

# Draft Principles for Supporting First-in-Family Students

*The following draft principles are based upon brainstorming sessions held at the Breaking the Barriers: Forum on First-in-Family students in Higher Education. These drafts were developed by participants on the day and are derived from a variety of perspectives from within the higher education field. We would welcome your feedback and also suggestions for other principles to include - please send any ideas via the Contact Us link at the bottom of the webpage.*

1

Foreground student contact that is face-to-face, that engages with students and their families in a meaningful sense and that occurs both on campus and in the community.

2

Utilise a variety of multi-modal technological strategies to engage with this group, this needs to be *'multi-channeled'*; *'relevant and targeted'*; *'two-way'*; *'student centered – computer says yes!'*; *'just in time'* and *'reflective of the student life cycle'*

3

Build a sense of community on campus by:

- Acknowledging students and their particular journeys to higher education
- Maintaining the approachability of staff
- Providing 'informal' opportunities for families to come on campus
- Providing space for first-in-family student 'voices' to be heard via marketing, literature and policy documents

4

Adopt a strengths based approach to university outreach that seeks to **empower** students by recognising what they bring to the university environment and also, encourages students to reflect upon the support that exists outside the university environment

5

Recognise the diversity of this cohort rather than assuming first-in-family is a 'generic' category – can include a diversity of ages / cultural backgrounds / socio-economic states etc. Don't label in a negative sense rather this should be supportive

6

Make people feel welcome and comfortable on campus by decoding the university landscape through a variety of strategies including *'family open days'*, real *'go to'* people and *'peer support'*

7

Actively work towards changing university culture and myths for example *'university is for young people'* or *'students that lack certain skills / life experiences need to be changed or acted upon'*. Remain mindful that you need to avoid implying (in any way) that these students are deficit

8

Strive to make the university part of the local community rather than separate from it

9

Build on technology to create relationships that are meaningful and supportive, these relationships need to be proactive, authentic and diverse but also involve real people and face-to-face encounters