

Costs, Benefits -- Guidelines for TSI Phase 2 Recommendations and Proposals

Guidelines for Measuring or Estimating Costs/Benefits for TSI Phase 2 Recommendations

Since the general goals of TSI can be summarized as both decreased costs and/or increased scope for our combined operations, it will be important to measure or estimate the cost vs. benefits of every joint initiative or functional collaboration in which we engage. Some activities lend themselves well to quantitative measurement, others do not, but we must nevertheless devise appropriate means to determine what makes sense to integrate and what does not.

In order to ensure the gathering of sufficient data/information to measure or evaluate the relative success of our joint efforts, working group leads and other involved in TSI Phase 2 should supply answers to the following questions when testing/implementing recommendations, ideas, and suggestions:

1. How much does it cost to perform this task/function as separate institutions?
2. How much would it cost to perform the same task/function if Columbia and Cornell work together?
3. Does the task fill a service, language or skill set gap at one or both institutions?
4. Are there ongoing overhead costs (communication, documentation, meetings) associated with mainstreaming this activity -- in other words, costs above and beyond what is required to simply perform the task/function?
5. How much time, money, or staff effort will working together on this task/function save us?
6. How will integrating this task/function improve user service?
7. What other benefits might we realize from integrating this task/function?
8. If we integrate this task/function across the two libraries, do we have (or need) an exit/fallback strategy for those that don't work out over time?
9. If purchasing a product, what are the initial and ongoing costs for that product?

The TSI Steering Committee will provide support and guidance to those conducting these evaluations, primarily through the Steering Committee liaisons to the working groups, but also through its assessment liaisons (Colleen Major and Boaz Nadav-Manes). We will also call on assessment and data analysts experts at both institutions, when necessary, to assist in this process.