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Greetings from the New Director of National Resource Center

I hope that this letter finds you all enjoying the summer season both personally and professionally. For some, this represents a time to slow down, reflect upon the past year and all that we have learned from our work with students in transition, and use these lessons to plan for the upcoming academic year. For others, summer is one of busiest seasons as new students visit our campuses for orientation, registration, bridge programs, common reading events, and welcome week. For me, the topic of transition has perhaps never been more personally meaningful—I have moved across the country, leaving a university where I have spent a significant amount of time to serve in an exciting new role as the director of the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition. This experience has served as a very personal reminder of a student's point of view during the initial adjustment to college.

I am honored to join the incredible staff of the National Resource Center and humbled to follow in the footsteps of its earlier leaders, John Gardner and Stuart Hunter. As with any movement in higher education, ours has grown and matured over the years. As such, new issues and resources have emerged and the National Resource Center has been at the forefront. While the first-year experience movement has long since gained a strong foothold in higher education, we are now also focusing on students at other points of transition.



Jennifer Keup
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A little over a decade ago, the Center expanded its scope and added “students in transition” to its name, taking the lead in broadening the focus on student learning and success across the college experience. The Center has since further developed the dialogue through conferences, publications, and online resources dedicated to the transition experiences of sophomores, transfers, seniors, and new graduate students. I intend to continue nurturing these newer developments until they reach the level of institutionalization in our field that we have enjoyed with the first-year experience focus.

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In another example of its leadership, The National Resource Center has built upon its solid foundation of high-quality conferences and publications and added institutes as a means to educate professionals not just on what is happening in the first-year experience and transition movement but to understand how to bring these issues to life on their own campuses (i.e., how to launch or re-tool a first-year seminar or how to create first-year assessment plans). Most recently, the Center has begun to expand its original research to complement its function as a clearinghouse for scholarly and practitioner-based literature. While each of these examples represents an evolution of purpose and product in response to a need in our field, they also represent the Center's expansion of its role as advocates and leaders who are shaping the issues in higher education, a role that I fully embrace and support as we create the vision for the next era of the Center.

I believe our international network of colleagues is one of the greatest resources that we have in our efforts to chart a path for the future of this movement and to identify and address the emerging issues in our field as well as higher education at large. I have always enjoyed the fact that the Center's intended audience has never been bound by membership, geography, discipline, title, functional area, or the field of higher education. As such, anyone who is interested in the success of students in transition—including faculty, academic administrators, college presidents, student affairs professionals, students, parents, legislators, policy analysts, and employers—is a member of our

constituency base and a participant in this movement.

As director of the National Resource Center, it is my immediate goal to draw upon the intellectual capital and commitment of all colleagues in our field to help refine the Center's vision and establish the direction for our future efforts. I already have been discussing some ideas with the incredible staff of the Center. I look forward to opening similar lines of communication with the Center's advisory board and with the pool of Outstanding First-Year Advocates who have been recognized by the Center for their achievements in improving the educational experience of first-year students.

I also look forward to conversations with other members of the community of professionals who are dedicated to the first-year experience and students in transition. As such, I would like to use this opportunity to include your voice in this dialogue. Please feel free to communicate with me about what you most value about our work, to share your vision for this movement, or to provide feedback on the role that you would like the National Resource Center to play in the future. It is important to me that the National Resource Center not only provides leadership but that any decisions or direction represent the best interests and input of our greater community of colleagues. Feel free to e-mail me at keupj@mailbox.sc.edu or call me at (803)777-2570.

I look forward to serving an amazing community of professionals who are dedicated to supporting and advancing efforts to improve student learning and transitions into and through higher education.

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