

Application Details

Manage Application: Textbook Transformation Grant

Award Cycle: Round 3

**Internal Submission
Deadline:** Sunday, May 31, 2015

Application Title: 139

Submitter First Name: Carlton

Submitter Last Name: Usher

Submitter Title: Associate Professor of Political Science/First
-Year and Transition Studies

Submitter Email Address: cusher@kennesaw.edu

Submitter Phone Number: 470 578 3540

Submitter Campus Role: Proposal Investigator (Primary or additional)

Applicant First Name: Carlton

Applicant Last Name: Usher

Co-Applicant Name(s): Linda Lyons

Applicant Email Address: llyons5@kennesaw.edu

Applicant Phone Number: 470 578-7783

Primary Appointment Title: Director of Strategic Initiatives

Institution Name(s): Kennesaw State University

Team Members (Name, Title, Department, Institutions if different, and email address for each):

Dr. Carlton A. Usher, Associate Professor of Political Science, Department of First-Year and Transition Studies, University College

Dr. Linda Lyons, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Assistant Professor of Education, Department of First-Year and Transition Studies, University College

Sponsor (Name, Title, Department, Institution):

Ruth Goldfine, Chair, Department of First-Year and Transition Studies, University College, Kennesaw State University

Proposal Title: 139

Course Names, Course Numbers and Semesters Offered:

Course : KSU 1111- Tomorrow World's Today (First-Year Seminar)

Offered in the Fall 2015, Spring 2016

Final Semester of Instruction:	Spring 2016
Average Number of Students per Course Section:	25
Number of Course Sections Affected by Implementation in Academic Year:	10
Total Number of Students Affected by Implementation in Academic Year:	250
List the original course materials for students (including title, whether optional or required, & cost for each item):	The Foundations of Academic Inquiry- required \$ 179.00 KSU 1111 Reading Packet- required \$ 40.00 Common Reader: required for all incoming first-year students \$ 30.00 Supplemental Reading access code (required) \$ 20.00 Total Cost \$ 269.00
Proposal Categories:	No-Cost-to-Students Learning Materials
Requested Amount of Funding:	\$10, 800
Original per Student Cost:	\$270.00
Post-Proposal Projected Student Cost:	\$265.00
Projected Per Student Savings:	98%
Plan for Hosting Materials:	Other

Project Goals:

The primary goal of this project is to improve course content delivery by investigating whether the use of an open no-cost learning materials format as an alternative to traditional textbook usage, would be an effective method of achieving the Learning Outcomes (LO) in a first-year seminar course (KSU 1111).

Statement of Transformation:

All first-year, full-time students entering Kennesaw State University with fewer than 30 credit hours are required to enroll in one of four first-year seminars or a learning community during their first year. The KSU 1111 seminar encompasses the Global Strategies Institute's research-based twenty five year projections of seven pivotal challenges impacting a global world. These seven are: population, resource management, technology, knowledge flow, economic integration, conflict/security, and governance.

Considering the topical nature of this course, it is difficult to find a single textbook to deliver content in each of the 7 areas. The solutions to this challenge include constructing reading packets, delivering copied handouts, using common readers, and requiring a list of supplementary text. While these tools have been somewhat useful and effective, a pivotal challenge remains apparent. These items purchased together are a great cost to the students. These things considered, in our proposal we seek to investigate whether using a Facebook page fortified with links from relevant contributors will offer a more salient pedagogy and a cost efficient content delivery system. The use of Facebook will not substitute online activities for in-class activities. It will, however, present a platform where open educational resources can efficiently replace a text book.

Using resources readily available on the World Wide Web and linking them to a Facebook page will allow access to a larger pool of peer-reviewed materials thus positively impacting the instructor's ability to utilize the highest relevant course content. Additionally, content delivered using smart maps, real time tickers, public research data, periodicals, and other multi-media formats will benefit both student and instructor. Students benefit from using social media because: (1) it lessens the financial burden; (2) it centralizes and organizes all course content on one platform; and; (3) it is a familiar engaged space for them. Previous Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) research using Facebook demonstrates why Facebook use will be effective alternative.

Consistent with the literature, student responses to using Facebook in the classroom were overwhelmingly positive. In fall of 2010 (N1), 76% believed that using current events and Facebook greatly improved their understanding of current issues. In 2011 (N2), 67% believed it had a high positive effect. There was 100 % agreement that it had at least some effect. When asked about the best use for Facebook in the classroom, an overwhelming 85% believed that Facebook's most important utility was that it became a usable database connected to the course—in essence, a one- stop- shop resource. (Usher, 2013)

Preliminary research on social media and first-year students indicate an overwhelming enthusiasm for Facebook as part of the course framework. The transformative impact includes a reduction of cost, inclusion of multi-media content, student-centered learning, and a non-traditional delivery of content we hope will be a future model throughout the college.

Source: Usher, C. (2013). Tomorrow's People: Using Facebook to Advance Civic Engagement and Global Learning in a First-Year Seminar, Apr 29, 2013, Vol 2, 1.

Transformation Action Plan:

The new course will require the creation of a secure group Facebook page (OWLS KSU 1111). Facebook allows for the creation of a private group page where only invited members have access and can interact and view content (see attachment). Additionally, The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines regarding online privacy will not a challenge since no student records or grading criteria will be included on the page.

The syllabus will include hyperlinks to all of the required readings. Additionally each, week's reading will be posted on the page, with link and commentary. Each of the seven topical areas will require uploading links from multi-media sites and will be posted as required reading in lieu of several textbooks. To insure students have access to a computer we will hold class in a computer lab once a week and/or use departmental lap tops available to students during lectures. Essentially, the student will need the ability to save or store downloads; a cloud is provided free for Kennesaw State University students. Dr. Lyons will construct a rubric intended to focus on first-year students' perception of the course content. Dr. Usher's focus will be on assessing social media's role since that is an area of expertise. Both will be responsible for creating, delivering, and assessing content. Once the pilot is completed, the plan for providing open access to the new materials will include workshops, and the creation of an open online resource page for all faculty to use as a guide.

Quantitative & Qualitative Measures: Quantitative data collection will be multi-fold. We will create a metric to compare course grades, attrition, and test scores between the ALG course and the traditional KSU 1111. Considering Facebook has a built-in poll function some data will originate from small surveys on the page. The real time data response system (clickers) will be utilized to gather real-time data from both subsets. Lastly we will offer pre-course and post-course questionnaire to measure change and compare the two courses.

The collection of qualitative data will measure students' perception of the course content and delivery. Measurements will include self-reported data and an open-ended questionnaire describing the alternative textbook experience. Additionally, we will create a grid to compare students overall perception of both ALG course and the standard KSU 1111.

Taken together, the collection of comparative data will help us determine possible performance differentials, perception of the course, content strengths, and whether the effectiveness of such a course should be expanded within the department and college.

Timeline:

- July 15, 2015: Design KSU 1111 to reflect open content format and structure.
- August- December 2015: Teach sections of (KSU 1111) Tomorrow's World Today
- October 15- December 9, 2015: Develop course survey instruments to measure student perceptions and attitudes. Develop questionnaire for real time data response system (clickers).
- November 30, 2015 : Develop Likert Survey and seek IRB approval.
- December 9-13, 2015: Assess collected data and create summary report. Complete and submit final report.
- January 8, 2016: Teach designed courses (KSU 1111) open content format.
- March 8, 2016: Collect real-time data from students during the semester.
- April 4, 2016: Administer open-ended Facebook survey.
- April 20, 2016: Administer end-of-year surveys sections taught by both Dr. Lyons and Dr. Usher. Seek open ended response and gather self-reporting materials.
- May 5, 2016: Assess collected data and create summary report.
- May 15, 2016: Complete and submit final report.

Budget:

Salary support for Dr. Usher (including benefits) \$5,000

Salary support for Dr. Lyons (including benefits) \$5,000

Support for travel to attend project meeting \$800

TOTAL \$10, 800

Sustainability Plan:

It is our intent to offer several workshops on how to development a no textbook content. A web portal will also be developed for open access. The page will be divided into to 7 subsections; each corresponding to the seven challenges described in the course . Each of the consecutive sections will include web links to online content. Additionally, it is also our intent to continue to teach these sections and increase the number of instructors to (10) using this model. Ultimately the sustainability plan includes a continuation of cost saving for the students and a concurrent focus of continuing to reach learning outcomes. It is our plan to review and amend as needed after each semester.



University College

Department of First-Year and
Transition Studies

27 May 2015

Proposal Review Committee
ALG Textbook Transformation Grant
Center for 21st Century Universities
Georgia Institute of Technology
Atlanta, GA 30332

Dear Committee Members:

I am pleased to provide this letter in support of the grant proposal put forward by Dr. Carlton Usher in partnership with Dr. Linda Lyons. Dr. Usher has shared with me his concept for No-Cost-to-Students Learning Materials, as described under Category 1 of the award descriptions in the ALG Textbook Transformation Grant RFP. His innovative approach incorporates social media commonly used by students with the most up-to-date publications accessible online to design course material that is free, current, and readily accessible to students.

The approach described in Dr. Usher and Dr. Lyons' grant proposal has the potential to be replicated for a wide variety of classes in most disciplines and can be easily sustained once it has been implemented. For our department, which offers more than 150 sections of the first-year seminar course taught primarily by part-time instructors, the impact of these no-cost materials could be significant. However, the proposed approach has the potential to impact countless other courses at institutions within the USG and beyond.

I believe the grant proposal developed by Drs. Usher and Lyons merits consideration, and I hope you will deem it worthy of funding. Should you have any additional questions or concerns, I can be reached at 470-578-2471.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruth A. Goldfine".

Ruth A. Goldfine, PhD
Chair, Department of First-Year and Transition Studies