

**Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation Grants  
Rounds Six, Seven, and Eight  
For Implementations beginning Fall Semester 2016  
Running Through Fall Semester 2017**

**Proposal Form and Narrative**

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<b>Sponsor, Title, Department, Institution</b>	Adolfo Santos, Dean of the School of Liberal Arts, Georgia Gwinnett College
<b>Proposal Title</b>	Opening Intro to Human Geography

<b>Course Names, Course Numbers and Semesters Offered</b>	Introduction to Human Geography, GEOG 1101 All semesters				
<b>Final Semester of Instruction</b>	Summer 2017, Fall 2017				
<b>Average Number of Students Per Course Section</b>	28	<b>Number of Course Sections Affected by Implementation in Academic Year</b>	35	<b>Total Number of Students Affected by Implementation in Academic Year</b>	980
<b>Award Category (pick one)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No-or-Low-Cost-to-Students Learning Materials <input type="checkbox"/> OpenStax Textbooks <input type="checkbox"/> Interactive Course-Authoring Tools and Software <input type="checkbox"/> Specific Top 100 Undergraduate Courses				
<b>List the original course materials for students (including title, whether optional or required, &amp; cost for each item)</b>	Pearson Contemporary Human Geography by James Rubenstein, 3rd Edition, required, \$136.60				
<b>Requested Amount of Funding</b>	\$25, 800				
<b>Original Per Student Cost</b>	\$136.60				
<b>Post-Proposal Projected Per Student Cost</b>	\$0				
<b>Projected Per Student Savings</b>	\$136.60				
<b>Projected Total Annual Student Savings</b>	\$133,868				
<b>Creation and Hosting Platforms Used</b>	Content will be hosted on Brightspace (D2L), GGC Library webpage and on MERLOT				

## 1.1 Project Goals

The goals of this project are to:

1. Improve retention in GEOG 1101, progression and eventual graduation.
2. Reduce the cost of education by providing no-cost-to-students learning materials.
3. Create materials that students like to use by asking students what works for them and what does not.

Saving students' money is part of the process of improving retention, progression, and graduation rates among GGC students. In particular, incoming students who enroll in Introduction to Human Geography often are surprised by the expense of textbooks. Since the cost of books may not have been budgeted, students unable to buy the books are placed at an immediate disadvantage in the course. This disadvantage tends to worsen over time. The goal of this project is to shrink that gap as much as possible.

## 1.2 Statement of Transformation

### Transformation description.

In a recent online article from Akademos website, Jonathan Shar discussed findings from the 2015 College CFO Survey on Textbook Affordability and Bookstore Services. In this article, he stated that "96% of respondents indicated that the high cost of textbooks and course materials had an impact on student retention and persistence. This is up 8% from the study published in 2013, with respondents stating "Very Much" increasing by 13% in just two years." He went on to say, "The study suggests that reducing textbook costs can have a positive impact on student satisfaction, but may have a significant financial impact for colleges and universities by helping improve student completion and retaining more tuition revenue. This was a big factor...in terms of convincing our faculty to abandon the traditional brick and mortar store and move to a virtual (student savings) format." (Shar, 2015)

The transformation of proprietary hard copy textbooks to an open online format will alleviate the problem of students who cannot or will not purchase textbooks for a course. Considering the size of this problem in an access institution, this should increase course completion dramatically, reducing the demoralizing DFW rate for courses. As an example, the GEOG 1101 faculty involved in this project have observed that fewer than 5% of their students come to class with a textbook. This is a completely reasonable reaction to a situation in which the book is likely very expensive and the book may be unnecessary for passing the course. This lack of textbooks is particularly problematic for GEOG 1101 classes because of the tight relationship between the reading material and class exercises and quizzes. The books truly are required and anything that delays engaging the material will result in a lower grade.

There are any number of proprietary textbooks for Introduction to Human Geography. Many if not all of them have an online e-text version for a lower price, but these slightly cheaper versions have had limited adoption by students in GEOG 1101. This mirrors experiences at other institutions.(Grasgreen, 2014)

This transformation will completely substitute online resources for the currently adopted course text, Rubenstein's Contemporary Human Geography, third edition. There will be no cost to access these materials. When students start the GEOG 1101 course, they will have all the links

to all the materials arranged in D2L in a chapter format. The material will be arranged in a similar order to the previously used book (Chapter 2-Population, Chapter 3-Migration, etc.) in order to make the transition easier for the course instructors, as well as make any resources developed here at GGC be easily transferred to other institutions.

Introduction to Human Geography is one of the courses satisfying Part 2 of Area C for General Education at Georgia Gwinnett College. It not only has a large number of sections; it is one of the first college courses for many students at GGC. Improving outcomes in a course that may set the tone for a college career is important.(Cantarella, 2011)

### **Stakeholders affected by the transformation.**

There are many stakeholders in a project such as this. The students are the most important stakeholders in this project. The College Board in 2016 found that students at public 4-year institutions spend on average \$1250 per year on textbooks alone. (College Board, 2016) Students who are on financial assistance, such as GGC students, are likely the most affected by the escalating prices of textbooks since their budgets are often insufficient to purchase their books in a timely manner. With no books as study guides, they are less prepared for class, more likely to suffer with low or failing grades, and ultimately put a stress on the entire educational system.

The families of students are also stakeholders since they are usually the financial resource that covers gaps that students may have in their own budgets. A no-cost-to-student textbook will reduce the financial burden to both the students and their families, while improving the students' class performance. Aside from the students and their families, faculty members will also benefit greatly from the project. David Wiley, co-founder of Lumen Learning, stated, "The degree of unaffordability is getting to the point that it's hurting learning."(Grinberg, 2014) Faculty members understand the gravity of this statement. It is demoralizing and stressful to watch students struggle in a course because they do not have a textbook. With free online materials, faculty can have the flexibility to modify the textbook as they see fit or as current events change, and to include materials that make more sense to their audiences or student population. The geography faculty already heavily supplement the supplied textbook with their own material. The new materials will now more closely cover the resources that they feel are most relevant.

The institution is a stakeholder. Institutions are often measured by the successes and failures of their students, but there is more to faculty and student relationship than spreadsheets and statistics. Institutional faculty want to help students succeed, and we have an emotional interest in their success. Colleges, particularly access colleges, exist to prepare the next generation of global workers, citizens, and leaders. It is a major achievement when an access institution like GGC that enrolls students who are often under-represented in higher education is then able to graduate more students to become competitive in this global market place because of efforts like the ALG grant. Finally, society is a stakeholder. A great number of GGC students have had limited exposure to the world outside the Atlanta metro region. Through this textbook transformation project, the easily accessible online materials are expected to spark an interest in them to be more aware of the world outside of their own. Society will then be benefited because the study of geography would widen the students' perspective of people, societies, cultures, and the environment. Most importantly, it will cultivate cultural sensitivity, while training them to

embark on careers such as a teacher, geographical information systems officer, disease modeler, or international aid worker.

### **Impact of this transformation on stakeholders and on course success.**

In an access institution, such as Georgia Gwinnett College, students often struggle to adjust to the demands of college. Anything that disrupts a student's life will have a negative impact on his or her studies. For incoming freshmen, a common problem is the sticker shock associated with book prices. With the increases in tuition, fees and books students often logically choose to forego paying for the only flexible expense that they have- their books. This false economy has terrible consequences. This, however, is not the only problem. Many students who receive assistance, particularly those waiting for book vouchers, often must wait for several weeks for the vouchers to post to their accounts. Irrespective of the cause, the effect is all too familiar. Students fall further and further behind, and become progressively more despondent and desperate, and all-too-often drop the course or fail it.

This is a negative outcome for all parties concerned- the students, their families, the institutions, and even society itself as something that should be a social good becomes a source of debt and grievance.

If this barrier were to be removed, then all of the previously stated problems resolve themselves. This is not to say that there are no other structural problems, but this one will go away. Working at an access institution requires exactly this kind of incremental problem solving.

### **Project's transformative impact.**

The impact of this transformation will be heavily positive for GEOG 1101. The materials will now be selected from a wider array of sources and they will be immediately available for students. Barriers to access of the material will be minimized. Work in the course will begin on the first day of class, and not at some arbitrary day when a check arrives during the semester. A cloud of anxiety will be lifted from the classroom.

## **1.3 Transformation Action Plan**

### **New course materials selection and identification.**

Specifically, this will entail finding substitutes for each chapter of the current textbooks from available open resources, as well as constructing accompanying support materials.

Currently there are two likely sources for this textual material. One is a complete textbook of material by S. Graves available at the following URL

<https://sites.google.com/site/gravesgeography/>

The Graves online textbook is a good starting point as a resource. It is broken into chapters that roughly approximate most proprietary textbooks. It is well written and interesting. It has some notable drawbacks. First, it excludes some chapters that are always included in introductory textbooks (migration, development, and hazards) and it adds chapters that are not usually included in other textbooks (Gender and Crime). It is also written in a style that references American pop culture that may not mean anything to students with different backgrounds.

The other main resource is a website that serves as an online version of a textbook presented as a series of web pages by A. Dastrup available at the following URL.

<http://www.opengeography.org/human-geography.html>

This book is much more in the style of a “normal” textbook in terms of tone and its subject matter. Its major shortcoming is that it is very short and it, too, is missing much of the material that is normally found in an introductory textbook. The table of contents for Dastrup’s and Graves’ materials are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Table of Contents of Dastrup versus Graves Textbooks**

<b>Table Of Contents - Dastrup</b>	<b>Table Of Contents- Graves</b>
Chapter 1: Introduction To Geography	Chapter 1: Introduction
Chapter 2: Population and Migration	Chapter 4: Health and Disease
Chapter 3: Cultural Geography	Chapter 2: Culture and Cultural Practices
	Chapter 6: Religion
	Chapter 5: Language and Dialect
	Chapter 9: Ethnicity
Chapter4: Political Geography	Chapter 7: Politics and Power
Chapter5: Sustainable Development	
Chapter6: Food, Water, & Agriculture	Chapter 3: Agriculture and Foodways
Chapter7: Urban Geography	Chapter 12: Economic Geography
	Chapter 13: Transportation
	Chapter 11: Urban Geography
Chapter8: Environmental Issues	Chapter 14: Environment
Chapter9: Living with Disasters	
	Chapter 10: Gender
	Chapter 8: Crime and Punishment

Neither of these resources are full replacements for the texts currently used in GEOG 1101, but together they are a suitable starting point for this project. Ideally, the material would be a combination of both sources, plus extra materials. Obviously, this will not be available for all the subjects covered. In such instances, either one chapter will be used or the team will find material for use in the course from such sources as Galileo, the USG library system, MERLOT, or other open online resources.

It will be necessary to create support materials for these books, since they have very little support materials available. One such material will be videos discussing some parts of the chapters in depth. All members of this team have been making videos for their GEOG 1101 courses already; thus, the material will be rewritten and represented to reflect the new reading resources. Other materials will be exam and quiz banks, study guides, and further reading lists. There will be no requirement for further institutional resources, all resources are virtual.

### Course and syllabus redesign phase.

This phase begins in January 2017. Team members will assess current open materials for suitability. The two referenced candidates will be assessed for suitability. Each separate chapter will be assessed for suitability. It is possible that one chapter, both or neither may be selected for the substitution. If neither is selected, then suitable material will be found or made.

Summer semester 2017 will include feature a pilot implementation of the newly organized material. Autumn semester 2017 will see the full implementation of the project, with subsequent semesters being devoted to sustaining the new instructional model. This sustenance phase will include aiding others in adopting this course materials, including new part-time faculty at Georgia Gwinnett College and instructors at other institutions if they are interested.

### Team member roles.

As the graph demonstrates, each team member is responsible for adjusting material for use in the transformed course. The left-most section represents the table of contents of the current textbook. The middle two sections are the comparable chapters of the two existing online textbooks for Introduction to Human Geography. The final column shows which team member is responsible for which chapter. The geography faculty at Georgia Gwinnett College was selected initially hired in order to cover the major sub-disciplines in a department. Although there are no departments at GGC and no geography major, our personnel structure allows the team to cover topics that are most familiar to the associated faculty member.

Each team member is responsible for the material noted in the Table 2. The overall transformation is being directed by David Dorrell, but this is a team effort.

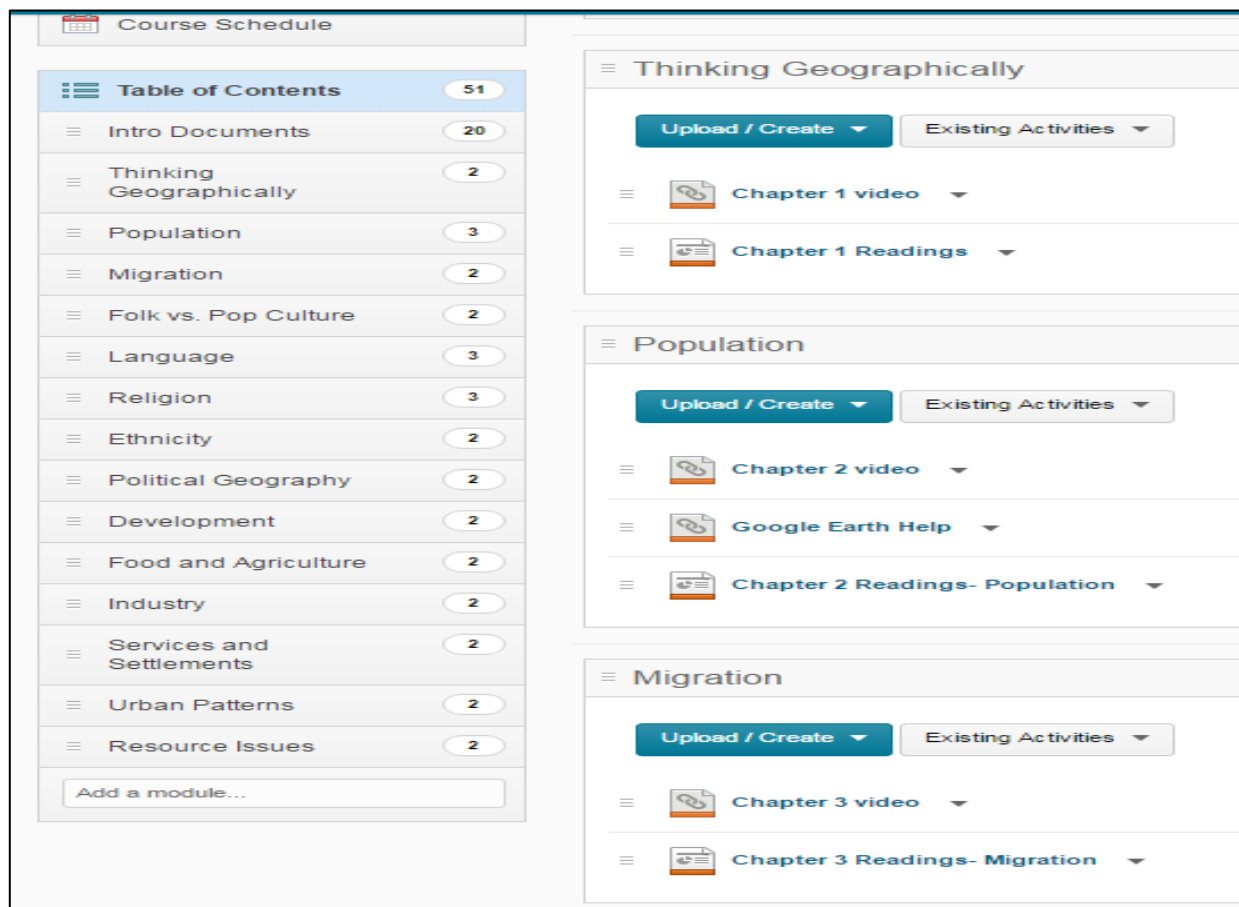
**Table 2: Chapter Assignments of All Team Members**

<b>Chapters</b>	<b>Responsible Team Member</b>	<b>Chapters</b>	<b>Responsible Team Member</b>
Chapter 1: Thinking Geographically	Lowry	Chapter 8: Political Geography	Henderson
Chapter 2: Population	Dorrell	Chapter 9: Development	Lindley
Chapter 3: Migration	Lindley	Chapter 10: Agriculture	Connor
Chapter 4: Folk and Popular Culture	Dorrell	Chapter 11: Industry	Lowry
Chapter 5: Religion	Lindley	Chapter 12: Settlements and Services	Connor
Chapter 6: Language	Dorrell	Chapter 13: Urban Patterns	Connor
Chapter 7: Ethnicity	Lowry	Chapter 14: Resource issues	Henderson

### Plan for providing access.

Current materials are already being hosted on Brightspace (formerly D2L) on a course-by-course basis, as demonstrated in the image below. This project will simply rework the existing situation. Figure 1 provides an illustration of the layout of the course materials.

**Figure 1. Snapshot of D2L Page for Proposed Geography Materials**



In Spring 2017, the team will sort through the available materials, selecting and aligning the appropriate resources from those available. These materials will initially be posted to a sandboxed, internal D2L site, as the team members add, delete and modify the material for the initial pilot project release in Summer 2017. Once the material has reached an acceptable state of quality and stability, it will be copied as a template to all sections of GEOG 1101 at GGC for Fall 2017.

The transformed course will be available as a complete course solution for all sections of GEOG 1001. It is also desired that a copy of the resources be maintained by the GGC library in order to facilitate other institutions adopting the transformed course as a model for their own online reading offerings. It is desired to place the material on MERLOT as well. In order to expedite this, team member David Dorrell has registered in the GRAPE Camp (Getting Reviewers Accustomed to the Process of Evaluation), the program for training MERLOT peer reviewers. All permanent geography faculty are members of the textbook transformation team and when the



project is implemented, all sections taught by full-time faculty at GGC will use the transformed course.

### 1.4 Quantitative and Qualitative Measures

Table 3 provides the quantitative and qualitative measures for each of the project goals. Examples of questions are provided in some instances.

**Table 3: Quantitative and Qualitative Measures for Each of the Project Goals**

Goal	Quantitative Measures	Qualitative Measures
Improve retention in GEOG 1101	Review DWF grades in classes involved in project. Compare current rates with previous year.	Survey students regarding barriers to completion before and after the transformation
Reduce textbook cost to students	Track number of students enrolled in each class and current cost of GEOG 1101 books. Savings will be determined from that calculation.	Develop open-ended questions as an addendum to the course evaluations on how no-cost materials helped with their studies and helped reduce educational financial burden on them.
Improve Student Learning Outcomes	Administer assessment instrument that comprises of geography test questions. Compare results before and after the transformation. Sample questions to determine student learning outcomes: 1. Which of these places is most likely to have a history of mixing of diverse cultures from different source regions? a) a location on a plain at 35 degrees latitude b) a mountainous location at 35 degrees latitude c) a location on a plain at 60 degrees latitude d) a mountainous location at 60 degrees latitude 2. Which of these would probably be most helpful for explaining why a particular	Discuss during the semester students' self-assessments of their mastery of the Student Learning Outcomes.

	<p>geographical region has a large amount of farm land?</p> <p>a) its longitude  b) its dominant religion  c) its colonial history  d) its topography</p> <p>3. Which of these would probably be most useful in helping to explain why a particular region had a high birth rate?</p> <p>a) its endowment of natural resources  b) its history of industrialization  c) its altitude  d) its proximity to the ocean</p>	
Increase use of course materials	<p>Provide quizzes over specific course material.</p> <p>Note numbers of students who never access materials on Brightspace.</p> <p>Conduct survey to students between midterm and finals to inquire how frequently they accessed the online materials and when they accessed materials.</p>	<p>Among those who have used the materials, ask how materials can be made more accessible. If they did not use the materials, ask why they did not utilize them or what barriers prevented them.</p>

### 1.5 Timeline

**January 9, 2017:** Notification

**January 30, 2017:** Kickoff Meeting

**February 2017-April 2017:** Prepare material for course implementation.

**Summer 2017:** Begin Implementation. Use newly organized resources to pilot the new program over Summer sessions.

**Fall 2017:** Full Implementation. Use data derived from the pilot implementation for full rollout across all relevant sections. Submit final report to ALG.

**Future Plans:** Maintain product for internal and external use.

## 1.6 Budget

Type of Grant:  **Standard-Scale Transformation**      Large-Scale Transformation  
*Funds are requested for:*

### A. Personnel

Justification: This process will be time consuming. In order to make it possible to expend the time necessary to do this properly and completely, we are requesting summer compensation for the team members. The Library staff who will be assisting the project team will provide their services without any charge to the grant.

Summer Compensation	Personnel	Role of team member	Reason
\$5,000	David Dorrell	Responsible for overall management of project. Find, assess and implement open content for Chapters 2,4 and 6	Summer Compensation
\$5,000	James Lowry	Find, assess and implement open content for Chapters 1,7, and 11	Summer Compensation
\$5,000	Joseph Henderson	Find, assess and implement open content for Chapters 8 and 14	Summer Compensation
\$5,000	Georgeta Connor	Find, assess and implement open content for Chapters 10, 12, 13	Summer Compensation
\$5,000	Todd Lindley	Find, assess and implement open content for Chapters 3 and 9	Summer Compensation
<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>Total Compensation</b>		

### B. Travel

Justification: Funds are requested to travel to Macon for the kick-off meeting. We are requesting funds for lodging, mileage, and per diem for the two members who will attend.

Amount	Personnel	Role of team member
\$400	David Dorrell	Mandatory training sessions and presentations
\$400	Todd Lindley	Mandatory training sessions and presentations
<b>\$800</b>	<b>Total Travel</b>	

**Total Request:** \$25,800

## 1.7 Sustainability Plan

The time after the year of transformation will one of continuous adjustment. The developed online materials will become the only resources that will be used for GEOG 1101 at Georgia Gwinnett College. Continuing to use the materials will require constant updating. The goal is to provide a first-rate online GEOG 1101 textbook that is free and easily accessible online.

Every successive summer, the geography faculty will meet to decide which materials are still meeting the needs of students and which may have become out of date or otherwise inadequate.

At this time, the project team will reassess, revise, update, and upload new resources. Moreover, it will be necessary to monitor the availability of new sources of material for this course as it is expected that other open geography textbooks will become available. Any new open texts will be considered as additions or replacements for the materials included in the initial transformation.

The geography faculty of GGC will also begin to promote these collected resources to other geography programs. For the first two-year phase, our attention will be on promoting the transformed materials to other USG institutions to adopt or adapt. The ALG and its repository will be a critical partner to this promotional effort. The geography faculty will begin promoting this transformation also by using venues such as conferences by speaking on the efficacy and practicality of using online materials in our discipline. The goal is to encourage departments further afield to use our transformed materials or to begin to consider online resources as textbook.

All materials are open, and there are no recurring expenses. There are no additional costs that will need to be paid in the future. The transformation will be sustained solely by updating the materials.

## **1.8 References**

Cantarella, M. (2011). Freshman May Be the Hardest Year of All | HowToLearn.com. Retrieved November 28, 2016, from <http://www.howtolearn.com/2011/07/freshman-may-be-the-hardest-year-of-all/>

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