

\$500K Grant to Bolster Student Transfer Rate

Lee College students will soon have access to more seamless transfer pathways and personalized support, thanks to a \$500,000 planning grant from Houston Endowment. The funding will help Lee College design and test new strategies that expand student success and workforce opportunities across the region.

Lee College is one of nine Houston-area colleges selected to receive funding aimed at improving student transfer outcomes and aligning local efforts with Texas House Bill 8 (HB 8) and Senate Bill 1786 (SB 1786), two key pieces of legislation that link state funding to measurable student achievement.

“This grant allows Lee College to innovate, evaluate, and refine strategies that directly impact how our students move from college to career,” said Dr. Marissa Moreno, associate vice president for Transfer and Educational Partnerships and one of the project’s principal investigators. “By perfecting our systems and partnerships, we’re building stronger bridges to four-year universities and high-demand careers.”

During the one-year planning phase, the college will develop and pilot five initiatives designed to strengthen student transfer outcomes:

- **Enhanced myPath Portal:** New features will allow students to plan courses through a bachelor’s degree, connect with university advisors, and explore career pathways.
- **Transfer Advising Expansion:** Dedicated transfer advisors and an artificial intelligence–powered support tool will offer around-the-clock guidance.
- **Transfer Navigator Program:** Lee College alumni will mentor current students preparing to transfer, helping them navigate academic and personal challenges.
- **Standardized Assessments:** Faculty will create end-of-course assessments in key gateway courses to ensure students are well prepared for university-level work.
- **Collaborative Partnerships:** The college will work with university and workforce partners to align programs with regional labor market needs.

“These efforts will make the transfer process more streamlined and more student-centered,” explained Dr. Janena Norris, associate vice president of Academic Affairs and co-principal investigator. “Ultimately, we will help even more students reach their educational goals and strengthen our regional workforce at the same time.”

Currently, about 300 to 400 Lee College students transfer to a four-year institution each year — roughly 25 percent of those enrolled in transfer-intended programs. The college aims to significantly increase this number through the initiatives developed under this grant.

The planning work will conclude in late 2026, positioning Lee College to expand successful strategies through a larger, multi-year implementation grant in 2027.

“This investment allows us to strengthen partnerships that benefit both students and the community,” said Dr. Moreno. “This process is about rethinking the student journey from the first class to the final degree, and ensuring every student has the tools to succeed.”