

**Purdue University College of Agriculture (West Lafayette, Indiana, USA)
Transformational Experiences or “CATE”**

Purdue College of Agriculture Transformational Experiences (or “CATE”) encompasses college student intentional experiences that enhance the undergraduate academic experience and occur primarily outside the typical classroom setting (<https://ag.purdue.edu/oap/cate/>).

Commonly referred to as co-curricular activities or high-impact educational practices, Purdue’s CATE initiative is based on Dr. Corey Seemiller’s research: Communication; Intrapersonal Awareness & Development; Interpersonal Skills & Intercultural Knowledge; Ways of Thinking.

Within higher education, these Transformational Experiences are designed to: foster intrapersonal and interpersonal development; assist students determine their place in a global environment; provide students opportunities for humanitarianism and civic engagement; enhance students’ communication, problem-solving, decision-making, analytical and creative thinking and organizational skills; assist students realize their potential; promote and enhance student engagement and satisfaction, along with improve student retention, success, and graduation rates; and equip students for life after college.

In this brief video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=R-gjypYUdyM) Dr. Karen Plaut, Dean of Purdue University’s College of Agriculture, shares her perspectives on the importance of CATE for students pursuing postsecondary education across the agricultural and related disciplines.

Purdue’s CATE Initiative encompass 15 defined categories of Transformational Experiences:

Academic Service Learning & Civic/Community Engagement	Certificate Program(s)	College Leadership
Field, Practicum, and Entrepreneurial Experience	Honors Distinction	Leadership & Professional Development Initiative
Learning Community	Peer Support (Mentor/Teacher/ Leader)	Professional/Industry Internship/Job
Public Policy/Government Internship	Recognized Purdue Student Organization Leadership	Residential Leadership
Study Abroad & International Engagement	Undergraduate Research	University Student Community Program

These 15 categories of Transformational Experiences align with the Four Signature Domains of Purdue’s CATE initiative:



Academic Excellence



Leadership



Issues Engagement



Research

At Purdue, the program is coordinated and managed by an assistant director in the college. All undergraduate students in the College of Agriculture are expected to engage in at least one meaningful transformational experience during their academic career. Hence, Purdue Agriculture developed an online CATE Tracking Database which allows us to verify and track the Transformational Experiences of undergraduate students in the College of Agriculture individually, by graduating cohort, by category of transformational experiences, by department, etc. It affords the leadership team and advising community the opportunity to track student CATE involvement by participation numbers and varied statistics (percentages of specified cohorts). In a sense, it functions as a co-curricular transcript.

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