

GC Journeys Program and The Liberal Arts Council (LAC) - FAQ

Q: What is the history of the GC Journeys Program?

A: The information gathering completed as part of the Liberal Arts Renewal Project, along with the NSSE data, the DQP Survey, and the State of the Core Survey, revealed strengths and shortcomings of our current general education program. First and foremost, it revealed a need to move students from “collecting the dots” to “connecting the dots,” by means of a more distinctive core. It also revealed a need for us to be more purposeful in our focus, and so the university community created the “Attributes of GC Graduates,” which are available on the website. When Georgia became an official “LEAP State” with AAC&U, the connections between that initiative and the work already accomplished were obvious. The strategic planning committee was then able to combine the work accomplished to that point with the LEAP initiative to form Strategic Goal #2.

Q: What are the goals of the GC Journeys program?

A: The GC Journeys program aims to hone our general education curriculum in order to make it even more cohesive, meaningful, and integrative such that we can state with confidence that our graduates leave here as agile thinkers who meet all the “Essential Learning Outcomes” and possess the attributes we hope they will possess.

Q: How will the GC Journeys program propel us toward preeminence?

A: As a result of our work on this project, we are leading both the state and region in terms of implementation of the LEAP Initiative. In fact, if we are successful in implementing the plan as currently envisioned, we would likely have the most complete LEAP implementation plan in the nation. Furthermore, the more meaningful and streamlined assessment process will likely be seen as a model for other institutions.

Q: How does the work of the LAC and the GC Journeys program align with initiatives already in place at Georgia College?

A: Georgia College is in the midst of implementing its new strategic plan, *Our Path to Preeminence*. The GC Journeys Program reflects and supports the initiatives for Goal 2 in the strategic plan. These initiatives include designing a curricular and co-curricular experience for students that is highly infused with high impact practices (i.e. transformative experiences) and that is fully integrated with AAC&U’s LEAP (Liberal Education and America’s Promise) essential learning outcomes and principles. The Liberal Arts Council is overseeing the implementation of Goal 2, along with much help from the entire campus community.

Q: Where can I go to find out more about the GC Journeys Program?

A: You can visit the website, <https://intranet.gcsu.edu/liberal-arts-council/committee-membership>. You can also contact anyone on the LAC Advisory committee. Information on committee membership can be found on the website.

Q: Who can offer a Transformative Experience to be included in the GC Journeys Program and how could one go about doing so?

A: Anyone can propose a transformative experience. Depending on the nature of the experience, it can be course-based or offered as a co-curricular experience. While most TEs will be course-based, there are many opportunities to offer additional co-curricular experiences. If you are interested in finding out how to propose a new TE or if you'd like to find out information about GC's current TE offerings, please contact someone on the LAC Curriculum and Co-Curriculum Subcommittee (listed on the website).

Q: Will any of this count towards promotion and tenure?

A: The LAC Advisory Committee is working very closely with the Promotion and Tenure Task Force to ensure that incorporation of Transformative Experiences and designing courses around the ELO's are highly valued in the T&P process.

Q: Why is mapping our courses to the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes so desirable?

A: The LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes represent a set of educational outcomes and skills that are critical for today's graduate. Described as "outcomes that are closely calibrated with the challenges of a complex and volatile world", the ELOs embody the critical skills needed that go beyond the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of traditional disciplines. Critical thinking, inquiry and analysis, ethical reasoning, civic knowledge and engagement, and problem solving are just some of the LEAP ELOs that prepare students for twenty-first century challenges and also for today's changing and ever-transforming employment market.

Q: How will this general education reform better prepare our students for life upon graduation?

A: The LEAP essential outcomes and participation in highly engaging, high impact experiences prepare students for success as workers in the 21st century¹. Employers expect college graduates to "contribute to a changing workplace and help companies and organizations succeed and grow" and employers' prioritize skills that equip their employees to be innovative, creative, and ethical problem solvers. Employers priorities include:

- a. Nearly all employers surveyed (95 percent) say they give hiring preference to college graduates with skills that will enable them to contribute to **innovation in the workplace**.
- b. Nearly all those surveyed (93 percent) say that "a demonstrated capacity to **think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems** is more important than a candidate's undergraduate major."
- c. 80 percent of employers agree that, regardless of their major, **all college students should acquire broad knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences**.
- d. More than 75% of employers say they want *more emphasis* on 5 key areas including: **critical thinking, complex problem-solving, written and oral communication, and applied knowledge in real-world settings**.

Source: *It Takes More than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success*. 2013. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities and Hart Research Associates.