

Character Forward Grant: Opportunities and Impact

Frost Center Colloquia

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What is the Character Forward Grant?

- A few initial resources:
 - Grant website: <https://hope.edu/character>
 - Hope PR article: <https://hope.edu/news/2024/giving/hope-receives-institution-wide-grant-through-educating-character-initiative.html>

What is the Character Forward Grant?

- Hope received a **3-year, \$700,000 Institutional Impact Award** from Wake Forest's Educating Character Initiative, funded by a Lilly Foundation grant
- We are one of 24 projects (at 29 institutions) receiving an award (\$15.6M disbursed)
- The project runs from Fall 2024 – Summer 2027

What is the Character Forward Grant?

- The focus of the grant is **character and virtue development**
- Hope has a history of prioritizing character development
 - Virtues of Public Discourse frame our communal life
 - Hope Forward is a particular, focused expression of meaningful character development around generosity and gratitude

What is character development?

Theory of Change. The Hope Forward Program is centered on the two virtues of gratitude and generosity and views them as mutually reinforcing. Through intentional curricular and programmatic offerings, students are given the opportunity to develop a deep sense of gratitude, which motivates them toward generosity. And by acting generously, they see the cascading benefits toward others and may reflect on other gifts they have received, for which they can be grateful. Over time, this character development may secondarily lead to greater strengthening of the other virtues in which this program is contextually framed—the virtues of public discourse—and would result in greater well-being and flourishing. This *virtuous cycle* is depicted in Figure 1.

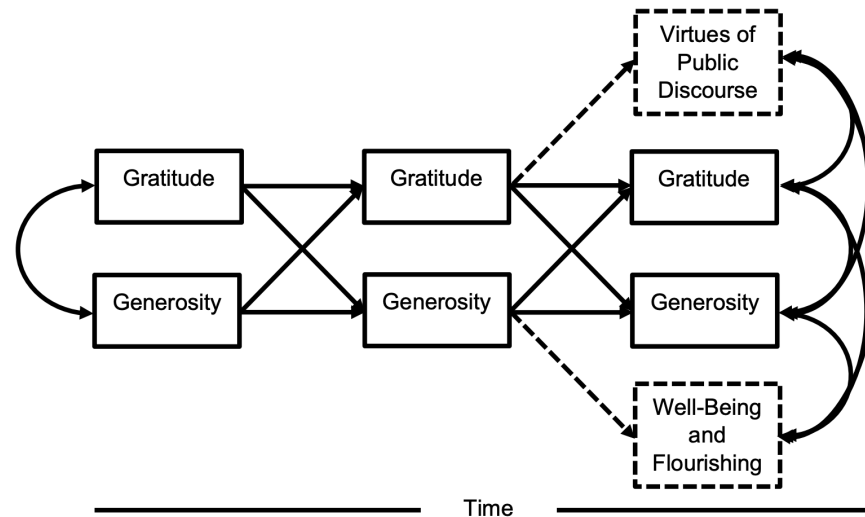


Figure 1. A *virtuous cycle*: a reciprocal relationship between gratitude and generosity, and their downstream secondary effects on other virtues and flourishing (in dashed boxes).

What is character development?

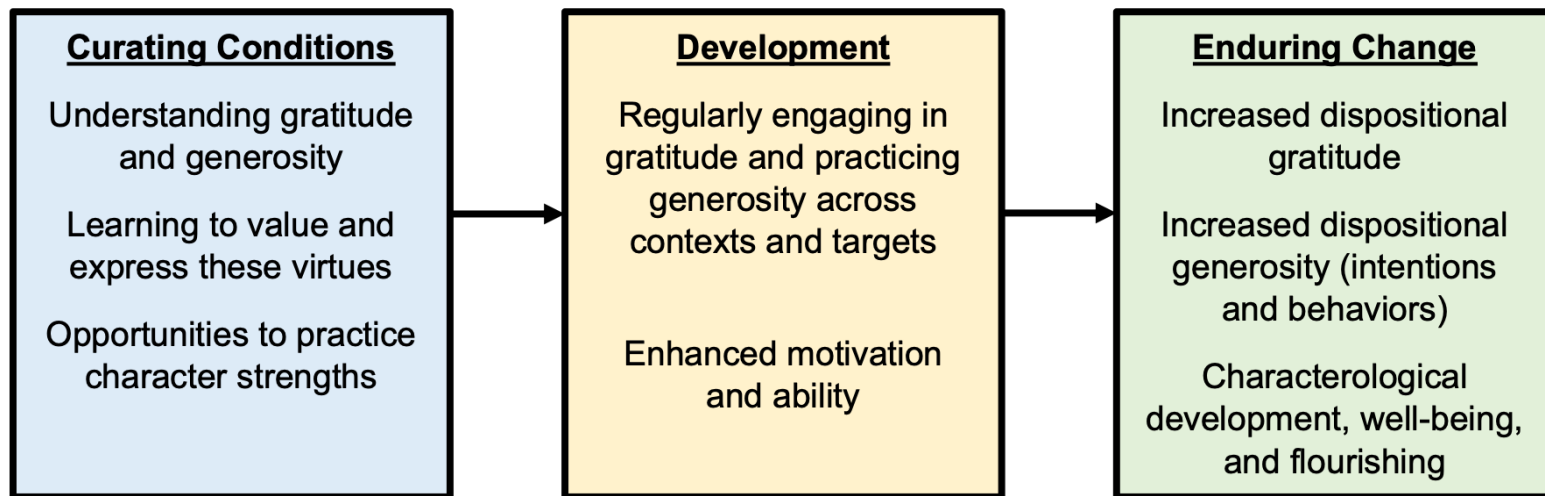


Figure 2. A proposed theory of change.

Who is involved?

GRANT PERSONNEL



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Who is involved?

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What is involved?

- **Establishing a Character Hub**
 - **Coordinating and accelerating character development efforts** through a single hub (that will be permanently supported by the College)
 - Developing a **strategic plan** for character development efforts
- **Faculty research grants**
 - **10 internal research grants** to support collaborative scholarship on character and virtue development (\$15,000 each + student support)

What is involved?

- **Course revision / redesign grants**
 - **10 internal course revision grants** to support revising an existing class to focus on character development (\$1,500 each)
 - **2 internal course design grants** to support developing a course on character development (\$4,000 each)
 - **2 off-campus course design grants** to support developing a course on character development (\$7,000 each)
- **Developing online teaching library**
 - **Cataloging all revised syllabi and multimedia modules** made freely available to all, posted to our website

What is involved?

- **Co-curricular programming and workshops**
 - **5 workshops/seminars** on practical character development
 - **6 community workshop breakfasts** for Hope community members
- **Recognizing character in action**
 - **Yearly awards (with prize money)** to organizations demonstrating character and virtue throughout their engagement with the College and community (of which 50% must be donated to an outside cause)
- **Bi-annual assessments**
 - **Twice yearly** assessments of our character development efforts among student

What is our anticipated impact?

- We are hoping that this will be a landmark project that will **change the course of the College in meaningful ways**
- The goal should not simply be to “check off” the list of promised grant activities
- Rather, we hope that this is an opportunity for us to fully embrace the good work of character development and center our shared work together around this common goal

What is our anticipated impact?

- The administration has committed **over \$100,000 of in-kind support** to making this project possible
- College leadership is committed to ensuring **the Character Hub is a permanent, sustained fixture of the College**
- The future is now!

Let's discuss!

- What questions do you have?
- What ideas do you have for promoting character development in your own areas?
- Where else could we accelerate this work?

Thank you!

- Please send us your questions and ideas!
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"We'd now like to open the floor to shorter speeches disguised as questions."