Manage Application: Textbook Transformation Grant

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<th>Application Title:</th>
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<td>Submitter First Name:</td>
<td>J. Sean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submitter Last Name:</td>
<td>Callahan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submitter Email Address:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:scallaha@highlands.edu">scallaha@highlands.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Submitter Phone Number:</td>
<td>706-340-0192</td>
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<td>Submitter Campus Role:</td>
<td>Proposal Investigator (Primary or additional)</td>
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<td>Applicant First Name:</td>
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<td>Co-Applicant Name(s):</td>
<td>Amy Burger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant Email Address:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:scallaha@highlands.edu">scallaha@highlands.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>706-340-0192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Appointment Title:</td>
<td>Asst. Prof. of Psy</td>
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<td>Institution Name(s):</td>
<td>Georgia Highlands College</td>
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Team Members (Name, Title, Department, Institutions if different, and email address for each):

- **Dr. J. Sean Callahan, Assistant Professor of Psychology and Director of Diversity Initiatives, scallaha@highlands.edu**

- **Ms. Amy Burger, Librarian and Instructional Designer, aburger@highlands.edu**

Sponsor (Name, Title, Department, Institution):

- **Dr. Alan Nichols, Dean, Division of Social Sciences, Business, and Education, Georgia Highlands College, anichols@highlands.edu**

Proposal Title: 141

Course Names, Course Numbers and Semesters Offered:
Project Goals:

We intend to provide free, high quality learning materials for Georgia Highlands College students who take Introduction to General Psychology (PSYC 1101) by converting from current purchased textbook and adopting the OpenStax’s College Psychology e-textbook.

By adopting Open Educational Resources (OER) materials, we expect to see an increase in enrollment and retention as well as completion rates of our students.

The adoption of free, open, high quality resources also makes higher education more affordable to a higher number of Georgia Highlands College students, thus contributing to the goals of Complete College Georgia.
To evaluate and assess the effectiveness of this conversion we will measure students’ perceptions and experiences and course success rates with OER materials compared against courses not using OpenStax.

**Statement of Transformation:**

The recent push by the current administration to make community college free to anyone who wants to attend makes it imperative that the costs associated with pursuing a degree as affordable as possible (Mason, 2015). Georgia Highlands College (GHC) is an open access institution that offers high quality education at a reasonable price. Many of the students who attend GHC, however, come from backgrounds and are in life situations that impede them from purchasing the expensive learning materials. Many of these same students are also required to enroll and successfully complete PSYC 1101 (in Area F category). The market costs for the current textbook and materials is $218.09. This is an extremely expensive option for many of the students who attend this institution. As a result of this transformation, the collective savings for students in these eight sections is $54,064 each academic year. As the course is developed and more faculty adopt the redesigned course, the potential collective student savings tops $300,000.

The families of our students are also impacted by this transformation, as many them use financial aid to help support households, pay for childcare, and for transportation to and from school. No-cost, high quality OER helps alleviate the deleterious factors that impede student success. For example, students will have access to the OpenStax College e-textbook at the start of the semester, rather than two weeks into the semester (after they receive financial aid overpayment), and are able to complete readings, quizzes, and tests associated with the course in a timely manner, thus increasing retention, course success, and graduation rates. The conversion to Open Educational Resources would attract more students to take courses in our Psychology program. More broadly, this move towards no-cost, easily accessible learning materials supports the mission of GHC as an access institution.

**Transformation Action Plan:**

The transformation action plan is comprised of three phases before course delivery in the Fall 2015 (pre-planning, planning, and course redesign).

**Pre-planning**

This phase has already completed. OpenStax’s College Psychology e-textbook has been identified, reviewed, and selected as the primary textbook for PSYC 1101.

**Planning and Course Redesign**
These phases of the plan are already in progress. Activities, websites, articles, and videos are being identified and assessed for appropriateness and effectiveness as supplemental materials. The backward design process in Dee Fink’s *Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses* and the American Association of Colleges and Universities’ VALUE Rubric will guide course redesign. Fink’s approach will provide the methodology for learning outcomes, while the VALUE rubric helps to support the internationalization and globalization of the curriculum. This systematic reorganization, including the course syllabus revision, will occur during the summer 2015. Dr. Callahan is the instructor of record and will serve as subject matter expert and identify course materials. Ms. Burger will serve as instructional designer, assist in identifying course materials, and design modules for access in D2L. Both Ms. Burger and Dr. Callahan will serve co-Investigators and work together to evaluate and assess student success and experience, including survey construction and distribution, protocol development, and data analysis.

**Quantitative & Qualitative Measures:** Quantitative and qualitative measures administered in the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters of the 2015-2016 academic year will be used to gauge the impact on student success and experience. The quantitative assessment includes a pre- and post-survey to compare the perceived quality, experience, and satisfaction of students using OpenStax’s Psychology and other online resources vs. previous semesters or classes using purchased textbook and materials. SPSS will be used to enter and analyze data to conclude there is significant statistical difference in students’ feelings toward the use of e-textbooks before and after course delivery. The achievement of learning outcomes, DFW rate, and tests/grades from courses using OpenStax will also be compared to previous semester or courses using purchased textbooks with t-test comparison. Qualitatively, interviews and surveys will be used to gather information regarding students’ comparisons of e-textbooks and materials and purchased textbooks. More specifically, this data will be analyzed for themes and patterns that help elucidate the effects of the adoption on student performance.

**Timeline:**

October 2014-December 2014—Selected and reviewed OpenStax’s College Psychology e-textbook as an appropriate, high quality, OER
January 2015-May 2015—Identify and locate no-cost, online, supplemental content materials

June 2015-August 2015—Systematic course redesign to modules on D2L

July 2015—Course buyout/Overload begins for Ms. Burger and Dr. Callahan, if funded

Fall 2015—Redesigned course delivery of PSYC 1101, Data collection on student experience and success begins and continues throughout semester

December 2015-January 2015—Co-Investigators compile data and revise course per student evaluations

Budget:

Amy Burger, Librarian and Instructional Designer $5000
J. Sean Callahan, Instructor of Record $5000
Travel to Kick Off $800
Total $10,800

Sustainability Plan:

The larger scope of this project is to create a master course model with modules consisting of assignments, activities, and rubrics that allow instructors to customize the content to their teaching style and economize the time they put into instruction. This would encourage faculty to adopt the redesigned course. The master course and modules will also be made available to faculty at other USG institutions. Course materials will be maintained Ms. Burger and Dr. Callahan for use into the foreseeable future.
Open Educational Resources (OER) have proven a worthy response to the rising cost of textbooks. A review of the literature indicates substantial evidence for the success of the OER model; in fact, for community colleges in particular, the use of OER is considered a "best practice" (Myran, 2013).

For Georgia Highlands College specifically, the use of OER translates not only to cost savings for students, it is also closely aligned with the spirit embodied by the institution. Georgia Highlands College’s philosophy is that education should be accessible and affordable, and the ever-increasing cost of textbooks, for students already struggling to pay tuition, can add an extra, unnecessary burden—a burden that OER can alleviate.

For Georgia Highlands College’s PSYC 1101 students, the current text, at a cost of $218.09, represents 82% of the tuition for the class. This additional financial obligation is at worst, so costly as to be an impediment—over 23 percent of students in one study said they “had occasionally not registered for a particular course or section because of the high textbook costs,” and at best, an additional expense—one that 37 percent of students in the same study opted to forgo (Morris-Babb & Henderson, 2012).

The benefits of OER adoption go beyond the financial, extending to the curricular; the use of OER is considered “a success factor of positive teaching and learning practices” (Everard & Pierre, 2014). Additionally, a 2012 study found that the grades were higher for students in courses using OER compared to those using standard textbooks (Feldstein, Martin, Hudson, Warren, Hilton, & Wiley). A separate study corroborated the positive effect on student grades, finding also an improvement in retention rates in classes that used open textbooks (Hilton & Laman, 2012).

An increased rate of OER adoption will benefit students, who will see positive educational outcomes and higher affordability, and institutions, which will benefit from an increased rate of student retention.

References


Mason, K. C. (2015, January 20). *Obama: Community college should be ‘as free and universal in America as high school’.* Retrieved from
To whom it may concern:

I write this letter as Dean of Social Sciences, Business, and Education at Georgia Highlands College in support of Dr. Sean Callahan’s proposal for an Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation Grant in Rounds Three, Four, and Five for implementation beginning Summer Semester 2015; running through Spring Semester 2017.

Dr. Callahan is proposing to replace the standard textbook in his PSYC 1101 (Introduction to Psychology) with OpenStax texts. This will result in a savings for students of nearly $220 per student per course. I believe that this is an especially worthy undertaking here at Georgia Highlands, where many of our students depend on financial aid not only to meet the costs of their education but their living expenses as well. I would expect that adopting OER materials will help Georgia Highlands in the areas of retention, a USG initiative, and course completion, a long-standing USG goal. Currently, many students do not purchase expensive texts for courses and their performance suffers. By adopting the high-quality OpenStax text, a significant barrier to student performance and completion will be removed.

Dr. Callahan has a well-developed plan for shifting to the OpenStax text. I fully support this shift, and have encouraged other faculty in my Division to shift to OER, where available, for their courses. As an institution, Georgia Highlands strives to be at the forefront of the University System of Georgia’s plans to make college affordable through lowering the cost of textbooks through Use of OERs as well as seeking out low-cost texts. I believe Dr. Callahan is worthy of financial support as he works towards these ends and I strongly support his application for grant funding.

Best,
Dr. Alan Nichols  
Dean, Division of Social Sciences, Business, and Education  
Georgia Highlands College  
3175 Cedartown Highway  
Rome GA, 30161  
706-368-7615  
anichols@highlands.edu