



National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students In Transition

Kate Lehman, Executive Director



NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND
STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA



History, Mission & Core Commitments



NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

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STUDENTS IN TRANSITION

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Above: Dr. Thomas Jones, USC President, 1962-74

Right: John Gardner, Inaugural faculty director of U101; Co-founder and Senior Fellow, NRC



1970



2026

May 1970: President Jones faces a campus fractured by protests; looking to bond students & transform ways that students were taught

1972: U101 introduced as an educational experiment in response to 1970 riots to build trust, understanding, & open lines of communication between students & admin.

1975: 175 educators convene at USC for a meeting on the first-year seminar concept; first FYE conference held 1 year later

1986: National Resource Center established at USC to build on the FYE momentum

1998: National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition moniker adapted as the NRC broadened its focus

2025: NRC selected as successor to NISTS

2026: 40th anniversary of the NRC



UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina

Our Mission

Serve education professionals by supporting and advancing efforts to improve student learning and transitions into and through higher education.

Core Commitments

Developmental
Power of
Student
Transitions

Connection
Between
Research &
Practice

Collaboration

Lifelong
Learning

Inclusion
and
Equity



NISTS

National Institute for the Study of
TRANSFER STUDENTS



Emily Kittrell
Transfer Expert-in-Residence

- The NRC is the new home for transfer champions, having acquired NISTS at the end of 2025
- Transition brings together two respected organizations known for advancing student success research & professional practice across higher education
- Addition of NISTS builds on the Center's 40-year history of support for educators & institutions, expanding our capacity to address the needs of transfer students & educators
- Welcome webinar, 2 listening sessions, & think tank session held during spring 2026 term



Defining FYE & SIT



NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

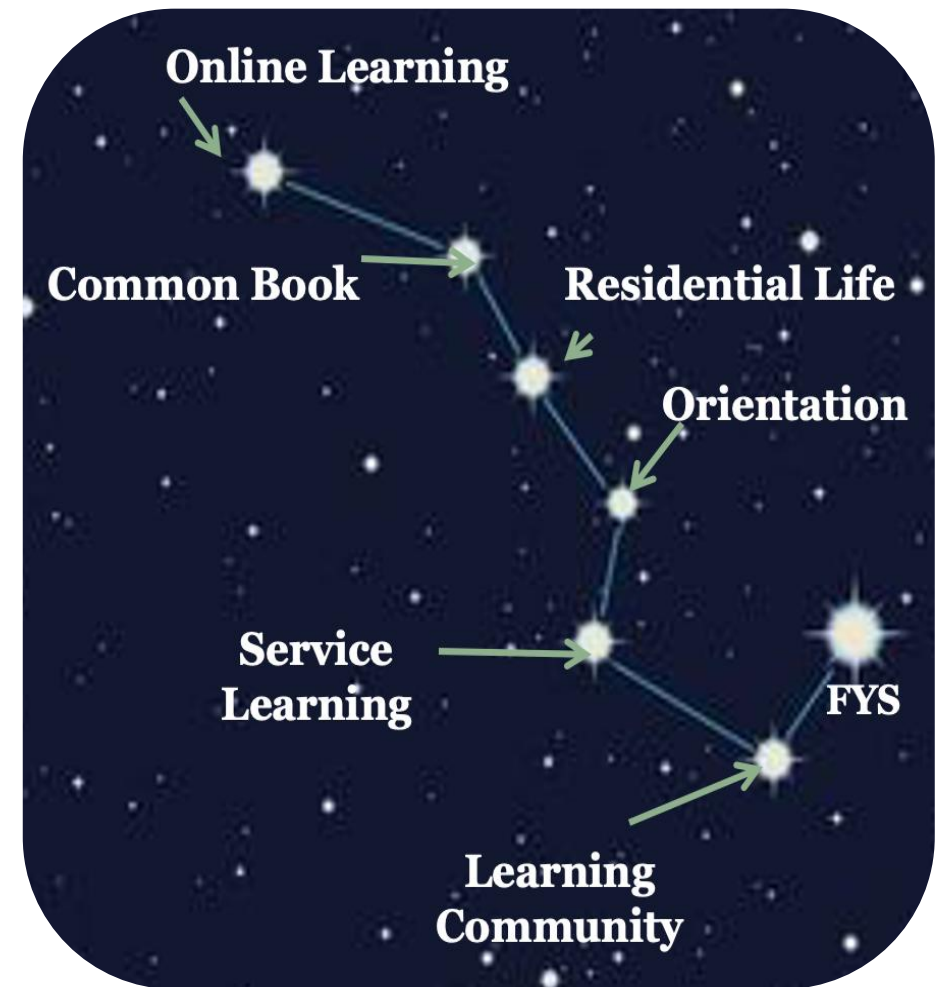
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND
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First-Year Experience

“The first-year experience is not a single program or initiative, but rather an intentional combination of academic and co-curricular efforts within and across postsecondary institutions.”

(Koch & Gardner, 2006)



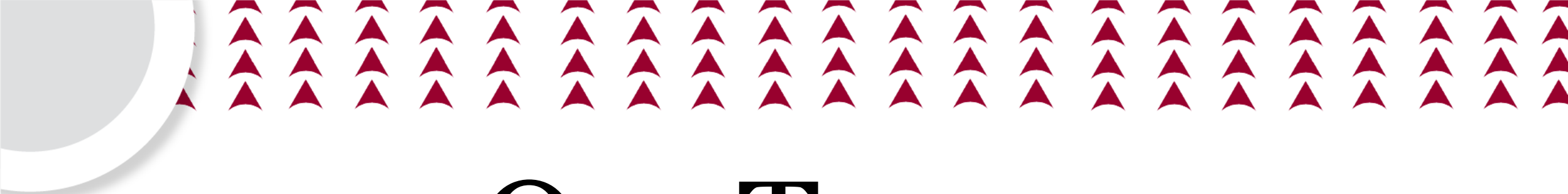


Students in Transition

Transitions are understood as key inflection points in students' educational journeys, including academic, social, and personal adjustments such as:

- Entry into higher education (e.g., first-year experience)
- Shifts in academic direction (e.g., major changes)
- Institutional movement (e.g., transfer pathways)
- Advancement to graduate or professional education
- Preparation for and transition into the workforce
- Re-entry or re-engagement with higher education





Our Team

Conferences &
Continuing
Education

Research &
Grants

Resources &
External
Relations



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Relations



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Coordinator



Kevin Wenger
Research Analyst



Jamil Johnson
Scholar-in-Residence



Cade Crenshaw
Coordinator



Rosa Thorn-Jones
Administrative
Specialist

Conferences & Continuing Education



Call for proposals now open!
Registration opens on Monday, May 18



Join us in Orlando!
Call for proposals & registration
launch this summer



June 1-26 | Academic Recovery Program Development (***course full**)

July 6-31 | Understanding & Supporting Transfer Student Success (***course full**)

October 5-30 | Understanding & Advancing First-Generation Student Success in Higher Education



2026-27 Awards Campaign is live:
Nominate an exceptional colleague,
student, &/or program today!

3 new transfer-focused awards

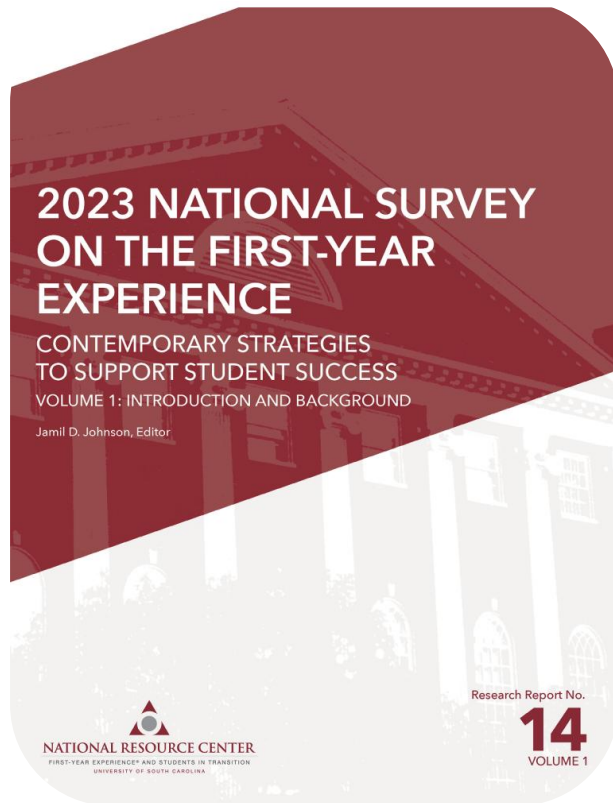


**Visit sc.edu/fye/awards
for more info.**



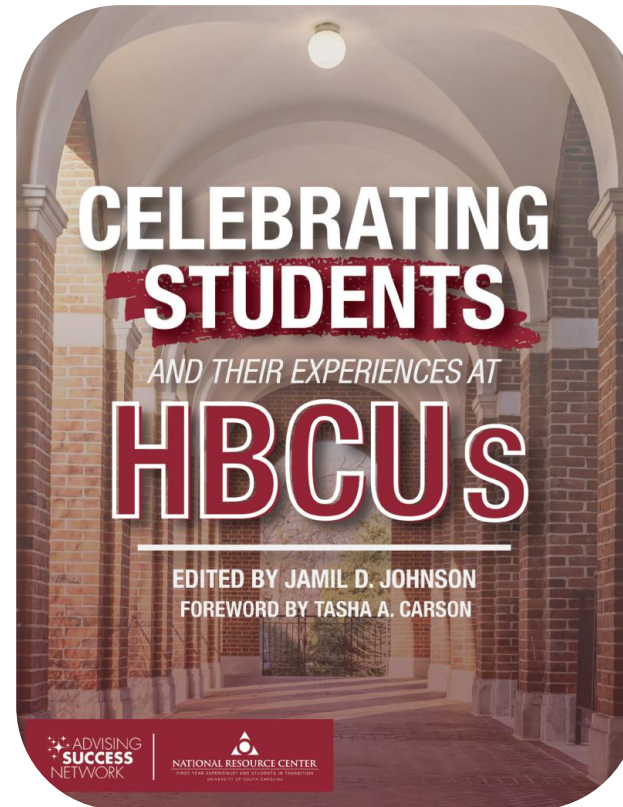
Research & Grants

New Open-Access Research Reports



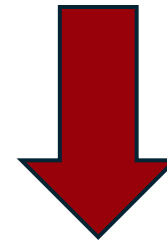
4 Volumes

Coming soon:
Frequency Tables & Research Briefs



Coming in August:
Virtual panel with authors
(partnership with ASN)

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Paul P. Fidler
RESEARCH GRANT

\$10,000 Research Grant

Application open through July
13

Info. session held in June

Visit sc.edu/fye/fidler
for more info.

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INSTITUTE**



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