

Georgia Institute of Technology
Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Executive Summary: Serve-Learn-Sustain
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Serve-Learn-Sustain focuses on integrating learning and engagement opportunities focused on the theme “creating sustainable communities” into Georgia Tech’s academic programs across all six colleges. These opportunities will help Georgia Tech students combine their academic and career interests with their desire to improve the human condition.

Serve-Learn-Sustain will make opportunities available to students at all levels. For example, the Project One community-building effort already now includes readings and discussion for first-year students around the topic of sustainable communities. Two new sophomore-level courses approach sustainable communities from two angles: one emphasizing sustainability concepts with applications in communities and the other emphasizing community engagement concepts with applications in sustainability. These two entry points will make it possible for students from many majors to access and incorporate courses into their degree programs. Additional courses already on the books will add sustainable communities’ content, and new courses will be developed to extend the curricular options. Sub-thematic pathways also will be specified — such as Public Service and Innovating for Sustainable Communities — consisting of classes and co-curricular experiences linked to real-world government, not-for-profit, and for-profit organizations that tackle sustainability challenges related to community life, in diverse areas of application represented in all of Tech’s colleges. Capstone course offerings will also be expanded to offer projects from the sustainable communities’ domain.

Georgia Tech’s vision emphasizes addressing critical global challenges, and its mission calls for improving the human condition. The sustainable communities focus is responsive to global challenges in critical areas of energy, environment, water resources, food security, and global health — all areas of expertise and interest at Georgia Tech. Sustainability goes beyond environmental considerations to include community-level social considerations such as human security, well-being, and health — issues defining the human condition that will provide a practical and meaningful context for Georgia Tech students. Through Serve-Learn-Sustain, our students will come to understand how to build on their disciplinary and life interests to collaborate with diverse partners, bringing renewed meaning to Tech’s motto, “Progress and Service.”

By creating community engagement opportunities focused on environmental and social concerns of the day, Serve-Learn-Sustain will result in:

- A campus culture that embraces both sustainability and community engagement as an academic focus.
- Students with a deep understanding of the environmental, social, and cultural impact of their profession.
- Graduates who can effectively address sustainability challenges and community-level needs in their professional and civic lives.
- Employers who recognize our graduates as having the ability to work effectively in diverse teams.
- High-value relationships between academic programs and local communities, community-facing organizations, government, and industry.

To be transformative, Serve-Learn-Sustain must resonate with all sectors of campus — students, faculty and staff — as well as prospective students, community and corporate partners, and other universities. It belongs to the entire campus, and engaging the community and supporting sustainability will be reflected in our way of life as a university.