

FAQ—THE WW NAME CHANGE

Why are you considering a name change now?

The Foundation Board and staff have grappled over time with the fact that the name both does not reflect of the nature of our current work and is tied to a man with a racist legacy. Recent events and the current national conversation about racial justice, as well as our desire to support improved civic learning and dialogue, gave new urgency to these concerns.

Are you erasing Woodrow Wilson from the entire institution's history?

No. When the organization was established 75 years ago at Princeton University our mission was to recruit new academics—professors to teach a rapidly expanding body of university students. Thus, our founders named the organization after Princeton's most famous president, who was himself a proponent of excellence in college teaching. We retained the name even as our work grew to include promoting more gender and racial diversity in American higher education. More recently, that work has also focused on improving the quality of K–12 education in our country, strengthening STEM teaching in high-need schools, and improving understanding of American history and civics.

Over the years more than 27,000 Fellows from various Foundation-based programs have contributed to creating not just a better educated, but a more just and inclusive America. We are proud of that work, even though we will be doing it under a different name. **We believe that telling the story of how an institution like ours came to have Woodrow Wilson's name and then to change its name is an important historical and educational opportunity.**

Who decided to change the Foundation's name?

The Board of Trustees of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation has voted unanimously to rename the organization and to remove Woodrow Wilson from its name.

When will you have a new name?

We will be talking with a number of stakeholders to gather advice on a new name, which we anticipate announcing by early fall.

Why were you originally named the Woodrow Wilson Foundation?

When the organization was established 75 years ago at Princeton University our mission was to recruit new academics—professors to teach a rapidly expanding body of university students. Thus, our founders named the organization after Princeton's most famous president, who was himself a proponent of excellence in college teaching.

I am a Woodrow Wilson Fellow. Will the name of my Fellowship change?

The consultative renaming process that we are undertaking will also include guidelines for names of *current* Foundation programs that have included the Woodrow Wilson name. We do *not* anticipate any change in the name of the original Woodrow Wilson Fellowship (1945–1971).

Why am I still seeing the Woodrow Wilson name on the website and other materials?

Until we have a new name, we are using alternatives like “WW,” “WW Foundation,” and “the Foundation” wherever possible. However, in some instances—such as our website design, our domain name, donation transactions, and so on—the process of fully changing the name and brand will await both the outcome of the consultative process and the completion of necessary legal and administrative steps.

Why am I still seeing the Woodrow Wilson name on programs?

We are working with funders and partners to consider the names of the current programs that reflect the Woodrow Wilson name. Again, alternatives like “WW” are being used to the fullest extent possible.

Will you be acknowledging Woodrow Wilson anywhere in your documents or website?

Yes. We believe that telling the story of how an institution like ours came to have Woodrow Wilson’s name and then to change its name is an important historical and educational opportunity.

Does this have anything to do with Princeton University’s decision to change the names of its school of international relations and its residential college named after Woodrow Wilson?

No. The Foundation Board and staff have grappled over time with the fact that the Woodrow Wilson name is not reflective of the nature of our current work and is tied to a man with a racist legacy. Recent events and the current national conversation about racial justice, as well as our desire to support improved civic learning and dialogue, gave new urgency to these concerns.

In addition to changing the name, what is the Foundation doing to fight systemic racism and work toward social justice?

We will continue to pursue work—as we have done since the 1970s—that promotes and supports equity, equality, and social justice, such as these programs:

- The suite of [Mellon programs](#) supports increasing diversity in the faculty ranks of higher learning by awarding fellowships to graduate students and faculty members.
- The [WW Teaching Fellowships](#) have sought specifically to help close the achievement gap in STEM learning by preparing outstanding math and science teachers for high-need public schools, many of which serve a disproportionate number of Black and Latinx students.

- Since 1974, the [WW Dissertation Fellowship in Women's Studies](#) is the only national program supporting original, significant, interdisciplinary doctoral dissertations on women's issues. In recent years, the work of new Women's Studies Fellows has focused increasingly on intersectionality, on women of color, and on nonbinary gender identities.

The Foundation has also long been committed to diversity in hiring, and its [staff](#) is diverse at all levels.

Is this a fundamental change in the organization?

No. Our existing programs and the legacy fellowships are critical to our story, to our impact and to our Fellows.

Where can I send my idea for the Foundation's new name?

Please email your idea to communications@woodrow.org with "naming idea" in the subject line.