

Transfer Redesign (Foundations of Excellence®- Transfer)

Foundational Principles (Foundational Dimensions®)

Four-Year College Version

Foundational Principles constitute a model that provides institutions with a means to evaluate and improve the transfer experience. As an evaluation tool, the model enables institutions both to confirm their strengths and to recognize the need for improvement to address gaps in services and changes in society and student needs. As an aspirational model, the Principles provide general guidelines for an intentional design of the transfer experience. The Principles rest on six assumptions:

- The academic mission of an institution is preeminent;
- The first college year is central to the achievement of an institution's mission and lays the foundation on which undergraduate education is built;
- For many institutions, the successful integration of transfer students is also central to mission attainment;
- The educational experiences of transfer students are different, and often unequal to the educational experiences of non-transfer students;
- Improvement efforts must go beyond the transferability of credits to all components of the educational experience of transfer students;
- Collectively, the Principles constitute an ideal for improving the entire transfer experience.

Foundational Institutions develop intentional policies and practices related to the transfer student experience based on a clear philosophy/rationale. The philosophy/rationale is explicit, clear and easily understood, consistent with the institutional mission, widely disseminated, and, as appropriate, reflects a consensus of campus constituencies. The philosophy/rationale is also the basis for transfer policies, practices, structures, leadership, department/unit philosophies, and resource allocation. This philosophy recognizes both similarities and differences in first-year and transfer transitions. **(Philosophy)**

Foundational Institutions create organizational structures that provide oversight and coordination of the transfer experience. A coherent transfer experience is realized and maintained through effective partnerships among academic affairs, student affairs, and other administrative units and is enhanced through appropriate budgetary allocations. Institutions ensure the fair application of transfer policies across all academic units. Foundational Institutions also assure communication and collaboration with sending institutions at multiple levels including senior administration, academic departments, academic advising, and other administrative units. **(Organization)**

Foundational Institutions assure the continued development of transfer students' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors consistent with the desired outcomes of higher education and the institution's philosophy and mission. They coordinate with partner institutions (sending and receiving) to determine common course goals and learning outcomes and the development and maintenance of academic program pathways. They provide opportunities for transfer students to participate in engaging learning experiences both in and out of the classroom. Foundational institutions monitor student learning and use the results for improvement. **(Learning)**

Foundational institutions create a culture of shared responsibility among faculty and staff for transfer student success by encouraging awareness of and responsiveness to the unique needs of transfer students. This culture of responsibility is nurtured by chief academic and student affairs officers, deans, and department chairs and supported by the institutions' reward systems. Foundations institutions strive to ensure transfer students are integrated both academically and socially. **(Institution Culture)**

Foundational Institutions facilitate appropriate transfer student transitions through policies and practices that are intentional and aligned with institutional mission. Beginning with transfer student recruitment and admissions and continuing through the first year of transfer, institutions and academic departments communicate clear curricular and co-curricular expectations and provide appropriate support for educational success. They are forthright about their responsibilities to students as well as students' responsibilities to themselves and the institution. They create and maintain curricular alignments and linkages with sending institutions to assure a seamless transition process. **(Transitions)**

Foundational Institutions serve all transfer students according to their varied needs. The process of anticipating and addressing needs is ongoing and is subject to continuous assessment and adjustment. Institutions provide services with respect for the students' abilities, prior academic history, lived experiences, current needs and interests. Institutions also ensure a campus environment in which transfer students are accepted and valued. **(All Students)**

Foundational Institutions ensure that all students experience a variety of ideas as a means of enhancing their learning and preparing them to become members of global communities. Whatever their demographic composition, institutions introduce transfer students to the standards of behavior expected in an open and civil community with people from various backgrounds. **(Global Awareness)**

Foundational Institutions promote student understanding of the purposes of higher education, both for the individual and society. These purposes include knowledge acquisition for personal growth, learning to prepare for future employment, learning to become engaged citizens, and learning to serve the public good. Institutions encourage transfer students to deepen and strengthen their understanding of the value of general education and to reexamine their motivation and monitor their progression toward personal educational goals. **(Educational Purposes-Transfer)**

Foundational Institutions conduct assessment and maintain associations with other institutions and relevant professional organizations to achieve ongoing improvement in the transfer experience. Institutions develop and share transfer and non-transfer student data to understand student enrollment and success patterns. Student data and assessment results are integral to institutional planning, resource allocation, decision-making, and ongoing improvement of programs and policies that affect transfer students. To achieve ongoing improvement, institutions are familiar with current practices at other institutions as well as with research and scholarship on transfer students and the transfer process. **(Improvement)**

The Foundational Principles were adapted for the transfer transition in 2009 by John N. Gardner, Betsy O. Barefoot, Betsy Q. Griffin, and Julie S. Alexander-Hamilton of the Gardner Institute in collaboration with Dennis E. Brown of El Paso Community College, Marc Cutright of the University of North Texas, Howard B. London of Bridgewater State College, Keith Pickus of Wichita State University, and Mark Allen Poisel of the University of Central Florida. The Foundational Principles were revised in 2024 by Betsy Q. Griffin, Sara Stein Koch, Jill Robinson Kramer, and Robert Rodier of the Gardner Institute.

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