

DATA STORYTELLING TEMPLATE

The purpose of this storytelling template is to help staff in the Division of Student Life translate assessment data and program effectiveness into compelling narratives for external audiences, including alumni and donor audiences. This template emphasizes impact, emotion, and clarity, while grounding the story in evidence.

Title

- Create a compelling, emotionally resonant title.
- Example: "Leading with Purpose: How Jordan Found His Voice Through Student Government"

Key Insight (What is the main takeaway?)

- Identify the most important insight you want your audience to remember.
- Focus on what is meaningful, surprising, or actionable.
- Complete this sentence: *"The most important thing my audience should understand is..."*
- Example: "Students who participate in multiple leadership experiences develop a stronger sense of belonging and confidence than students who participate only once."

Opening Hook

- Start with a vivid anecdote, quote, or surprising fact that captures attention.
- Example: "Jordan never imagined he'd be the one standing at the podium, addressing hundreds of students—but that moment changed everything."

The Challenge (What was the need?)

- Describe the problem or gap the program/service aimed to address. Use data sparingly but meaningfully.
 - What issue were students facing?
 - Why was this important to solve?
- Example: "Our 2024 student experience survey revealed that only 28% of students felt confident pursuing leadership roles."

The Response (What did we do?)

- Explain the program or service implemented. Focus on the human element.
 - What was the initiative?
 - Who was involved?

- How was it delivered?
- Example: “The Emerging Leaders Institute was created to empower students like Jordan with the skills, mentorship, and confidence to lead. Through workshops, peer collaboration, and real-world projects, students learned to lead with authenticity.”

The Impact (What changed?)

- Show the results using both quantitative and qualitative data.
 - What improvements were seen?
 - Include a student quote or story if possible.
- Example: After completing the program, 92% of participants reported increased leadership confidence. Jordan ran for student government—and won. ‘This program helped me realize that leadership isn’t about being the loudest voice, but the most intentional one,’ he said.”

The Broader Significance (Why does this matter?)

- Connect the story to the institution’s mission and the donor’s values.
 - How does this align with student success?
 - What long-term outcomes are supported?
- Example: “Leadership development is at the heart of preparing students to shape their communities and careers. Programs like this ensure every student has the opportunity to lead.”

The Call to Action (How can donors help?)

- Invite the reader to be part of the solution.
 - What can their support do?
 - Be specific and inspiring.
- Example: “With your support, we can expand leadership development opportunities to reach more students—helping them become the changemakers of tomorrow.”

Visuals (Optional but powerful)

- Include a photo, infographic, or quote graphic to enhance emotional connection.