Making the Invisible Visible

A Provost Learning Community

March 2, 2026

Overview

Foreword

Sometimes, simply finding *the name* of the notion you are trying to capture is the hardest. *Precisely* because you do not know this concept's name, learning about it is difficult. This community could have been named:

- "Discovering blind spots"[1]
- "Exploring the mundane" (Emily Harris),
- "Think-alouds" (Kalpana Ramgopal),
- "Tacit Knowledge" (Andrew Goss).

The selected title was suggested by Kalpana Ramgopal, but I hope that those keywords will resonates with your interests!

Description

Any anthropologist will tell you: routine activities tend to go unnoticed, are not recorded, and are, therefore, difficult to divulge. That applies to any discipline. For example, while not all programmers develop introductory guides, experienced programmers know that documenting "how to get started" with their program is paramount to its adoption. Faculty in the psychological sciences may not tout inclusivity, but they recognize the importance of designing universally accessible courses so that all feel welcome and have access to material that facilitates collective success.

This PLC aims to examine good practices from a variety of fields to foster easily actionable changes in our workflows, teaching, and habits. We will hear from guest presenters and delve into our respective fields to explore the impact of what it means to disclose the mundane and make explicit what "goes without saying". We will collectively enrich our repository of best practice and efficiency techniques, from minute-taking to ergonomics, from universal design to leveraging available resources on campuses.

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[1]This was my suggestion, I disliked its ableist tone, but was amused at how it echoed the famous textbook by Jean-Yves Girard *The blind spot : lectures on logic.*

Participants

- Clément Aubert – Computer Sciences (Facilitator)
- Courtney Berge – Libraries (Participant)
- Mustafa Culha – Biochemistry (participant)
- James Garner – Rhetoric & Writing (Guest presenter)
- Andrew Goss – History (Participant & guest presenter)
- Tyler Greene – History (Participant)
- Danielle Harris – Communication (Participant)
- Emily Harris – Library Science and Administra (Guest presenter)
- David Hunt – Sociology (Guest presenter)
- Katie McKie – Medicine (Guest presenter)
- Nicole Meyer – French and Women's and Gender Studies (Participant)
- Rafael Pacheco – Dental Materials (Guest presenter)
- Sonia Sharmin – English (Participant)
- Angie Spencer – Chemistry (Participant)

Meeting Modalities

Date	Time	Place	Content	Presenter
Aug. 22, 2025	1–2:15pm	Summerville Campus, University Hall, 227	Introduction	Clément Aubert
Sep. 26, 2025	1–2:15pm	Summerville Campus, Allgood Hall, E158	Academic Writing	James Garner
Oct. 24, 2025	1–2:15pm	Summerville Campus, Reese Library, LIBR 141	Using Thick Description to Make the University Visible	Andrew Goss
Nov. 21, 2025	1–2:15pm	Health Sciences Campus, Greenblatt Library, AB 2103	Tips, Tricks, and Tools for Efficiency	Emily Harris
Jan. 30, 2026	1–2:15pm	Health sciences campus, Children's Hospital of Georgia, BT 1931	An Imperfect Science - Bridging the Gap	Katie McKie
Feb. 27, 2026	1–2:15pm	Health Sciences Campus, Dental College of Georgia Building (GC), GC 5002	From High-Tech Dentistry to Everyday Tools	Rafael Pacheco
Mar. 27, 2026	1–2:15pm	Forest Hill Campus, Christenberry Fieldhouse, room TBD		David Hunt
Apr. 24, 2026	1–2:15pm			Clément Aubert

Contents

Introduction – Clément Aubert

Making the invisible visible will begin by answering seemingly simple questions: Why are we here? Which contradictions do we need to face? How can we improve despite boundaries?

- Slide in html and pdf (source in .md)
- "Digest" in html and pdf (source in .md)

Academic Writing – James Garner

Academic writing can be difficult to navigate, especially when it's required alongside a teaching load. How do I juggle writing and teaching time? Should I use a reference manager? Which reference manager? What about AI? Dr. James Garner, interim director of the Center for Writing Excellence, will share techniques and technologies to help you improve your writing and research process.

- Slides
- "Digest" in html and pdf (source in .md)

Using Thick Description to Make the University Visible – Andrew Goss

Universities are under the microscope, and there is no shortage of writing about the state of this strange but important fragment of American life. So much being written is either prescriptive, opining on what the university could or should be, or relies on quantitative methods to comprehend college's value and importance – like the poll about the public perception of college education, or the studies of the ROI of different majors. In this presentation, I take a different approach, utilizing Clifford Geertz's method of ethnographic description, what he called Thick Description, to make visible the culture of today's university. This method was developed to make sense of the interwoven structures of behavior and relationships that make a society's culture. This method lends itself to efforts to analyze something as unusual as the university. What are the rituals, language, and habits of the university? How do different university participants construct interpretative frames of meaning about their institution? I look at four different ways Augusta University exists – as a Republic of Scholars, as a Business, as a Bureaucracy and as a Corporation – not for the purposes of finally figuring out what the university truly is, but to help suggest ways to navigate the invisible structures of the university.

- "Digest" in html and pdf (source in .md)

Tips, Tricks, and Tools for Efficiency – Emily Harris

Between teaching, research, service, and life outside of work, it's easy to feel buried under an endless list of tasks and deadlines. These days, it seems like every problem comes with a new AI tool promising to fix it—but sometimes the most inconspicuous habits are still the most powerful.

In this session, we'll get back to basics: practical, time-tested strategies for working more efficiently and staying focused in our day-to-day academic lives. We will also review a few (non-AI) tools that you can use to keep yourself on track!

- Slides (backup)

An Imperfect Science - Bridging the Gap – Katie McKie

Have you ever wondered just what your doctor is doing behind the scenes as you tap your toe and scroll through your phone in the waiting room? In this session you will get a peek behind the curtain at the daily life of a physician in a busy academic practice as we discuss similarities and differences between our roles as university faculty. This discussion invites us to reflect as a group on how we teach, how we investigate, and how we care for our patients, learners, and colleagues.

- Slides

From High-Tech Dentistry to Everyday Tools: Making the Invisible Visible – Rafael Pacheco

In this session, Dr. Pacheco will introduce the Dental College of Georgia and its digital infrastructure, including intraoral scanners, 3D printers, and milling machines. He will then walk through the everyday tools he uses to manage clinical, administrative, and educational workflows, such as Outlook Calendar, Bookings, Planner, and AI. He will also share a few personal projects, including a custom-built digital door display and applications of TinkerCAD. The goal is to show how the same problem-solving mindset applies whether you are scanning a patient or organizing your week.

- Slides

About

This Provost Learning Community was initiated and facilitated by the Center for Instructional Innovation. Learn how to report it in PACT.

Miscellaneous

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