

# VIP Course #: Students as Partners

Multiple Sections

Dr. Karen Bunch Franklin



## Course Description

Do you often sit in a class and think, “If only the professor did this or that, I would learn so much more” or you think, “This professor is amazing – when they do X or Y, it really helps me learn the content”? Maybe you have felt **seen** in some classes and **invisible** in others.

How can you use your experiences as a student to help inform faculty and educational development – in other words, **how can your voice inform the type of training professors receive?**

**WELCOME to the STUDENTS AS PARTNERS VIP!** In this VIP, we will focus on students’ lived experiences both in and out of the classroom. We’ll conduct action research to better understand the learning needs of Georgia Tech students and then host student-led panels to share the findings with faculty. Working as a team, we’ll blend the findings with best practices in teaching and learning and share our findings at potential conferences and/or academic journals.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**1** Describe best practices in social science research.

**2** Use research best practices to design, develop, conduct, and analyze an action research study centered around student learning experiences. (Describe student experiences in the classroom. Relate and connect student experiences in the classroom to best practices in teaching and learning.)

**3** Design a student-led faculty panel on the needs of Georgia Tech undergraduate students.



## Minimal Grading

*Focus:* Learning  
*Progress:* Detailed Feedback & minimal point scale  
More details on page 3!

## Materials



All course materials are in Canvas.



## Course Site

[Canvas Course Site](#)



# Course Assignments

## Action Research Project (Semester 4)

In this semester-long project, you will work with a small team to engage in an action research project. Information on Semesters 1-3 is in LabArchives.

### Weeks 1-2

All VIP members: Introductions, VIP Expectations, Designation of Tracks & Teams, Team Building

### Week 3

All VIP members: Recap work from Spring 2026 to prepare for work in Fall 2026  
 \*New VIP members: Review Spring 2025-Spring 2026 information in Lab Archives, Complete CITI Training

### Weeks 4-7

Student Track: Begin work to develop and facilitate a student-led panel for faculty to disseminate your findings from the student-focused action research. Begin work on one journal article focused on findings.  
 Faculty Track: Begin development of a faculty survey.

### Weeks 8-10

Student Track: Facilitate faculty panel. Continue writing journal article (start a second if time)  
 Faculty Track: Submit faculty survey to IRB. Develop marketing for faculty survey

### Weeks 11-14

Student Track: Review the evaluation of the faculty panel. Begin work on a 2<sup>nd</sup> article. Begin development for 2<sup>nd</sup> round of student survey.  
 Faculty Track: Collect data and prepare for data analysis.

## IRB Certification - \*New VIP Members\*

IRB Certification: You will obtain your IRB Certification to participate in data analysis.

## VIP Notebook (Continuous)

Your opportunity to document and reflect on the weekly content and discussions about research and student voices. You have an individual notebook and a team notebook.

# Accommodations

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodations, [contact the Office of Disability Services](#) (404.894.2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your needs and obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.



***I will work with you regardless of formal accommodations.***

## ABOUT KAREN

### My Teaching Philosophy

I see you as a whole person. I recognize you are more than a student in my class and have multiple responsibilities that you are juggling all at once. Always contact me if you have any issues. I will work with you!

E: [karen.franklin@gatech.edu](mailto:karen.franklin@gatech.edu), Canvas  
 P: 803.422.8814 (feel free to text me also!)  
 Drop-in Hours: TBD

My Why



Where it all started! My daughter posing with my cap at my Master's ceremony.



She wanted to replicate the cap tradition at her HS graduation.



My daughter & I at my PhD Hooding where she recreated the cap photo.



Now, Year 4 at University of Oklahoma in Architecture!

## COURSE CULTURE

We all come to the course with different ideas, experiences, and knowledge. This enriches our discussions and understanding. It is expected that we will discuss with consideration and respect. This is a discussion-based course, which works best when we are all present. If you cannot attend class, please communicate with me. The [Faculty-Student Expectations](#) outlines basic expectations we should have.

## GEORGIA TECH INCLUSIVE VALUES STATEMENT

At Georgia Tech, we see diversity of backgrounds and perspectives as essential to learning, discovery, and creation. We strive to remove barriers to access and success, and to build an inclusive community where people of all backgrounds have the opportunity to learn and contribute to our mission. As outlined in [our strategic plan](#), we want to create an environment of holistic learning where all individuals can grow and learn to lead healthy, purposeful, impactful lives.

## Course Expectations & Guidelines

- The Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code applies to all work submitted in this course. [Review the Honor Code](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#). If you use AI, be sure to acknowledge and cite appropriately. AI should only be used to help generate ideas, refine thoughts, etc. All work should be your own.
- Be sure to check your e-mail and Canvas daily. Important class announcements and information will be posted to Canvas. You are responsible for all materials posted.
- Feedback will be posted to Canvas throughout the semester. It is your responsibility to keep track of your submitted assignments and engage with the feedback.
- Please double check your work for spelling and simple grammatical errors. Make sure to cite your sources using APA.
- I will come to class each day ready to engage you in all things learning. Each class will be structured to encourage your active participation, so please come to class [ready to participate](#) and [contribute to the class](#).
- Due dates are spaced throughout the semester & can be found in the Course Plan & Canvas. Assignments can be turned in up to one week after the due date.

## MINIMAL GRADING



### Intention

To help you focus on working in a more organic way, as opposed to working as you think you're expected to. Our grading scale is reduced to focus less on grades and more on learning.

### Feedback

Focus on qualitative not quantitative assessment.

| Grade Scale |   | Total Points to Earn |
|-------------|---|----------------------|
| A           | 4 | 50-45                |
| B           | 3 | 44-40                |
| C           | 2 | 39-35                |
| D           | 1 | 34-30                |
| F           | 0 | 29 or less           |

| Grade Category           | Total Points |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| Attendance               | 14           |
| Group Evaluation         | 10           |
| VIP Notebook: Individual | 13           |
| VIP Notebook: Group      | 13           |

## ABOUT VIP

The Vertically-Integrated Projects (VIP) Program operates in a research and development context. Undergraduate students that join VIP teams earn academic credit for their participation in design/discovery efforts that assist faculty and graduate students with research and development issues in their areas of expertise.

## VIP Teams:

VIP Teams are:

- Multidisciplinary - drawing students from all disciplines on campus;
- Vertically-integrated - maintaining a mix of sophomores through PhD students each semester;
- Long-term - each undergraduate student may participate in a project for up to three years and each graduate student may participate for the duration of their graduate career.

The continuity, technical depth, and disciplinary breadth of these teams are intended to:

- Provide the time and context necessary for students to learn and practice many different professional skills, make substantial contributions to the project, and experience many different roles on a large, multidisciplinary VIP team.
- Support long-term interaction between the graduate and undergraduate students on the team. The graduate students mentor the undergraduates as they work on VIP projects embedded in the graduate students' research.
- Enable the completion of large-scale projects that are of significant benefit to faculty members' research programs.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Through VIP students will:

- Learn and practice professional skills;
- Make substantial contributions to the team project;
- Experience different roles on a large, multidisciplinary team.

## VIP CLASSROOM

The VIP classroom is shared by other VIP teams. Therefore, it is important to clean up after ourselves and be careful with all equipment used in the space.

Food and drink are allowed in the space. Please dispose of trash appropriately in trash bins and clean up any spilled food or drink.