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# Coding for a Better Community: UWG Brings Back Hackathon for Young Tech Enthusiasts

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Dec. 1, 2021

Reading time: 2 minutes, 36 seconds

Do you or someone you know like to create or design stuff? How about using technology to build a better community?

Join the University of West Georgia for [Hackathon 2022](#) – themed “Coding for a Better Community” – scheduled for April 8-9.

The event is hosted by the [College of Education's Fusion Center for Experiential Learning](#), and the [College of Arts, Culture and Scientific Inquiry's Department of Computing and Mathematics](#).

“The College of Education's Fusion Center for Experiential Learning is excited to offer STEM education events for all ages,” said Lindsey Robinson, director. “After the hiatus due to COVID-19, we are more than ready to provide hands-on opportunities for our youth.”

Hackathon consists of two tracks.

The Youth Track is open to middle, junior high and high school students, aged 13-18. It will be held Saturday, April 9, and will focus on the [GreenBelt](#) and sustainability. Technical skills aren't required; participants will learn from each other and mentors during the event.

“It's really cool to see what students come up with in response to the community problem,” explained Kim Huett, assistant professor in UWG's [Department of Education Technology and Foundations](#). “Some teams will create story-based applications, while others might make more technical solutions. We offer a variety of awards, from computing excellence to best pitch, so it's not just technical savvy that's going to win.”

To be held Friday, April 8, and Saturday, April 9, the Advanced Track is open to high school and college students age 18 and above. Participants don't need to be computing professionals but should have some technical skills, like basic web development, and experience with a general-purpose programming language. The focus of this track will be a specific request for a product prototype.

Throughout the event, professional and student advisers will be available to provide assistance to the teams. Mentors come from local software company and Hackathon sponsor [GreenCourt Technologies](#), computer science and instructional technology faculty, and other computing roles in the community.

The event highlights UWG's commitment to experiential learning and a dedication to the curation of a first-choice university, as outlined in the [strategic plan](#) launched earlier this year.

The [Richards College of Business](#) recently hosted its own Robotic Process Animation (RPA) Hackathon, which was in partnership with [Southwire](#).

“Hackathons present challenges to solve and can be a powerful tool for engaging students in competition and collaboration, complementing the formal learning that takes place in classrooms,” said assistant professor Jeannie Pridmore, who spearheaded the RPA project. “It gave students the space to create their own ideas and produce a prototype of their vision. It fostered a work-integrated learning environment and put our students in contact with industry professionals.”

They also capitalize on the unique strengths and backgrounds individuals bring to the table, Huett added, which benefits them in the future.

“The Hackathon is a fun way to let kids experience the dynamic team-based problem-solving that is so needed in today's workplace,” she concluded. “Computing is integral to everything we do in society. In the 21st century, we need all hands on deck to solve the problems we face across industries and communities.”

For more information and registration details, please visit [www.westga.edu/education/hackathon/](http://www.westga.edu/education/hackathon/).





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