

# GC JOURNEYS NEWS



SEPTEMBER 2019

## Transformative Experience Spotlight: MURACE (Mentored Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors)

MURACE has had a strong start to the semester. Several students have already started presenting research, including three of Dr. Snyder's students who presented at the 18th International Congress of Myriapodology in Budapest, Hungary. Furthermore, the student sponsored 'Undergraduate Research Circle' has grown to include students from GMC.

October will be a busy month for MURACE. On 10/9, Research Roundup will seek to connect students interested in research with faculty interested in mentoring. On 10/11, the MURACE Symposium will feature multiple sessions, including student research presentations, and a round table discussion on research at Georgia College.

## Upcoming MURACE Events

- **Undergraduate Research Circle** (Open to all), October 1st (5:30-6:30) in Atkinson 202
- **MURACE Research Roundup**, October 9th- HSB Commons Area 5:30, email [urace@gcsu.edu](mailto:urace@gcsu.edu) to attend
- **MURACE Symposium**, October 11th (12:00-4:00pm) [Register here](#)
- **Posters at the Georgia State Capitol** (Feb 25th), Call for applications start on October 4th
- **Georgia Undergraduate Research Conference** (November 1st & 2nd) at UNG

## GC JOURNEYS INFO SESSION

*FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED!*

- [RSVP Here](#)
- October 8 at 12:30-1:00 PM in Donahoo Lounge
- November 4 at 3:00-3:30 PM

We will be hosting brief (half-hour) information sessions to explain how you can get involved.

## GC JOURNEYS WORKSHOP

Sign up for faculty workshops on:

- Using transformative experiences in the classroom
- Essential skills

[Sign up here](#)

## Dr. Alby Leads Workshops in Transformative Learning & Essential Skills

Georgia College is moving into full implementation of GC Journeys with the classes of 2022 and 2023, and it will clearly take a village to move it from state spotlight to national distinction! Please take a moment today to register for two workshops this semester, each focused on one of the key aspects of the program: Essential Skills and Transformative Experiences.

**These will be workshops, not presentations.** Each will focus on a) questions we need to consider and b) the decisions faculty will need to make in order to tailor GC Journeys to the needs of their students. I promise to work hard to make these workshops productive and meaningful. I want you to leave with ideas and the feeling that you made a contribution to further developing our liberal arts mission.

REGISTER HERE: [https://gcsu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_9BpxUHctdQsa8kJ](https://gcsu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9BpxUHctdQsa8kJ)

### Incorporating Transformative Experiences Workshop

Is there a Transformative Experience that could be a good fit for one or more of your courses – an experience that would allow students to apply their learning and help you feel a renewed sense of purpose or excitement? What makes an experience “transformative”?

### Essential Skills Workshop

What are the most effective means of developing the attributes in our graduates that we determined as a community were important to us? What would courses that develop truly consummate thinkers look like?

## GC Journeys Presents for the University System of Georgia

On September 18th, Drs. Jordan Cofer, Cynthia Alby, and Jim Berger presented on Georgia College’s method of using faculty development to support GC Journeys & high-impact practices. Georgia College was one of four institutions invited to present at the Equity in High-Impact Practices Vanguard Institution meeting held at the University System of Georgia office in Atlanta.

The presentation offered an argument for the need to support faculty implementing high-impact practices, an overview of GC Journeys, and ended with GC’s model of supporting faculty in high impact practices. Cofer, Alby, and Berger explained how Georgia College had created a tiered system starting with 30 minute info sessions on GC Journeys, as well as 2 hour workshops on Transformative Experiences as one on Essential Skills, and finally a 32 hour course on Transformative Design. In addition, the Center for Teaching and Learning is working on additional means of support, including a faculty learning community centered around high-impact practices.



## GC Journeys, Where Did It Originate?

In the spring of 2015, a group of six GC faculty members attended an AAC&U summer institute, where the goal was for every institution to come home with a plan. We realized the university community needed to design its OWN plan. This led to expanding the steering committee, hosting an August kickoff event, creating monthly discussion groups, meetings with various departments and colleges, and bring together a multitude of individuals into 3 subcommittees. It was called, “The Liberal Arts Renewal Project.”

We posed two questions : “What do we really want to be/what do we want in our graduates?” and “What experiences do we want our students to have?” So a list of attributes for our graduates was built, evolved, and polished. Then, the ideas about possible transformative experiences were debated, surveyed, and discussed until the list was whittled down bit by bit to the eight we currently have.

Since then, GC Journeys has become part of the strategic plan. We branded the program, built up our transformative experiences, engaged in a lot of faculty development, developed an accompanying ePortfolio system, presented on the program statewide and nationally, and so much more. A “soft rollout” began with the class of 2022, and the class of 2023 is receiving full saturation. It never would have happened without the help of literally hundreds of individuals around campus: faculty, staff, students, and administration. May we all continue to work together!

## Are You A Faculty Member Who Wants to Get Involved with GC Journeys?

Consider volunteering for the GC Journeys Advisory Council  
email:  
[journeys@gcsu.edu](mailto:journeys@gcsu.edu) to volunteer

## GC Journeys In the News

[Click here to read about GC Journeys in the news](#)



Students attending the MURACE Undergraduate Research Circle

## Resources

- [GC Journeys Student Handbook](#)
- [Sign up for Transformative Experience & Essential Skills Workshops](#)
- Learn how you can be involved: [RSVP for a GC Journeys Info Session](#)
- [Register for the next Design for Transformative Learning class \(Spring 2020\)](#)
- Follow [@gcjourneys\\_](#) on Instagram
- Contact us:
  - [Cynthia Alby- Director of GC Journeys](#)
  - [Jordan Cofer-Associate Provost for Transformative Learning Experiences](#)

# What Makes a Transformative Experience "Transformative"?

## Eight Key Elements from AAC&U on What Makes a High-Impact Practice

Figure 2

### High-Impact Practices: Eight Key Elements and Examples

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#### Performance expectations set at appropriately high levels

*Example:* A writing- or inquiry-intensive first-year seminar in which assignments, projects, and activities—such as multiple short papers, problem sets, or projects—challenge students to achieve beyond their current ability levels as judged by criteria calibrated to students' precollege accomplishment evidenced by placement tests or ACT or SAT scores.

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#### Significant investment of time and effort by students over an extended period of time

*Example:* A multiple-part class assignment on which a student works over the course of the academic term—beginning with a synopsis of the problem or issue to be examined and the methods or procedures that will be used; followed subsequently with narrative sections describing the methods, findings, and conclusions which together culminate in a completed paper; concluding with demonstration or performance evaluated by an independent third party or faculty supervisor.

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#### Interactions with faculty and peers about substantive matters

*Example:* Out-of-class activities in which students in a learning community or first-year seminar come together at least once weekly to attend an enrichment event—such as a lecture by a visiting dignitary and/or a discussion of common readings and assignments facilitated by an upper-division peer mentor.

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#### Experiences with diversity, wherein students are exposed to and must contend with people and circumstances that differ from those with which students are familiar

*Example:* A service-learning field assignment wherein students work in a setting populated by people from different backgrounds and demographics, such as an assisted living facility or shelter for abused children, which is coupled with class discussions and journaling about the connections between class readings and the field assignment experience.

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#### Frequent, timely, and constructive feedback

*Example:* A student–faculty research project during which students meet with and receive suggestions from the supervising faculty (or staff) member at various points to discuss progress, next steps, and problems encountered and to review the quality of students' contributions up to and through the completion of the project.

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#### Periodic, structured opportunities to reflect and integrate learning

*Example:* Linked courses in a learning community wherein an instructor of one course designs assignments that require students to draw on material covered in one or more of the other linked courses, supplemented by a peer preceptor who coordinates student attendance and discussion at relevant campus events, or a capstone course in which students submit a portfolio and explain the relative contributions of the artifacts contained therein that represent the knowledge and proficiencies attained at various points during their program of study.

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#### Opportunities to discover relevance of learning through real-world applications

*Example:* An internship, practicum, or field placement that requires that students apply the knowledge and skills acquired during their program of study, or supervisor-mediated discussions among student workers that encourage students to reflect on and see the connections between their studies and experiences in the work setting.

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#### Public demonstration of competence

*Example:* An oral presentation to classmates of the required capstone seminar product that is evaluated by a faculty member and/or an accomplished practitioner, or a narrative evaluation of an internship, practicum, or field placement by the work setting supervisor and/or supervising faculty or staff member.