



**Georgia  
Tech**

CREATING THE NEXT

# ENGAGING UNDERGRADUATES IN ASSESSMENT OF A FIRST- YEAR PROGRAM

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# OUTCOMES

**After participating in this session, you will be able to:**

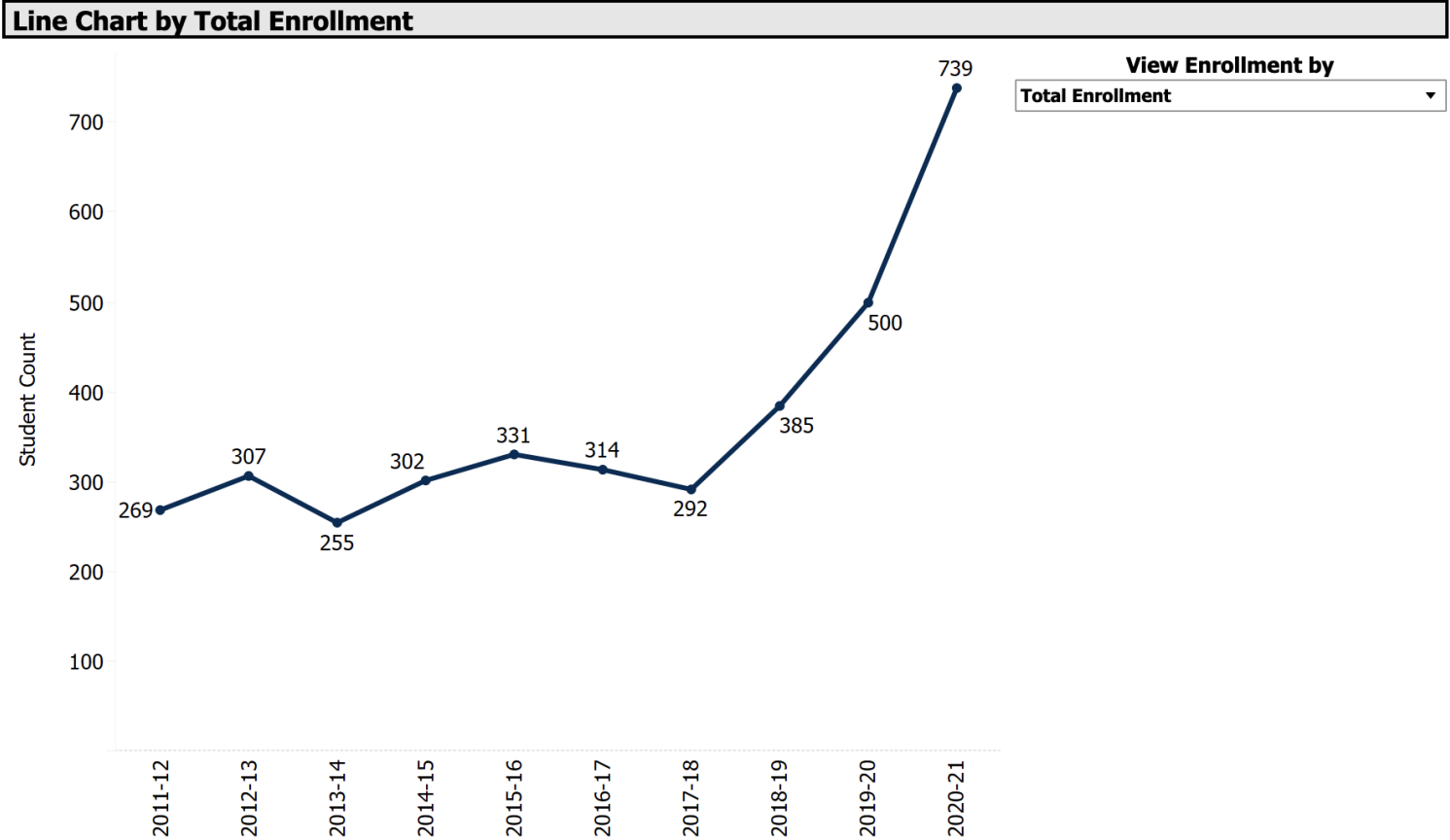
- Describe how principles of Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) may help guide the assessment process
- List three strategies for creating a successful student advisory board
- Describe how involving students in the assessment process can be beneficial to both students and student services
- List three potential challenges to assessment in student services
- List five practical steps to engaging students in continuous improvement efforts

# GEORGIA TECH

- Established in 1885, opened for classes in 1888
- Major research institution and member of the Association of American Universities (AAU)
- STEM-focused public Institution within the University System of Georgia
- **Fall 2020 Enrollment:** 39,775
  - 16,564 Undergraduate and 23,211 Graduate
- **Outreach:** regional, national, and global (Savannah, France, Singapore, Shenzhen, etc.)
- **Location:** Urban (midtown Atlanta)
- **Vision:** Over the next decade, Georgia Tech will be an example of inclusive innovation, a leading technological, research university relentlessly committed to serving the public good; breaking new ground in addressing the biggest local, national, and global challenges of our time; making technology broadly accessible; and developing exceptional leaders from all backgrounds ready to produce novel ideas and create solutions with real human impact.
- **Mission:** The Georgia Institute of Technology is a public research university established by the state of Georgia in Atlanta in 1885 and committed to developing leaders who advance technology and improve the human condition.

# Summer Sessions Initiatives - iGniTe

First year students admitted for summer enter Georgia Tech for the late short summer term and will participate in iGniTe. First year students admitted for Fall term may also apply to change their admit term to summer to be a part of iGniTe!



# Summer Sessions Initiatives - iGniTe

- June – August (5 weeks of instructional time)
- cohort-based living learning community
- 6-7 credits (3 classes)
- co-curricular enrichment + instruction
- first year experience course required

## **Methods of Assessment:**

- surveys
- focus groups
- anecdotal feedback (student advisory board)

# INCORPORATING A COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH APPROACH

*Guided by principles of Community Based Participatory Research (Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998)*

- Builds off existing strengths
- Develops collaborative and equitable research partnerships
- Fosters co-learning among partners
- Relies on systemic approach and iterative process
- Long term relationships with commitment to sustainability



The iGniTe Summer Launch Program strives to collect meaningful qualitative and quantitative assessment to drive improvement and student satisfaction.  
We strive to involve students in the research process and equip them with research skills and training.

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## INVOLVING STUDENTS IN ASSESSMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS



- Give students ownership of the assessment process
- Give research opportunity and training (institutional context)
- Expand staff capacity to perform assessment (esp. focus groups)
- Student comfort in talking/sharing stories during focus groups



## STUDENT INTERN ASSESSMENT RESPONSIBILITIES



- Transcription of qualitative data
- Coding of qualitative data
- Report writing
- Focus group facilitation
- Data collection

- Transcription (incl. Use of transcription equipment)
- IRB Application Writing
- Data security
- CITI Training
- Involvement in staff assessment days/professional development
- Pay rate equitable for research duties
- Clear templates for assessment reports
- Training on coding qualitative data/collaborative process

- Recruitment through the program each year (Fall, after summer program)
- Volunteer – so appreciation / recognition is important.
- Role is to advise on improvement – provide open environment for criticism
- Present data, explain data, ask for solutions
- Biweekly meetings, throughout fall & spring
- Director(s) are students who lead the board, staff take an advising role
- Bring campus partners to present to students
- Fall semester focused on assessment of past summer (incl. Campus partners)
- Spring semester focused on planning for next summer

## ADVISORY BOARD ASSESSMENT RESPONSIBILITIES



- Continuous improvement (suggestions for ways forward)
- Constructive criticism
- Points of pride

Data is presented in meetings

Data is discussed and contextualized

Suggestions for continuous improvement come primarily from this group

Think "Board of Directors"

- Recruitment for participants
  - Provide meal(s) or giveaways
  - Naming – e.g. Feedback instead of "focus group" (clarity)
- Shift to virtual
  - Use social media to advertise
  - No incentives but explain to students the WHY
- Data security / confidentiality
  - Provide laptops for students to work, work in an office
  - Data stored on university – approved cloud storage
  - Training

## PRACTICAL STEPS TO INVOLVING STUDENTS IN ASSESSMENT



1. Look for students / majors / programs looking for research experience
2. Provide plentiful training, sourced from all over campus
3. Help students see the WHY of assessment (improvement, student experience)
4. Recruit a volunteer board, to assist with recommending program improvements (not research tasks)
5. Build community around assessment – if in person, provide a meal. Make it fun!



## BENEFITS TO STUDENTS AND PROGRAMS



Benefits to Students	Benefits to Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hands-on learning opportunities</li><li>• Gain skills in data collection and analysis</li><li>• Introduced to data security concepts</li><li>• Skills in presenting data</li><li>• Feel more connected to their campus community</li><li>• Opportunity to act as change agent and influence their environment in meaningful ways</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stakeholder feedback is built in throughout the entire process</li><li>• Students provide great feedback on assessment instruments—how they will read and interpret questions, etc.</li><li>• Students are great resources for data collection, easily build rapport with students within the program</li><li>• Creates a community of continuous improvement and lets students know their voice is valued</li></ul>

## DISCUSSION GROUP

- What challenges do you face in assessing living learning communities or other first year programming in your own university or institute?
- How are you working to overcome those challenges?
- How are you involving students in your own assessment process? What benefits and challenges do you face with this?
- What do you skills do you want your students to gain from working with you on program assessment?



## REFERENCES



Israel, B. A., Schulz, A. J., Parker, E. A., & Becker, A. B. (1998). Review of community based research: Assessing partnership approaches to improve public health. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 19, 173-202. doi: 10.1146/annurev.publhealth.19.1.173.

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