

SLS Affiliated Capstone Projects

Serve-Learn-Sustain supports a number of capstone projects every semester. This document provides some general guidelines about these projects. We aim to have affiliated projects in every school and we're eager to collaborate with project teams! If you have a particular project in mind that you'd like to discuss – or if you would like SLS to help find you a project related to its theme, “creating sustainable communities” – please make an appointment to meet with us.

What is an SLS Affiliated Capstone Project?

SLS engages students in using their disciplinary expertise to help “create sustainable communities” where humans and nature flourish, now and in the future, in Georgia, the U.S., and around the globe. To that end, we support capstone projects that align with the [SLS sustainable communities framework](#). This means that the projects have clear social and/or environmental goals. For example, an [ME capstone team](#) designed the first iteration of an Urban Farm Composter for Atlanta Food & Farm, a social enterprise consulting group that does urban agriculture and community food system planning (see text box).

All of the capstone projects that we support are carried out jointly with a real-world partner, and ideally with a partner who is deeply engaged in the communities related to the project. This ensures that the projects advance visions and goals established by community leaders or organizations serving communities. The community partner also brings important knowledge to the partnership, about the project itself and its broader social, cultural, economic, and political contexts. As such, the partner is considered an educator. For this reason, small community partners with minimal budgets are generally [compensated](#) for their time.

All SLS project teams are assigned a Subject Matter Expert, generally from another school, who advises the team and provides input to the instructor to be considered in end-semester evaluations. This adviser helps the team consider additional perspectives related to sustainability and community.

All project teams also receive basic training from SLS staff on building and maintaining relationships with partners and touch base with us during the semester to ensure that the relationship proceeds smoothly and in ways that are beneficial to the students, partners, and SLS. Finally, teams are expected to respond to our basic [pre- and post-semester surveys](#) to contribute to SLS assessment of student learning.

How does SLS support a capstone project?

SLS supports projects in a variety of ways, depending on the projects and the school. These can include:

- Identifying partners and developing project ideas
- Providing training and assistance with building and maintaining the partner relationship
- Providing funding for the school or team to be used towards the project or support the program
- Identifying Subject Matter Experts to serve as additional project advisers
- All SLS Affiliated Project Teams are invited to share their work at the SLS Student Showcase hosted at the end of every semester and enter the Showcase award competition
- SLS also documents some teams' work to be shared through the online SLS Teaching Toolkit

Questions or want to discuss or find a project?

Talk to your Capstone Adviser and contact Jennifer Hirsch, Director of Serve-Learn-Sustain, at jennifer.hirsch@gatech.edu



AF2 AgTech "Skunkworks"

Following our experience with hosting six GA Tech Mechanical Engineering senior students for the Fall 2017 semester as part of the GT Capstone Design program, our firm will establish a permanent research and development division to design and launch innovations in technological solutions for urban agriculture.

(Source: [AF2 Opportunity Harvest Souvenir Booklet](#), Dec. 2017)

The ME capstone team designed a composter for AF2. Read about the project [here](#)



An ISyE team worked with the National Foundation to End Senior Hunger to help senior centers better predict the demand for meals and redistribute excess food to reduce food waste. The team was advised by a History & Sociology professor who specializes in food, agriculture and inequality. (Photo Source: [NFESH website](#))