

## Application Details

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### Manage Application: ALG Textbook Transformation Grant

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**Award Cycle:** Round 4

**Internal Submission  
Deadline:** Monday, September 7, 2015

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**Application Title:** 151

**Submitter First Name:** Andrea

**Submitter Last Name:** Allen

**Submitter Title:** Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice

**Submitter Email Address:** andreaallen@clayton.edu

**Submitter Phone Number:** 4042778437

**Submitter Campus Role:** Proposal Investigator (Primary or additional)

**Applicant First Name:** Andrea

**Applicant Last Name:** Allen

**Co-Applicant Name(s):** Scott Jacques, Georgia State University

**Applicant Email Address:** andreaallen@clayton.edu

**Applicant Phone Number:** 4042778437

**Primary Appointment Title:** Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice

**Institution Name(s):** Clayton State University

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

Andrea Allen  
Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice  
Department of Social Sciences  
Clayton State University  
andreaallen@clayton.edu

Scott Jacques  
Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and Criminology  
Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology  
Georgia State University  
sjacques1@gsu.edu

### Sponsor, (Name, Title, Department, Institution):

Mara Mooney, Chair and Associate Professor, Department of Social Sciences, Clayton State University

Richard Wright, Chair and Professor, Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology, Georgia State University

**Proposal Title:** 151

**Course Names, Course Numbers and Semesters Offered:**

Clayton State University:

- Research Methods (SOC 4501) – offered Fall and Spring semesters
- Research Methods & Policy Evaluation (CRJU 4501) – offered Fall and Spring semesters

Georgia State University:

- Research Methods in Criminal Justice (3020) – offered Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters

**Final Semester of Instruction:** Fall 2016

**Average Number of Students per Course Section:** 25 at Clayton State University (CSU), 35 at Georgia State University (GSU)

**Number of Course Sections Affected by Implementation in Academic Year:** 4 at CSU, 2 at GSU

**Total Number of Students Affected by Implementation in Academic Year:** 170

**List the original course materials for students (including title, whether optional or required, & cost for each item):** Required text: Maxfield, M. G. & Babbie, E. R. (2011). Research methods for criminal justice and criminology, 3rd edition. (\$114 plus tax on amazon.com)  
Please note the above text is several years old; at present, the textbook is on its 7th edition and costs \$193.44 plus tax. The 3rd edition is assigned to reduce student cost, but its age makes it increasingly difficult to obtain. Thus, in the near future the 7th (or a later) edition will be assigned. A goal of this proposal is to avoid that adoption and, instead, offer a no-cost option to students.

**Proposal Categories:** No-Cost-to-Students Learning Materials

**Requested Amount of Funding:** \$10,800

**Original per Student Cost:** \$114 plus tax (or, in near future, \$193.44 plus tax)

**Post-Proposal Projected Student Cost:** \$0

**Projected Per Student Savings:** \$114 plus tax (or, in near future, \$193.44 plus tax)

**Plan for Hosting Materials:** D2L

### **Project Goals:**

The primary goal of this textbook transformation is to reduce students' costs for Research Methods (a required course) at our respective institutions, Clayton State University (CSU) and Georgia State University (GSU). Research Methods textbooks are expensive. The normal price of such books is \$150 to \$200, and even earlier editions exceed \$100.

Please note that there is a particular need at CSU and GSU for no-cost options, as a substantial percentage of our student body populations are from relatively low-income backgrounds, evident by 64% of students at CSU and 55% at GSU being supported by the Pell Grant (USDOE, 2015).

A second goal of this textbook transformation is to streamline the course material and offer sources with greater readability. Many of the available textbooks contain excessive jargon and unnecessary information. Thus, when choosing no-cost materials for adoption, we will prioritize sources with the greatest readability and directness; this should improve student learning outcomes.

### **Statement of Transformation:**

The transformation will entail compiling source materials to use in lieu of a textbook. To do so, first we will conduct a content analysis of social science research methods textbooks. The purpose of this exercise is to determine 1) what content is consistently covered in such textbooks, and 2) in what order. (Please note that because criminology is an interdisciplinary field, social science textbooks are perfectly suited to criminology students.) Second, we will gather source materials on said content and arrange it in the most common order. Materials will be obtained using the library resources and open resources listed in the solicitation. The gathered materials will constitute the course text. This text will be used in both sections of Research Methods -- all taught by Dr. Allen -- offered by CSU's Department of Social Sciences, and the sections of Research Methods -- taught by Dr. Jacques -- that is offered by GSU's Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology. In the 2016-17 academic school year, they will teach the redesigned course to 6 sections, or about 170 students. Thus, based on the price of the current textbook's 3rd edition, the projected total student savings for that academic year is close to \$20,000 (\$114 per textbook + tax x 170 students). However, if the 7th edition of the textbook was adopted that year (which is the plan), the total student savings will exceed \$34,000 (\$193.44 + tax x 170).

This transformation will affect three stakeholders: students, faculty, and our respective universities, more specifically the Department of Social Sciences at CSU and the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology at GSU. All students seeking degrees in these departments are required to take Research Methods (with the exception of "Legal Studies" students at CSU).

As for students, the transformation will save them a sizeable amount of money, which, as already noted, is especially important at our institutions given that a large percent of the student bodies are from relatively low-income backgrounds. Also, we know from our experience that some students go several weeks, or longer, without the textbook because they cannot afford it when the course begins; of course, this is detrimental to their learning. By providing students with a no-cost textbook option, they will have access to course materials from the very beginning of the course and so their learning outcomes should improve. On a similar note, affording the current textbook requires more than 20 hours of labor in a minimum-wage position. Time spent in such a position to afford a textbook is potentially time spent away from studying. Here again, a no-cost textbook option should improve learning, in this case by freeing up time to study – instead of working to be able to afford studying. Furthermore, we aim to select no-cost source materials that are more readable and direct than traditional textbooks, which we anticipate to improve student performance.

The transformation will also impact us (the instructors) as we redesign the course. For one, the aforementioned content analysis of textbooks should improve our breadth and depth of knowledge as relates to designing and delivering a Research Methods course. Further, the transformation will allow us to tailor the new course to meet the needs of our students, which should improve course success.

This textbook transformation should positively impact our universities by improving retention and matriculation rates. At CSU, for instance, only 68% of students move on to their sophomore year and only 28% of on-time students graduate (College Factual, 2015). In part, this is due to the cost associated with attending college. On a similar note, one of GSU's strategic goals is to "[b]ecome a national model for undergraduate education by demonstrating that students from all backgrounds can achieve academic and career success at high rates" (GSU, 2015). Adopting a no-cost text should help CSU's and GSU's retention and matriculation rates.

### **Transformation Action Plan:**

The first step in our transformation plan will be to identify and review social science research methods textbooks on the market. To do so, we will search Amazon and Google. Then we will analyze these textbooks' table of contents, identifying the major topics covered within them, and the order in which topics are covered. The consistently covered topics will be included in our textbook transformation; also, the course will cover these topics in the order that is most common in the analyzed textbooks.

Once we determine the major topics to be covered in the Research Methods course, we will independently identify and review source materials covering these topics that are available through the Library Resources and Open Resources listed in this solicitation. When reviewing source materials, we will take into account many of the ALG's evaluation criteria: clarity, comprehensibility, readability, content accuracy and technical accuracy, adaptability, appropriateness, and accessibility. Moreover, any and all materials will comply with the USG's copyright policy.

After reviewing source materials, we will move to jointly select and adopt new course

materials, such as peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters or excerpts. Adopted materials will be posted to our individual classes on D2L.

We will also submit our course materials to the ASA's TRAILS Program. "TRAILS is an online, modular (by topic and type of teaching tool) and searchable database that reflects a major innovation in the creation and dissemination of peer-reviewed teaching resources. ... All new submissions to TRAILS undergo a two stage peer review process using public criteria based on empirically proven best practices in higher education. In this way, TRAILS provides a new form of evidence, which can be coupled with systematic peer review of teaching in the classroom, to help schools more objectively measure excellence in teaching" (ASA, 2015).

### **Regarding the activities expected from each team members:**

Together, we will design the course and syllabus. This will entail outlining the course content (i.e., major topics) to be covered in a syllabus, and the order in which topics will be presented; selecting readings on the topics of coverage; creating PowerPoints and lectures based on the readings; and organizing and posting the readings to D2L where students may access them.

The team members will be equal partners and consult with each other throughout the innovation process. Instead of "splitting the workload," each of us will perform all tasks in full (e.g., content analysis) and then meet to discuss our findings. Among other advantages, this will serve as a reliability check and facilitate critical thinking about how to maximize the potential of the redesigned course. Thus, both team members will be responsible for identifying, reviewing, selecting, adopting, and uploading source materials for this textbook transformation. The only instance in which we will work separately is when instructing the course at our respective institutions.

We consider our team to be "subject matter experts." Together we have extensive experience teaching Research Methods and thus have a good understanding of what materials should be used to best convey the information to our students. We also have extensive experience conducting research and have published in a variety of top-ranked journals in our field.

**Quantitative & Qualitative Measures:** We will evaluate the textbook transformation's effectiveness by student success and students' perceptions of the redesigned Research Methods course. To do so, we will rely on the following quantitative and qualitative measures:  
the number of students who drop, fail, and withdraw from the course;  
final grade distributions (mean, median, mode);  
students' teacher evaluations;  
test questions that assess proficiency of course learning outcomes.

The above data will be compared within and between instructors, and also compared to similar data from prior semesters in which a traditional textbook was used.

Additionally, we will work with CSU's Center for Instructional Development and GSU's Center for Instructional Innovation to develop a range of extra tools (quantitative and qualitative) for assessing learning outcomes. We intend for these assessment outcomes to be obtained by comparing students' knowledge at the beginning, midpoint, and end of the course. To be clear, we will draw on these extra tools when designing and implementing the course.

#### **Timeline:**

The timeline below indicates dates for which the following actions should be completed.

- September 2015: Notification of Award
- October 2015: Compile social science research methods textbooks
- November 2015: Conduct content analysis of textbooks, focusing on topic coverage and order in which topics are covered
- December 2015: Based on findings, decide for redesigned course which topics to cover and in what order
- January-March 2016: Identify, review, and select new source materials
- April 2016: Create and finalize course syllabus; upload source materials to D2L
- May-August 2016—Develop course PowerPoints and lectures based on the new source materials; create test questions measuring course learning outcomes; additionally, work with CSU's Center for Instructional Development and GSU's Center for Instructional Innovation to develop a range of other assessment tools
- August 2016—Implement the new Research Methods course; collect "beginning" data to be later used in assessment
- October 2016—Collect and analyze midpoint data outlined in section 1.4
- December 2016—Collect and analyze data outlined in section 1.4; work on final report; submit course materials to the ASA TRAILS program

**Budget:**

The requested **total budget is \$10,800** (\$5,000 x 2 team members + 800 for overall project expenses). Written out per item, our budget is:

- Salary Compensation for Andrea Allen = \$5,000
- Salary Compensation for Scott Jacques = \$5,000
- Overall Project Expenses = \$800

**Sustainability Plan:**

As individual instructors, we will offer this no-cost-to-student option in future course sections of Research Methods. Additionally, we will encourage other instructors teaching this course to adopt our course design. To maintain – and improve – course materials, we will meet at the end of each semester to determine if changes should be made for the next semester. Such changes will be based on student feedback and our own evaluations of “what worked” (and what did not) in the course.

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## References

- American Sociological Association (2015). *Teaching resources and innovations library for sociology*. Retrieved from <https://trails.asanet.org/Pages/TDLContent.aspx>.
- College Factual (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.collegefactual.com/colleges/clayton-state-university/academic-life/graduation-and-retention/>.
- Georgia State University (2015). *GSU's strategic plan*. Retrieved from <http://strategic.gsu.edu/preamble/goal-1/>.
- United States Department of Education (2015). *Distribution of federal pell grant programs funds by institution*. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/finaid/prof/resources/data/pell-institution.html>.



College of Arts and Sciences

August 24, 2015

RE: Drs. Allen and Jacques - Application for Affordable Learning  
Georgia Textbook Transformation Grant

Dear Committee Members:

It is with enthusiasm that I support the application for a no-cost-to-students textbook transformation grant submitted by Dr. Andrea Allen and Dr. Scott Jacques. Their innovative proposal for a Research Methods textbook will benefit countless students across the State of Georgia, many of whom, particularly at our institution, will ultimately become first-generation applicants to graduate school. I firmly believe that Drs. Allen and Jacques will produce a no-cost textbook that becomes an invaluable addition to our state's collection of open education resources for many generations of students.

I also want to share my extremely favorable experience working with Dr. Allen in my capacity as chair of the Department of Social Sciences. Dr. Allen is a delightful colleague who is extremely dedicated to serving the students in our Criminal Justice program. I am consistently impressed with her scholarly achievements, her multitude of service activities, and her ability to inspire and educate students, particularly in the most challenging of subjects. In addition to excelling in her own research endeavors, Dr. Allen routinely teaches our Research Methods course, in which she inspires students to reach a potential many did not think could be achieved.

I urge you to award a no-cost-to-students textbook development grant to Drs. Allen and Jacques. The Affordable Learning Georgia initiative and future students across our state will benefit over many years from the availability of a no-cost-to-students Research Methods textbook.

Thank you for your consideration. If you would like to discuss this recommendation in more detail, please feel free to contact me at (678) 466-4642.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mara Mooney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mara Mooney, J.D.  
Chair, Dept. of Social Sciences  
Associate Professor of Legal Studies

August 21, 2015

Dear Selection Committee:

This letter certifies that the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology at Georgia State University supports development of the proposed course. The course is entirely sustainable. Indeed, our department offers Research Methods every semester and all students seeking a Bachelor's degree in criminal justice and criminology must pass this course. The proposed no-cost-to-student course is sorely needed at almost any institution, but especially at ours because so many of our students come to us from low-income backgrounds. Dr. Jacques, who is teaching our Research Methods course currently, is a widely-respected researcher with a rock-solid grasp of social science research methods.

Kind regards,



Richard Wright  
Professor and Chair  
Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology  
Andrew Young School of Policy Studies  
Georgia State University  
rwright28@gsu.edu  
<http://aysps.gsu.edu/profile/richard-wright/>