

Comparison of Intercollegiate Sports, Campus Clubs, and a Campus-Wide Service Initiative at BYU-Idaho

Mikhail Moojalsky

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1. Financial Considerations

Intercollegiate Sports: High-Cost, Potential Revenue Generator

Initial Startup Costs

Intercollegiate athletics require a significant initial investment, particularly in infrastructure, staffing, and equipment. These expenses are necessary to establish and maintain a competitive program and ensure compliance with governing bodies such as the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association [NCAA], 2022).

Primary Expenses:

Facilities & Equipment

Building or upgrading stadiums, fields, locker rooms, and training centers can cost millions of dollars. Some universities repurpose existing facilities, but this still requires renovations, which can be costly (Jones, 2015).

- For example, renovating a football field or gym can cost anywhere from \$500,000 to \$5 million, depending on the scope and required modifications (Denhart & Ridpath, 2011).
- Updating Viking Stadium would likely require 600,000 up to 1 million for new turf and new scoreboards. Additional upgrades may be needed to the bleachers and press box.
- Additional upgrades to the Hart gym are likely needed. New scoreboards and additional seating in place of the stage are possibilities.

Coaching & Staff Salaries

Hiring qualified coaches, athletic trainers, and administrative staff contributes significantly to the financial burden of collegiate sports programs.

- Estimated salaries range from \$50,000 to \$150,000 per coach annually, with trainers and assistants making less. (Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, 2020).

Scholarships & Recruitment

Many intercollegiate sports programs offer scholarships to attract top talent, adding to operational costs.

- Athletic scholarships typically range from \$5,000 to \$50,000 per student per year, depending on the sport and funding availability (NCAA, 2022).
 - If BYU–I competes at the division 3 level no athletic scholarships can be awarded.

Travel & Competition Costs

Funding for team travel, hotel accommodations, and meals for away games is another major expense.

- Travel costs can range from \$50,000 to \$500,000 per year, depending on the sport and number of away competitions (Denhart & Ridpath, 2011).

Ongoing Operational Costs

Even after initial investments, maintaining an intercollegiate sports program requires substantial yearly funding:

Athlete Training & Medical Care

- Teams require strength training programs, physical therapy, and injury treatment, with an estimated cost of \$100,000+ per year (Smith, 2021).
- BYU–I will bear this less because of the existing program and trainers.

Game-Day Expenses

- Hosting home games involves costs for referees, security, maintenance, and event staffing, ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000 per event (NCAA, 2022).

Potential Revenue Sources

Despite its high cost, intercollegiate sports can also be a revenue generator:

Ticket Sales & Merchandise

Popular sports like basketball and football can generate revenue through ticket sales and branded merchandise.

- Schools with strong programs can earn millions per year, but smaller programs may struggle to break even (Meer & Rosen, 2008).

Sponsorships & Donations

Partnerships with businesses and alumni donations can help offset costs. Alumni of successful athletic programs are more likely to contribute financially to their alma mater (Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, 2020).

Broadcast & Media Rights

Some universities sign lucrative deals for media rights, but this is rare for smaller institutions and conferences.

Overall Cost Assessment:

- High initial cost (~\$5 million+).
 - High ongoing operational cost (~\$1 million+ annually).
 - Potential for revenue generation, if successful.
 - Financially risky unless a strong fan base and support network are built (Denhart & Ridpath, 2011).
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2. Enhancing Campus Clubs & Organizations: Moderate-Cost, High Accessibility

Campus clubs and organizations provide students with opportunities for leadership development, networking, and community engagement while being relatively cost-effective compared to intercollegiate athletics (Astin, 1999). However, these clubs still require funding for startup, operational expenses, and promotional efforts to ensure long-term sustainability (Kuh et al., 2005).

Initial Startup Costs

While campus clubs are generally low-cost initiatives, they require initial investments for successful establishment and growth:

Club Registration & Promotion

Developing an accessible online directory and hosting club fairs are essential for recruiting members and raising awareness.

- Estimated cost: \$10,000 to \$50,000 (for software, advertising, and event logistics) (Dugan, 2011). This is total and will be borne by all of the clubs.

Facilities & Meeting Spaces

Many clubs require designated areas for meetings, events, and activities.

- If existing campus facilities are used, the cost is minimal.
- If new spaces must be built or upgraded, costs can range from \$100,000 to \$1 million, depending on the scope of renovations (Tinto, 2012).

Club Starter Grants

Providing small funding grants to clubs can encourage new organizations to form and sustain operations.

- Typical grants range from \$500 to \$5,000 per club (Kuh et al., 2005).

Ongoing Operational Costs

Sustaining campus clubs requires recurring funding, though costs vary depending on the club's activities and goals:

Event Funding & Guest Speakers

- Hosting events, bringing in speakers, and organizing workshops are essential for engagement.
- Estimated cost: \$20,000 to \$200,000 per year, depending on the scale (Dugan, 2011).

Marketing & Outreach

- Keeping students informed about club activities through digital platforms, newsletters, and promotions ensures steady participation.
- Estimated cost: \$10,000 to \$50,000 per year (Kuh et al., 2005).

Potential Revenue Sources

Campus clubs are generally not revenue generators, but some methods can offset costs:

Membership Fees

Some clubs charge small dues to help cover operational expenses.

- **Typical fees range from \$10 to \$50 per semester (Astin, 1999).**

Fundraising & Sponsorships

- Clubs can host fundraising events or seek sponsorships from local businesses or alumni to supplement their budgets (Dugan, 2011).

Overall Cost Assessment:

- **Moderate startup cost (~\$100,000 to \$500,000).**
 - **Moderate ongoing cost (~\$50,000 to \$500,000 annually).**
 - **Lower financial risk than sports programs.**
 - **No major revenue generation, but clubs have a lower long-term financial burden (Tinto, 2012).**
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3. Campus-Wide Service Initiative: Low-Cost, High Community Impact

A university-wide service initiative is the most cost-effective, in terms of total expenses, option for enhancing student engagement while fostering meaningful community connections. Service-learning programs have been shown to improve student leadership, civic responsibility, and academic performance (Eyler et al., 2001). Although these programs require some initial investment, they are generally more affordable than intercollegiate athletics or campus clubs and can be sustained through partnerships and external funding sources (Jacoby, 2009).

Initial Startup Costs

While a service initiative has lower costs compared to other engagement strategies, some upfront investment is required:

Program Development & Coordination

- Hiring staff to oversee service initiatives and coordinate projects is necessary for effective implementation.
- Estimated cost: **\$50,000 to \$150,000** for staffing and administration (Jacoby, 2009).

Partnerships with Local Organizations

- Establishing relationships with nonprofits, businesses, and government agencies is crucial for maximizing impact.
- Cost varies depending on agreements but is usually **minimal** (Smith et al., 2017).

Marketing & Promotion

- Creating awareness through social media, posters, and student outreach ensures high participation.
- Estimated cost: **\$10,000 to \$50,000** (Eyler et al., 2001). Less if students are the creating body, similar to how Soapbox practicum works for Communication majors.

Ongoing Operational Costs

Running a service-learning initiative requires consistent funding, though it remains lower than sports or clubs:

Project Funding

- Providing resources for students to engage in volunteer work, including transportation, materials, and supplies.
- Estimated cost: **\$50,000 to \$200,000 per year** (Jacoby, 2009).

Faculty & Staff Involvement

- Encouraging professors to integrate service into coursework enhances academic engagement.
- Costs depend on faculty incentives but are estimated at **\$50,000 to \$100,000 per year** (Eyler et al., 2001).

Potential Revenue Sources

While service initiatives do not generate direct revenue, they can attract grants and donations:

Philanthropic Grants

- Many foundations support service-learning programs, offering funding opportunities (Smith et al., 2017).

Corporate & Nonprofit Sponsorships

- Companies may fund service initiatives as part of corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs (Vitreo Group, 2024).

Overall Cost Assessment:

- **Low startup cost** (~\$50,000 to \$250,000).
- **Low ongoing cost** (~\$100,000 to \$300,000 annually).
- **No direct revenue generation**, but grant funding is possible.
- **High impact with minimal financial risk**, as service-learning programs align with institutional missions and community development efforts (Jacoby, 2009)

Final Cost Comparison Table

Solution	Startup Cost	Ongoing Cost (Annual)	Revenue Potential	Financial Risk
Intercollegiate Sports	High (\$5M+)	High (\$1M+ annually)	Moderate to High (ticket sales, sponsorships, media rights)	High
Campus Clubs & Organizations	Moderate (\$100K–\$500 K)	Moderate (\$50K–\$500K annually)	Low (membership fees, fundraising)	Low to Moderate

Campus-Wide Service Initiative	Low (\$50K–\$250K)	Low (\$100K–\$300K annually)	None (except grants & sponsorships)	Very Low
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Conclusion: Which Option is Best Based on Cost?

If cost is not a barrier:

Intercollegiate sports offer the greatest long-term visibility and student unity, but they also come with high financial risks. Large-scale athletic programs can attract sponsorships, ticket sales, and alumni donations, though they often require millions in subsidies (Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, 2020).

If a balanced, cost-effective approach is needed:

Enhancing campus clubs is a moderate investment with manageable financial risks while still improving student engagement. Student organizations contribute to leadership development, networking, and personal growth while operating at a fraction of the cost of athletic programs (Dugan, 2011).

If cost efficiency and immediate impact are the goals:

A campus-wide service initiative is the most affordable and sustainable solution with minimal financial risk. Service-learning programs provide long-term community benefits and align with university missions while maintaining low costs (Jacoby, 2009).

Impact Comparison of Intercollegiate Sports, Campus Clubs, and a Campus-Wide Service Initiative on Student Engagement at BYU-Idaho

While all three options—intercollegiate sports, campus clubs, and a campus-wide service initiative—offer meaningful ways to increase student engagement, intercollegiate sports emerge as the most impactful solution due to their ability to unify students, create traditions, enhance school spirit, and generate sustained engagement at both the student and alumni levels. Below is a thorough comparison demonstrating why intercollegiate sports offer the highest potential for long-term student involvement.

1. Unmatched Student Engagement & School Spirit

- Research indicates that collegiate athletics create a strong sense of identity and belonging among students, fostering long-term connections to the institution (Clopton, 2009).

- Sporting events serve as community-wide traditions, increasing attendance at campus events and strengthening social bonds (Meer & Rosen, 2008).
2. **Long-Term Alumni and Financial Impact**
 - Universities with successful athletic programs see higher alumni engagement and increased donations, often attributed to nostalgia and school pride (Smith, 2021).
 - The "Flutie Effect" suggests that athletic success leads to a rise in student applications and institutional visibility (Zimbalist, 2016).
 3. **Broader Community & Economic Benefits**
 - College sports have a direct economic impact on local businesses, driving revenue through tourism, hospitality, and sponsorships (Denhart & Ridpath, 2011).
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1. Intercollegiate Sports: Unmatched School Spirit & Community Engagement

Potential Student Reach: Very High (~60-80%)

- Unlike campus clubs and service initiatives, which typically engage students **based on interest in a specific activity**, sports serve as **a rallying point for the entire student body**.
- **Athletes, fans, and event staff** all contribute to the culture, making sports one of the most **widely attended and followed extracurricular activities** at most universities.
- Attendance at games, pep rallies, and sports-related events can engage **60-80% of the student population**, even if only 5-10% are athletes (Holy Family University, 2023).

Depth of Engagement: Extremely High

- **For athletes**, engagement is year-round, requiring dedication to training, teamwork, and leadership.
- **For students**, supporting their teams fosters a deep emotional connection to the university.
- Traditions like **rivalries, homecoming events, and championship celebrations** create lasting memories and keep students involved throughout their academic careers (Princeton University, 2017).

Inclusivity & Accessibility: High for Spectators, Moderate for Athletes

- While **not all students can compete at the intercollegiate level**, the **majority can engage as fans, event staff, cheerleaders, or even intramural participants** inspired by competitive sports.
- Many universities provide **club sports or student sections** that allow non-athletes to experience the benefits of athletics without formal competition.

Long-Term Retention & Alumni Loyalty: Extremely High

- Schools with **strong athletic programs** often have some of the **most engaged alumni networks**, as sports serve as a long-term connection to their college years ([Princeton University, 2017](#)).
- **Athletic alumni donate more frequently** to their alma mater, attend games long after graduation, and stay connected to campus life. The "Flutie Effect"—a phenomenon where sports success boosts applications and donations—is well-documented in schools like Gonzaga University ([Wikipedia, 2024](#)).

Social & Community Impact: Very High

- Intercollegiate sports encourage **civic pride** by connecting students, faculty, alumni, and the broader community through shared support for teams.
- Games provide a **common meeting ground** for students from different backgrounds, helping to **bridge cultural and social divides**.
- Schools with successful sports programs often see **higher student involvement in other activities**, as sporting events serve as a launching point for deeper campus engagement ([Holy Family University, 2023](#)).

Overall Engagement Impact:

- **Broadest reach, engaging athletes and non-athletes alike.**
- **Deep and sustained commitment among students and alumni.**
- **Creates powerful traditions that last beyond graduation.**

Score: 10/10 for overall engagement impact.

2. Enhancing Campus Clubs & Organizations: Strong, But Limited in Reach

Potential Student Reach: Moderate (~50-70%)

- Clubs attract a **wide range of students**, but many students **never join a club** during their college years.
- Unlike sports, which **passively engage fans**, clubs require students to **actively seek out and join** them.

Depth of Engagement: Very High for Participants, But Many Are Uninvolved

- Club members develop **deep bonds** and long-term leadership skills, but overall student body engagement is **weaker** compared to sports ([ResearchGate, 2020](#)).

Overall Engagement Impact:

- **Highly impactful for those who join**, but limited in overall student reach.
- **Does not foster the same long-term campus traditions as sports.**

Score: 8/10 for overall engagement impact.

3. Campus-Wide Service Initiative: Meaningful, But Not Universally Engaging

Potential Student Reach: High (~60-80%)

- Service-learning initiatives are **widely available** but often **optional**, leading to **inconsistent student participation**.

Depth of Engagement: Moderate

- Some students deeply commit to service work, but others **participate briefly** and never engage again.
- Unlike sports, **service projects lack recurring events that build school-wide excitement** ([Bowling Green State University, 2019](#)).

Overall Engagement Impact:

- **Highly meaningful, but does not engage the entire student body at once.**

- Fails to generate long-term campus traditions or alumni involvement.

Score: 7.5/10 for overall engagement impact.

Final Comparison Table: Impact on Student Engagement

Criteria	Intercollegiate Sports	Campus Clubs & Organizations	Campus-Wide Service Initiative
Potential Student Reach	Very High (60-80%)	Moderate (50-70%)	High (60-80%)
Depth of Engagement	Extremely High	High for those involved	Moderate
Long-Term Retention & Loyalty	Extremely High	Moderate	Moderate
Social & Community Impact	Very High	Moderate to High	Very High
Overall Score (out of 10)	10/10	8/10	7.5/10

Conclusion: Why Intercollegiate Sports Are the Best Engagement Strategy

1. **Sports can unite the entire student body**, while clubs and service initiatives remain niche-focused.
2. **Athletics foster lifelong school pride**, leading to **strong alumni engagement**.
3. **Sporting events create traditions** that boost **school spirit and retention rates**.

For BYU-Idaho, **intercollegiate sports** represent **the strongest solution** for **building student unity, increasing engagement, and fostering long-term school loyalty**.

Timeline & Availability Comparison of Intercollegiate Sports, Campus Clubs, and a Campus-Wide Service Initiative at BYU-Idaho

To determine which initiative is the most **immediate, sustainable, and widely accessible**, we will compare each based on the following key timeline and availability factors:

1. **Implementation Timeline:** How long does it take to establish?
 2. **Student Accessibility:** How frequently can students participate?
 3. **Seasonality & Availability:** Are there constraints on when students can engage?
 4. **Sustainability & Longevity:** How well can the initiative be maintained over time?
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1. Intercollegiate Sports: Lengthy Implementation, Seasonal, but Long-Term Engagement

Implementation Timeline: Long (3-5 Years)

- **Planning & Approval (Year 1-2):**
 - Requires administrative approval, funding, and NCAA/NJCAA/NAIA compliance ([NCAA, 2023](#)).
 - Need to secure facilities, recruit coaches, and develop a competitive structure.
- **Recruiting & Training (Year 2-3):**
 - Recruiting student-athletes, building teams, and preparing for competition.
 - Initial games may be non-competitive exhibitions before full conference participation.
- **Full Launch (Year 4-5):**
 - Teams officially compete, student engagement increases through school spirit events ([Holy Family University, 2023](#)).

Student Accessibility: Limited to Athletes, High for Fans

- Only **5-10% of students** directly participate as athletes, but **60-80% engage as fans** ([Princeton University, 2017](#)).
- Students who **don't make a varsity team** can still engage through club or intramural sports.

Seasonality & Availability: Seasonal (Limited by Sport Schedules)

- Most intercollegiate sports operate **in seasons** (fall, winter, spring) ([NCAA, 2023](#)).

- Student engagement peaks **during game days**, but there are **off-seasons with less activity**.

Sustainability & Longevity: Very High

- Once established, sports **remain a lasting part of campus life**.
- **Alumni and community support** sustain engagement long-term ([Princeton University, 2017](#)).

Overall Timeline & Availability Impact:

- **Takes 3-5 years to fully implement.**
- **Accessible year-round for fans, but only seasonally for players.**
- **Highly sustainable with long-term traditions and funding opportunities.**

Score: 7.5/10 for timeline & availability.

2. Campus Clubs & Organizations: Immediate Implementation, Year-Round Accessibility

Implementation Timeline: Short (3-6 Months)

- **Planning & Organization (Month 1-2):**
 - No major funding or regulatory approvals required.
 - New clubs can be created quickly with a faculty sponsor and student leadership ([American College Health Association, 2021](#)).
- **Recruitment & Launch (Month 3-6):**
 - Club fairs, student outreach, and promotional events establish a presence.

Student Accessibility: Very High

- Clubs are **open to all students**, with **no athletic or skill barriers**.
- Students can **join multiple clubs**, allowing diverse engagement ([ResearchGate, 2020](#)).

Seasonality & Availability: Year-Round

- Unlike sports, **clubs operate continuously**, making them accessible anytime.
- Regular **weekly or monthly meetings** provide ongoing engagement.

Sustainability & Longevity: Moderate to High

- Clubs are easy to start, but **many fade when leadership transitions poorly**.
- **Some clubs thrive for decades**, but others disband after a few years due to low participation ([American College Health Association, 2021](#)).

Overall Timeline & Availability Impact:

- Takes 3-6 months to implement.
- Year-round availability for students.
- Sustainability depends on leadership continuity.

Score: 9/10 for timeline & availability.

Final Comparison Table: Timeline & Availability

Criteria	Intercollegiate Sports	Campus Clubs & Organizations	Campus-Wide Service Initiative
Implementation Timeline	Long (3-5 Years)	Short (3-6 Months)	Moderate (6-12 Months)
Student Accessibility	Limited for athletes, high for fans	Very High	High, but sporadic participation
Seasonality & Availability	Seasonal (dependent on sport schedules)	Year-Round	Limited by event schedules
Sustainability & Longevity	Very High (tradition-driven, long-term support)	Moderate to High (depends on leadership)	High (if integrated into university culture)
Overall Score (out of 10)	7.5/10	9/10	8/10

Challenges to Implementing Intercollegiate Sports, Campus Clubs, and a Campus-Wide Service Initiative at BYU-Idaho

Each of these initiatives faces **unique challenges** that must be addressed before successful implementation. Below, we compare the **financial, logistical, administrative, and student participation barriers** that could hinder the success of **intercollegiate sports, campus clubs, and a campus-wide service initiative** at BYU-Idaho.

1. Intercollegiate Sports: High Institutional & Financial Barriers

1. Financial Challenges: Extremely High

- **Facility Costs:** If BYU-Idaho does not already have suitable stadiums, training centers, or playing fields, **renovating or building** facilities can cost **millions of dollars** (Fulks, 2019).
- **Athletic Scholarships:** Many schools offer scholarships to attract top athletes, adding another **recurring financial burden** (Smith, 2021).
- **Operational Costs:** Sports require **coaching staff, medical trainers, equipment, uniforms, and travel expenses** (Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, 2020).
- **Potential Revenue Shortfalls:** While large schools profit from athletics, smaller universities often **lose money on sports programs** due to low ticket sales (Denhart & Ridpath, 2011).

2. Logistical Challenges: High

- **NCAA/NAIA Compliance:** If BYU-Idaho joins a college sports league, it must follow strict **eligibility and compliance rules**, requiring legal oversight (NCAA, 2022).
- **Scheduling Conflicts:** Sports seasons run on fixed schedules, which could interfere with **academic priorities** for student-athletes (Ridpath, 2018).

- **Recruiting Challenges:** Schools that **lack strong athletic programs** may struggle to attract competitive players, making it difficult to build successful teams (Smith, 2021).

3. Administrative & Cultural Challenges: High

- **Institutional Commitment:** Faculty and administration may **oppose athletics** if they believe it will **divert resources from academics** (Bowen & Levin, 2011).
- **Cultural Fit:** Since BYU-Idaho emphasizes **spiritual and academic development**, some may argue that competitive sports **do not align with the school's values** (Church Educational System, 2023).
- **Title IX Compliance:** If men's and women's sports programs **are not equally funded**, BYU-Idaho could face **legal repercussions** (Suggs, 2021).

4. Student Engagement Challenges: Moderate

- **Limited Participation:** Only **5-10% of students** will compete in sports, meaning that a **large portion of the student body may remain disengaged** (Fulks, 2019).

Overall Implementation Difficulty:

 **Very High** – Requires extensive funding, administrative approval, and cultural alignment.

Score: 4/10 (Most Difficult to Implement).

2. Campus Clubs & Organizations: Leadership & Sustainability Issues

1. Financial Challenges: Low

- **Lower Initial Costs:** Clubs do not require massive funding, but **some money is needed for club fairs, events, and marketing** (Astin, 1999).
- **Unequal Funding Distribution:** Some clubs **thrive with strong leadership**, while others **struggle due to a lack of funds** (Dugan, 2011).

2. Logistical Challenges: Moderate

- **Lack of Student Awareness:** Many students **do not know which clubs exist**, leading to under-enrollment in some organizations (Tinto, 2012).
- **Inconsistent Meeting Schedules:** Clubs meet at different times, and **conflicts with class schedules** can make regular participation difficult (Astin, 1999).

- **Limited Campus Space:** Meeting rooms and event locations **may be unavailable** due to demand from multiple student groups (Kuh et al., 2005).

3. Administrative & Cultural Challenges: Low to Moderate

- **Faculty Sponsorship Requirements:** Many universities require clubs to have **faculty advisors**, which may be difficult to secure (Dugan, 2011).
- **Disbandment Risks:** Many clubs **fade away when student leaders graduate**, leading to constant turnover (Astin, 1999).
- **Ensuring Inclusivity:** Some clubs **become exclusive**, unintentionally alienating students who feel like outsiders (Tinto, 2012).

4. Student Engagement Challenges: Moderate

- **Self-Motivation Required:** Unlike sports, which naturally attract attention, clubs **require students to actively seek them out**, leading to **lower participation** (Dugan, 2011).
- **Interest-Dependent Participation:** Some clubs attract **many students**, while others **struggle to stay active** (Kuh et al., 2005).

Overall Implementation Difficulty:

⚠ **Moderate – Easily started but difficult to sustain long-term.**
Score: 7/10 (Moderately Difficult).

3. Campus-Wide Service Initiative: Coordination & Participation Barriers

1. Financial Challenges: Low to Moderate

- **Lower Upfront Costs:** Service initiatives do not require **major infrastructure investment**, but organizing large-scale events may require **funding for transportation, materials, and logistics** (Jacoby, 2009).
- **Funding Stability:** Service programs **rely on external funding** from donations or grants, which may not always be reliable (Eyler et al., 2001).

2. Logistical Challenges: High

- **Coordinating with External Organizations:** Partnering with **local nonprofits or government agencies** takes time, requiring careful planning (Jacoby, 2009).
- **Event Scheduling Issues:** Students must be available for **specific service events**, making participation **less flexible than club activities** (Eyler et al., 2001).

- **Transportation & Accessibility:** Some service projects **require off-campus travel**, which **limits participation for students without vehicles** (Kuh et al., 2005).

3. Administrative & Cultural Challenges: Moderate

- **Aligning with Curriculum:** If service initiatives are linked to academic courses, **professors must integrate them into their syllabi**, which could face resistance (Jacoby, 2009).
- **Long-Term Institutional Commitment:** Universities must **prioritize service-learning** as part of their culture, or participation will decline over time (Eyler et al., 2001).
- **Ensuring Meaningful Service Projects:** Some students may feel their work is **not impactful** if service projects are poorly organized (Kuh et al., 2005).

4. Student Engagement Challenges: Moderate to High

- **One-Time Participation vs. Sustained Engagement:** Many students participate in **one event per semester** to meet service-hour requirements but do not continue volunteering (Eyler et al., 2001).

Overall Implementation Difficulty:

⚠ **Moderate – Easier to launch than sports but requires constant planning to maintain interest.**

Score: 6.5/10 (Moderately Difficult).

Support from Students: Comparing Intercollegiate Sports, Campus Clubs, and a Campus-Wide Service Initiative Based on Survey Data

To determine which initiative has the **strongest student support**, we will analyze the survey data collected and compare it across three key engagement strategies: **intercollegiate sports, campus clubs, and a campus-wide service initiative.**

The analysis will focus on:

1. **Student Interest & Preferred Activities** – Which initiatives align with current student priorities?
2. **Perceived Value & Willingness to Participate** – How likely are students to engage if these programs are expanded?
3. **Overall Support Levels** – Which initiative has the most enthusiasm and potential for growth?

1. Intercollegiate Sports: Strong Enthusiasm, But Mixed Priority

Student Interest & Preferred Activities:

- **30% of students** ranked extracurricular activities (which include sports) as one of their main interests.
- **20% prioritized leadership opportunities**, which can also be developed through sports participation.
- **5% selected sports as their top activity**, meaning it is not the highest priority but still has a dedicated base of interest.

Perceived Value & Willingness to Participate:

- **70% of students reported feeling disconnected from campus life**, suggesting a major opportunity to use sports to create school unity.
- **25% of students said they already engage in sports or athletic activities**, meaning a portion of the student body would immediately benefit.
- However, **some students may not see direct academic or career benefits** from expanding sports programs.

Overall Support Levels:

- While sports do not top the list of student priorities, they **provide a unique opportunity for campus-wide engagement** beyond just direct participation.
- **Fan engagement and school spirit events** could significantly increase student connection to campus.

Overall Support Score: 8.5/10

- **Moderate interest among students, but high potential for widespread involvement.**
- **Fan culture can engage students even if they are not athletes.**

2. Campus Clubs & Organizations: Broadest Support, High Accessibility

Student Interest & Preferred Activities:

- **40% of students listed “activities and clubs” as their top priority, making it the most popular category.**
- **30% prioritized religious involvement**, which often overlaps with student organizations.
- **Academics (25%) and leadership (10%)** also play a role in club participation.

Perceived Value & Willingness to Participate:

- **60% of students already participate in some type of club or campus activity**, meaning it has the strongest existing engagement.
- **30% of students showed interest in joining new clubs** if accessibility and awareness were improved.
- Clubs are **viewed as directly beneficial** for personal growth, networking, and career preparation.

Overall Support Levels:

- Clubs appeal to a **diverse range of students**, making them the **most universally supported initiative**.
- **However, clubs can be fragmented**, meaning there is no **one unifying event or tradition** that brings all students together.
- Additional clubs may not create the same benefit as current ones.

Overall Support Score: 8/10

- **Strongest existing engagement.**
- **Highly accessible and inclusive.**
- **Lacks the large-scale impact of sports.**

3. Campus-Wide Service Initiative: Meaningful, But Less Exciting for Most Students

Student Interest & Preferred Activities:

- **25% of students ranked service or community engagement as a key priority.**
- **Service projects may align with academic and religious interests (combined 50% of responses).**

Overall Support Levels:

- Service initiatives provide **deep engagement for those who participate**, but they **do not generate school-wide enthusiasm like sports or clubs**.
- **Better integration with coursework or student groups** could improve engagement.

Overall Support Score: 7/10

- Respected but not widely prioritized.
- Appealing for those with strong community values but not seen as a campus-wide engagement strategy.

Final Comparison Table: Student Support Based on Survey Data

Criteria	Intercollegiate Sports	Campus Clubs & Organizations	Campus-Wide Service Initiative
Student Interest & Priority	Moderate (30%)	Very High (40%)	Moderate
Willingness to Participate	Moderate (25%)	Very High (60%)	Moderate to Low (10-45%)
Campus-Wide Engagement	High (Fan support, game days, traditions)	Moderate (Personal involvement but fragmented impact)	Moderate (Service has meaning, but is short-term)
Excitement & School Spirit	Very High (Creates unity & identity)	Moderate (Engaging, but lacks large-scale traditions)	Low (Meaningful, but lacks broad excitement)
Overall Support Score (out of 10)	8/10	9/10	7/10

Conclusion: Why Intercollegiate Sports Have Strong Student Support

While campus clubs have the highest participation rates, intercollegiate sports offer a unique opportunity to unify the student body, create traditions, and improve campus engagement.

1. **Sports have broad engagement potential** – Even students who are not athletes can attend games, support teams, and engage in fan culture.
2. **Sports create traditions** – Unlike clubs, which are fragmented across different interests, sports bring everyone together for a common cause.
3. **Students feel disconnected from campus life** – Since 70% of students feel disengaged, sports can serve as a rallying point to improve school spirit.

Final Verdict on Student Support

- **Best Immediate Support & Engagement: Campus Clubs & Organizations**
- **Best Long-Term School-Wide Engagement: Intercollegiate Sports**
- **Best for Meaningful Impact (But Less Broad Appeal): Campus-Wide Service Initiative**

Overall Best Choice for Student Unity & Campus Identity: Intercollegiate Sports

Comparison of Ancillary Benefits: Intercollegiate Sports, Campus Clubs, and a Campus-Wide Service Initiative

Comparison of Ancillary Benefits: Intercollegiate Sports, Campus Clubs, and a Campus-Wide Service Initiative

1. Intercollegiate Sports: Boosts School Reputation, Alumni Engagement, and Leadership Development

1. Academic & Career Development Benefits: Moderate

- Student-athletes develop strong time management, discipline, and teamwork skills, which are valuable in any career. The discipline and structure in athletic programs help motivate student-athletes to take advantage of educational opportunities (Gerdy, 2000).
- Many employers view sports participation as a sign of resilience, leadership, and competitiveness. Participation in sports has been linked to the development of leadership skills that persist into adulthood, aiding individuals in various leadership roles (Women's Sports Foundation, 2023).
- However, sports do not directly contribute to academic knowledge or career networking outside of sports management fields.

2. School Reputation & Branding Benefits: Extremely High

- Athletic success boosts national visibility, helping attract more applicants, faculty, and donors. Data supports that winning athletic programs help to increase donations, applications, academic reputation, and enrollment numbers (Holy Family University, n.d.).
- Schools with strong sports programs often rank higher in public perception, even if academics remain unchanged.
- Athletic events create marketing opportunities for the university (media coverage, televised games, merchandise sales).

3. Alumni Engagement & Donor Support: Extremely High

- Successful athletic programs generate long-term loyalty from alumni, leading to higher donation rates. Institutions rely on strong relationships with alumni for philanthropic support, and robust athletic programs can strengthen these relations (Vitreo Group, 2024).
- Alumni often return for homecoming games, reunions, and sports-related events, strengthening their bond with the school.
- Many schools have athletics-specific endowments, ensuring financial sustainability.

4. Community & Economic Benefits: High

- Sports events bring revenue to local businesses, benefiting the university's surrounding economy. College sports have a profound economic impact that extends beyond the athletic department, influencing the financial well-being of universities and the local communities in which they reside (Marygrove College, n.d.).
- Partnerships with local youth programs and community outreach initiatives strengthen town-and-gown relationships.

Overall Ancillary Benefit Score: 9.5/10

- Best for school reputation, alumni donations, and community impact.
- Moderate impact on academics and career preparation.

Campus Clubs & Organizations: Strongest for Career Development & Academic Growth

1. Academic & Career Development Benefits: Extremely High

- Clubs directly contribute to career skills, networking, and industry experience. Participation in student organizations offers opportunities to learn more about oneself, set personal goals, and identify strengths, which are beneficial for career development (Bentley University, 2021).
- Many students use club experience for internships, resumes, and job applications. Involvement in extracurricular activities has been associated with higher academic performance and increased likelihood of attending college (Continents.us, 2022).
- Professional organizations (business, law, medical clubs) provide hands-on experience in specialized fields. Engagement in such activities fosters the development of leadership, teamwork, and time-management skills, which are crucial in professional settings (Bentley University, 2021).

2. School Reputation & Branding Benefits: Moderate

- Unlike sports, clubs do not generate school-wide recognition, but they do help specific departments or majors gain prestige. Active student organizations can enhance the academic environment and contribute to a vibrant campus culture, indirectly boosting the institution's reputation.
- Strong student organizations in debate, robotics, or entrepreneurship can help improve academic rankings. These clubs showcase student talent and innovation, attracting attention to the university's academic strengths.

3. Alumni Engagement & Donor Support: Low to Moderate

- Some alumni stay involved in professional clubs, but most do not maintain long-term engagement with campus organizations. While alumni can provide valuable networks and industry insights, sustained engagement often depends on the strength of the alumni relations program (GlobalFocus Magazine, 2022).
- Unlike sports, there are fewer major alumni events centered around student organizations. However, fostering strong relationships with students during their time on

campus can lead to meaningful alumni engagement post-graduation (Educause Review, 2021).

4. Community & Economic Benefits: Moderate

- Clubs with a community service component (Rotaract, pre-law groups, medical service organizations) can strengthen local partnerships. Participation in such organizations promotes community involvement and can lead to positive social outcomes (College of St. Scholastica, 2016).
- However, club events do not generate the same local economic impact as sports. While they contribute to community engagement, their financial impact on the local economy is less pronounced compared to large-scale athletic events.

Overall Ancillary Benefit Score: 8.5/10

- **Best for academic and career development.**
 - **Moderate community impact and alumni engagement.**
-

Conclusion: The Value of Campus Clubs & Organizations

- **Enhancing Personal and Professional Growth:** Active participation in campus clubs fosters essential skills such as leadership, teamwork, and time management, directly translating to improved academic performance and better career prospects (Bentley University, 2021).
 - **Building a Supportive Community:** Engagement in student organizations helps reduce feelings of isolation by connecting students with like-minded peers, thereby enhancing their overall college experience (Community College Daily, 2024).
 - **Contributing to Institutional Prestige:** While not as publicly prominent as athletic programs, successful student organizations can enhance the university's academic reputation by showcasing student innovation and leadership.
 - **Fostering Alumni Networks:** Strong involvement in student organizations can lay the foundation for future alumni engagement, providing valuable networks and potential mentorship opportunities for current students (GlobalFocus Magazine, 2022).
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Campus-Wide Service Initiative: Best for Civic Engagement & University Mission Alignment

1. Academic & Career Development Benefits: Moderate to High

- Service-learning enhances critical thinking and civic responsibility, skills that are valuable in social work, healthcare, and law. Engaging in service-learning provides students with real-world experiences that foster the application of theoretical knowledge, thereby enhancing critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (CampusGroups, 2021).
- Students can use volunteer experience on resumes and applications, especially for graduate schools that value public service. Participation in community service allows students to develop professional skills and gain practical experience, making them more competitive in the job market (CampusGroups, 2021).
- However, service programs do not provide the same level of industry networking as career-focused clubs.

2. School Reputation & Branding Benefits: High

- A strong service-learning program can help establish the university as a leader in civic engagement. Universities that actively participate in community service demonstrate their commitment to societal betterment, thereby enhancing their public image and attracting prospective students and faculty (Smith et al., 2017).
- Many universities use community impact rankings to differentiate themselves from competitors.

3. Alumni Engagement & Donor Support: Moderate

- Schools with strong service traditions often see graduates continue their involvement in nonprofit work. Research indicates a strong relationship between student community service and continued community involvement by alumni, suggesting that early engagement fosters long-term civic responsibility (Vitreo Group, 2024).
- However, service does not generate major financial contributions from alumni the way sports do.

4. Community & Economic Benefits: Extremely High

- Directly benefits local communities through volunteerism and charitable projects. Service-learning initiatives provide essential services to local communities, addressing immediate needs and fostering positive university-community relationships (Smith et al., 2017).
- Strengthens university-community relations by positioning the school as a civic leader.
- Unlike sports, which benefit the local economy through ticket sales and tourism, service programs benefit people directly through aid and education.

Overall Ancillary Benefit Score: 8/10

- **Best for civic engagement and community relationships.**
- **Moderate impact on career development and alumni support.**

Best Decision for Maximizing Student Engagement and School Spirit → Intercollegiate Sports

If student engagement and school spirit are the top priority, then intercollegiate sports is the best option.

Why Intercollegiate Sports?

Highest Reach Across the Student Body:

- **Unlike clubs and service initiatives, sports engage both participants and spectators, creating a unifying experience (Clopton, 2009).**
- **Attendance at games, pep rallies, and related events can engage 60-80% of the student population (Holy Family University, 2023).**

School Identity & Long-Term Traditions:

- **Sports create deep emotional connections to the university, leading to long-term student and alumni engagement (Smith, 2021).**
- **The "Flutie Effect" suggests that athletic success increases school visibility, applications, and donations (Zimbalist, 2016).**

Sustained Engagement & Retention:

- **Sporting events happen regularly (weekly or seasonally), keeping students engaged throughout the year.**

- **Campus clubs and service projects often require active participation, but sports allow passive engagement as spectators, leading to broader inclusion (Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, 2020).**

Community & Alumni Engagement:

- **Sports provide a reason for alumni to stay engaged, return to campus, and donate (Meer & Rosen, 2008).**
- **Local businesses and the broader community benefit, strengthening the university's external relationships (Denhart & Ridpath, 2011).**

Challenges to Consider:

High Cost & Financial Risk – Intercollegiate sports require a large upfront investment (\$5M+ startup, \$1M+ annually) with no guarantee of profitability.

Time to Implement – Establishing competitive teams, facilities, and administrative structures can take 3-5 years (NCAA, 2022).

Final Verdict: Intercollegiate Sports is the Best Choice for Student Engagement & School Spirit

- **If financial feasibility is NOT a concern, intercollegiate sports provide the most effective long-term student engagement strategy.**
- **The broad reach, deep emotional connection, and sustained school spirit make sports unmatched in impact.**

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