solving the Puzzle: Researching the Impacts of Climate Change Around the World*. 2009.

