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Application Summary

Competition Details

Competition Title:	Textbook Transformation Grants, Round Twelve (Fall 2018-2019)
Category:	University System of Georgia
Award Cycle:	Round 12
Submission Deadline:	09/13/2018 at 11:59 PM

Application Information

Submitted By:	Matthew Little
Appplication ID:	2598
Application Title:	387
Date Submitted:	09/11/2018 at 8:29 AM

Personal Details

Institution Name(s):	Gordon State College
Applicant First Name:	Peter
Applicant Last Name:	Higgins
Applicant Email Address:	phiggins@gordonstate.edu
Applicant Phone Number:	678-359-5155
Primary Appointment Title:	Assistant Vice President of Academic Excellence
Submitter First Name:	Matthew
Submitter Last Name:	Little
Submitter Email Address:	matthewl@gordonstate.edu
Submitter Phone Number:	678-359-5226
Submitter Title:	Strategic Initiatives Project Manager

Application Details

Proposal Title

387

Final Semester of Project

Fall 2019

Requested Amount of Funding

$10700.00

Type of Grant

No-or-Low-Cost-to-Students Learning Materials

Course Title(s)
Students Taking Academic Responsibility

Course Number(s)
STAR 0098

Team Member 1 Name
Peter Higgins

Team Member 1 Email
phiggins@gordonstate.edu

Team Member 2 Name
Matthew Little

Team Member 2 Email
matthewl@gordonstate.edu

Team Member 3 Name

Team Member 3 Email

Team Member 4 Name

Team Member 4 Email

Additional Team Members (Name and email address for each)

Sponsor Name
Dr. Jeffery Knighton

Sponsor Title
Vice President of Academic Affairs

Sponsor Department
Academic Affairs

Original Required Commercial Materials (title, author, price)
 On Course 3rd Edition, Skip Downing, $120.24

Average Number of Students per Course Section Affected by Project in One Academic Year
17

Average Number of Sections Affected by Project in One Academic Year
9

Total Number of Students Affected by Project in One Academic Year
161

Average Number of Students Affected per Summer Semester
17

Average Number of Students Affected per Fall Semester
81

Average Number of Students Affected per Spring Semester
41

Original Total Cost per Student
$120.24

Post-Project Cost per Student
$0

Post-Project Savings per Student
$120.24

Projected Total Annual Student Savings per Academic Year
$19,358.64

Using OpenStax Textbook?
No

Project Goals

The Students Taking Academic Responsibility (STAR 0098) class is a one-credit hour, graded course that is required of all students returning to Gordon State College after a suspension. The course is designed to help students transition back into the classroom and provide them with skills and tactics to ensure that they do not find themselves in continued academic distress. This course covers topics such as personal responsibility; self-motivation; goal-setting; priority management; decision-making; engaging the academic community; interpersonal communication; note-taking and other study skills; test-taking strategies; and the power of positive thinking.

The goals of this project are designed to help impact the largest number of students possible, and move more students to successful completion of the class and their programs of study.

1. Due to the students' prior academic performance, many of the students in this course no longer meet satisfactory academic progress thresholds for continuing their financial aid. Coupled with the cost of the textbook, this drives many students to forego purchasing the textbook for the class. By lowering the cost of the textbook all students will be able to access the information that they need to be successful both in the class and in their academic careers in general.

2. The creation of these materials will help ensure that the information and materials needed by these students will be more consistent in future iterations of the course. This process will allow for additional conversations between faculty and students about what materials and what delivery methods worked best to accomplish the stated goals of the class.

3. This project will allow the creation of material that can be readily updated and implemented as the need arises. This will allow the faculty of the course to provide more responsive pedagogical interventions within their sections and to individual students.

4. The information included within the created material would be shared across departments and programs throughout the institution. This would allow well-crafted and institutionally specific modules to be developed and used in "bite-sized" formats that can be used to promote student success in a variety of settings.

5. This project would also allow for the development of new modalities for the course and serve more students. Currently the creation of an online version of the course is being discussed to help deal with specific student learning issues within this format. The development of these materials will allow this option to engage students in a more meaningful way and better address their specific issues.

Statement of Transformation

Gordon State College's STAR 0098 is a key component of the institution's overall focus on increasing the persistence and success of our students. The STAR course meets on an 8-week schedule and is completed by mid-term for full-term classes. During the 2017-2018 academic year there were 9 sections of the course provided to students for enrollment through all 3 semesters. Due to the compressed nature of the course students are sometimes reticent to purchase the textbook. Coupled with the high cost of the book, and the lack of external funding sources for many of these students, the students will often make a strategic decision to not purchase the book. This decision causes additional problems for the student as one of the largest graded portions of the course are journals found within the text that are based on readings from the book.

Since the reasons for academic suspension are varied, each STAR section has unique characteristics related to the actions that led the student into the course. The textbook provides a large amount of material that satisfactorily covers many of these issues. However, the text is not specifically designed to help students who have previously been unsuccessful in their academic endeavors. In this regard many students struggle to see themselves and their situation(s) within the text. This project will allow us to create a textbook with this population specifically in mind and address institutional issues such as campus specific occurrences or policies that may have led to student suspension. As an example, the Fall 2017 student cohort had the largest number of academic suspensions in a number of years. Due to institutional research we are aware of issues that helped lead to this spike. This project would allow the STAR course the flexibility to engage these specific issues during this period, while allowing for different interventions for the next cohort of student based on our drive for continuous improvement for student success.

Currently, all students enrolled in the course must attend it at the main campus regardless of their primary location of instruction. This in itself can be a cause for financial hardship on the students in the course. However, with our current text it is the only method available for providing instruction with this course. This project will allow us to expand the options for students to benefit from the material and information available in this class and increase the number of students who can take the course with these options.

Our campus serves a high number of students who are Pell-Eligible with almost 2/3rd of all students meeting this criteria. Students enrolled in this course are often on the verge of or have fallen into financial aid suspension. As such, these students pay out of pocket for their courses, and do not have the resources to purchase their books. This project will allow students the opportunity to spend their limited funds in a different way and help them focus on the work at hand rather than working to purchase the textbook for the course.

This project is designed to create no-cost materials for all students enrolled in the STAR 0098 course. This material will be designed and curated by members of the Gordon State College campus community to support our students to the best of our abilities. The creation of this new text will impact the course immediately. By removing the potential roadblock of the cost of the text students will be able to access the information needed for accomplishing the goals of the STAR class without the risk of having to financially burdening themselves during their first semester back on campus. It will allow the institution to address specific needs and share best practices developed as part of this course with the wider campus community.

Transformation Action Plan

The project will begin with the evaluation and selection of material needed for the redesign. The content currently covered by the text will be prioritized and vetted for continued inclusion within the course. Once this content has been determined, items that are currently held by third parties and not available due to rights issues will be identified and the search for materials that can either replace this information that are open sourced, or otherwise available through USG resources will commence. In addition to these resources, campus entities will be contacted to help develop institutional specific materials related to the topics identified as effective. These materials will be solicited, vetted, and incorporated into the project by the STAR redesign team. Additionally, currently created materials that are the intellectual property of the institution already will go through this same vetting process to help build additional resources from those who have taught the course previously. These processes will include discussion regarding the content and format of this information. The creation of multimedia and technology enhanced materials will be given additional support and encouragement.

The STAR redesign team will consist of both members of the grant application group. Peter Higgins and Matthew Little have both taught the STAR class in the previous academic years and the STAR class falls under the purview of Mr. Higgin's portfolio. Both Mr. Higgins and Mr. Little have been involved with curriculum development at the post-secondary level and have worked with the creation of student success materials at various institutions. They will serve as the primary arbiters of the material included in the redesign and lead the work in facilitating the creation and collection of material. An instructional design staff member will be involved for technical support and technology training for the team as well as faculty using the new materials. Members of the Hightower Collaborative Learning Center and Library will assist in the collection and evaluation of items that are available for use in this project. They will also take the lead in determining any rights issues that may arise. Former STAR faculty will also be engaged in this process as subject matter experts in the content and the needs of this particular sub-population. Institutional Research will also be involved in the design of the assessments and collection of the comparative data for the project.

A pilot section of the course will be identified for the Spring semester to use the initial developed material. This section will not have the textbook required and will have a different course map than the one currently used by the faculty of the course. The campus LMS will be used extensively in this section as will other online materials developed through this project.

During this pilot semester assessments will be provided to determine the effectiveness of these new materials and to seek out areas where additional change is needed. These assessments will include both pre- and post- and will include input from the students as well as the faculty teaching the course. The control sections will also be provided this survey to determine if there was a difference in the effectiveness of the two formats. Focus groups will be used to garner qualitative data on the students and faculty enrolled in the course.

Quantitative & Qualitative Measures

Pre- and Post- Course Assessments

Each student enrolled within the STAR course will be provided a survey that will cover the major learning outcomes of the course. The survey will be used to determine the student's understanding and achievement of these outcomes. These assessments will be compared to surveys provided prior to the implementation of the new free materials to explore the potential improvement provided by the new free materials.

The surveys will also explore student actions in relation to the purchasing of textbooks. In some sections of STAR students are currently surveyed for their purchase of the textbook for the course, but also for their purchase of their other classes' books. This survey question will be expanded to all sections to determine if the creation of the no-cost materials has affected the habits of the students in relation to the purchasing of required texts across their curriculum.

Assessment of Student Success

The purpose of the STAR course is to improve student outcomes throughout their academic programs. As such, the students' grade distribution in their non-STAR classes will be compared from previous semesters to determine if there is any difference in the outcomes for these students with the new materials.

Qualitative Assessments

Focus Groups

Focus groups will be created to discuss the potential benefits of the new material. These focus groups will include former STAR course students, STAR course faculty (past and present), and current STAR course enrollees. These groups will provide the opportunity for continuous improvement through the providing of their input on needed sections, changes in delivery, and positive changes made through the process. These focus groups will meet to discuss needs that need to be met through this project and then again at the beginning and end of the implementation semester.

Assessment of Faculty Use

The faculty using the material will be asked to describe their use of the new material for the course. They will also be asked if there is any information that they used in any other courses that they taught during the course of the semester. This open-ended questioning will also include requests for information regarding potential changes that they believe should be made as well as what items worked the best. The faculty will also be asked to discuss material that would assist student problems from an intervention standpoint.

Timeline

October 2018- Review of current materials. Identification of needed content for the course and inclusion within the new materials. Development of the course shell for the new material is begun.

October 2018- Initial focus groups with faculty and students are convened related to the materials needed and content that best serves these populations.

November- Mid-December 2018- All new materials placed into the course shell. Continued creation of content will occur with a deadline of mid-November.

December 2018- Data from the student outcomes of student enrolled in the Fall sections of the course will be collected to provide baseline data from which to work from regarding the new materials.

January 2019- Pilot section is implemented with new materials.

January 2019- Pre-assessment survey deployed to all STAR 0098 sections regarding needs and student learning outcomes.

January 2019- February 2019- Evaluation and assessment of redesign is performed.

February 2019- Post-assessment survey is deployed.

March 2019- Focus groups convened for those in the pilot and those in the control to discuss the effectiveness of the two materials and the use of them within the sections by faculty. Faculty focus groups will cover same material.

May 2019- Data is analyzed and provided to the redesign team. Information gathered is used to determine changes needed for the summer sections of STAR.

June 2019- STAR sections use updated versions of the material developed during the fall and spring. Pre-assessment survey deployed.

July 2019- Redesigned sections take part in post-assessment survey and focus groups.

Budget

Travel and Expenses: $800

Focus Groups Incidentals and Supplies: $1200

Assistance for Development and Creation (Content and Design): $2,400

Grant Team: Matthew Little: $2,800 (Course funding for Fall and Spring), Peter Higgins: $3,500 (Course funding for Fall, Spring, and Summer)

Total: $10,700

Sustainability Plan

The STAR 0098 class is a key facet in Gordon State's student success initiatives. The course is offered each semester and is a focus area for Academic Affairs. This project will provide a sizable portion of our population, often the most vulnerable, with the opportunity to be successful and increase the rate of graduation. The materials designed for this course are designed to not only support the students in this course, but to also provide a suite of materials for use in any other class as well in addition to departmental needs related to student success. The content used within the redesigned STAR class will be pertinent to all students, and thus it will allow us to leverage this work across campus.

Recently, talks have been had regarding changing the STAR 0098 class from a recovery course to an intervention course. This would assist all students who find themselves in academic distress. However, the cost of the textbook and the ability to serve an even greater population with it has stymied this possible move. This project would allow the institution to move forward with a variety of options to support this group including offering workshops using this material or the creation of a new class to support students either through intervention or in recovery. This could conceivably triple the number of students directly affected by this change through the creation of new sections.

The Assistant Vice-President for Academic Excellence would maintain and update the materials in conjunction with the course faculty of the STAR 0098 course. Evaluation and assessment would remain included in the course to help create more opportunities for improvement and to keep an eye out for changes that each generation of students need. The assessments and conversations had with the students enrolled will be used to update materials semester by semester and academic year after academic year. As technology changes so will the methods used within the course to deliver the content. The evaluation process will include work in this area as well.

This redesign will hopefully change the success rates of our students and provide us with a wealth of data to determine the best ways to support our students within this class, but also throughout campus. If we realize the change we hope to find on our campus our goal is to share it with our colleagues throughout the USG as well as present our findings at various student success and advising events.

Acknowledgment

Grant Acceptance

[Acknowledged] I understand and acknowledge that acceptance of Affordable Learning Georgia grant funding constitutes a commitment to comply with the required activities listed in the RFP and that my submitted proposal will serve as the statement of work that must be completed by my project team. I further understand and acknowledge that failure to complete the deliverables in the statement of work may result in termination of the agreement and funding.

September 10, 2018

Affordable Learning Georgia
University System of Georgia
270 Washington Street, S.W.
Atlanta GA 30334

To the committee for Affordable Learning Georgia:

I am pleased to support the enclosed proposal from Peter Higgins and Matthew Little for the redesign of the currently costly, required text used in the Students Taking Academic Responsibility course (STAR 0098) to free, online materials. This redesign will allow the institution to support one of our most vulnerable populations by creating no-cost materials that simultaneously creates a more student-focused option that can also be used to support students throughout the institution. This grant will provide us the opportunity to ensure that the voices of the various constituencies serviced by the course will have their needs evaluated and met by the materials, while also developing educational items that are flexible for long-term use and reflective of our students' needs. The grant will support the work needed to meet the goals outlined within the proposal and provide the proper recourses to ensure the success of this project.

STAR 0098 has assisted students in their transition back into post-secondary work for many years. However, the high cost of the textbook stymies the institution's ability to expand the resources and opportunities provided by the course to a larger population of students who also need this support. As this course is provided to a diverse group of students, flexibility and affordability are key elements that must be included in any activity we undertake with this class. This redesign will provide us with both of these elements and will allow us to improve the way we deliver this information to them in a way that will be more relevant and more engaging than our current text allows. This grant will also allow for these resources to be available to students currently enrolled in the class, students who need this information but have previously not been able to enroll, and to the entire campus community as these resources can be more readily shared. Supporting this grant supports student success throughout the campus and helps keep the dream of obtaining a college degree alive for a group of students.

Sincerely,

C. Jeffery Knighton, Ph.D.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Textbook Transformation Grants, Round Twelve (Fall 2018-2019)

Proposal Form and Narrative

Notes

- The proposal form and narrative .docx file is for offline drafting and review. Submitters must use the InfoReady Review online form for proposal submission.
- The only way to submit the official proposal is through the online form in Georgia Tech's InfoReady Review. The link to the online application is on the Round 12 RFP Page.
- The italic text we provide is meant for clarifications and can be deleted.

Applicant, Team, and Sponsor Information

The **applicant** is the proposed Project Lead for the grant project. The **submitter** is the person submitting the application (which may be a Grants Officer or Administrator). The submitter will often be the applicant – if so, leave the submitter fields blank.

Institution(s)	Gordon State College
Applicant Name	Peter Higgins
Applicant Email	phiggins@gordonstate.edu
Applicant Phone #	678-359-5155
Applicant Position/Title	Assistant Vice President of Academic Excellence
Submitter Name	Matthew Little
Submitter Email	matthewl@gordonstate.edu
Submitter Phone #	678-359-5226
Submitter Position	Strategic Initiatives Project Manager

Please provide the first/last names and email addresses of all team members within the proposed project. Include the applicant (Project Lead) in this list. Do not include prefixes or suffixes such as Ms., Dr., Ph.D., etc.

	Name	Email Address
Team Member 1	Peter Higgins	phiggins@gordonstate.edu
Team Member 2	Matthew Little	matthewl@gordonstate.edu

Please provide the sponsor's name, title, department, and institution. The sponsor is the provider of your Letter of Support.

Dr. Jeffery Knighton, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Academic Affairs, Gordon State College.

Project Information and Impact Data

Title of Grant Project	STAR 0098 Free Textbook Transformation
Type of Grant	"No-or-Low-Cost-to-Students Learning Materials,"
Requested Amount of Funding	
Course Names and Course Numbers	Students Taking Academic Responsibility/ STAR 0098
Final Semester of Project	Fall 2019
Average Number of Students Per Course Section Affected by Project	17
Average Number of Sections Affected by Project in One Academic Year	9
Total Number of Students Affected by Project in One Academic Year	161
Average Number of Students Affected per Summer Semester	17
Average Number of Students Affected per Fall Semester	81
Average Number of Students Affected per Spring Semester	41
Title/Author of Original Required Materials	On Course 3rd Edition/ Skip Downing
Original Total Cost Per Student	$120.24
Post-Project Cost Per Student	$0
Post-Project Savings Per Student	$120.24
Projected Total Annual Student Savings Per Academic Year	$19,358.64
Using OpenStax Textbook?	No

Narrative Section

1. Project Goals

The Students Taking Academic Responsibility (STAR 0098) class is a one-credit hour, graded course that is required of all students returning to Gordon State College after a suspension. The course is designed to help students transition back into the classroom and provide them with skills and tactics to ensure that they do not find themselves in continued academic distress. This course covers topics such as personal responsibility; self-motivation; goal-setting; priority management; decision-making; engaging the academic community; interpersonal communication; note-taking and other study skills; test-taking strategies; and the power of positive thinking.

The goals of this project are designed to help impact the largest number of students possible, and move more students to successful completion of the class and their programs of study.

1. Due to the students' prior academic performance, many of the students in this course no longer meet satisfactory academic progress thresholds for continuing their financial aid. Coupled with the cost of the textbook, this drives many students to forego purchasing the textbook for the class. By lowering the cost of the textbook all students will be able to access the information that they need to be successful both in the class and in their academic careers in general.
2. The creation of these materials will help ensure that the information and materials needed by these students will be more consistent in future iterations of the course. This process will allow for additional conversations between faculty and students about what materials and what delivery methods worked best to accomplish the stated goals of the class.
3. This project will allow the creation of material that can be readily updated and implemented as the need arises. This will allow the faculty of the course to provide more responsive pedagogical interventions within their sections and to individual students.
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5. This project would also allow for the development of new modalities for the course and serve more students. Currently the creation of an online version of the course is being discussed to help deal with specific student learning issues within this format. The development of these materials will allow this option to engage students in a more meaningful way and better address their specific issues.

2. Statement of Transformation

Gordon State College's STAR 0098 is a key component of the institution's overall focus on increasing the persistence and success of our students. The STAR course meets on an 8-week schedule and is completed by mid-term for full-term classes. During the 2017-2018 academic year there were 9 sections of the course provided to students for enrollment through all 3 semesters. Due to the compressed nature of the course students are sometimes reticent to purchase the textbook. Coupled with the high cost of the book, and the lack of external funding sources for many of these students, the students will often make a strategic decision to not purchase the book. This decision causes additional problems for the student as one of the largest graded portions of the course are journals found within the text that are based on readings from the book.

Since the reasons for academic suspension are varied, each STAR section has unique characteristics related to the actions that led the student into the course. The textbook provides a large amount of material that satisfactorily covers many of these issues. However, the text is not specifically designed to help students who have previously been unsuccessful in their

academic endeavors. In this regard many students struggle to see themselves and their situation(s) within the text. This project will allow us to create a textbook with this population specifically in mind and address institutional issues such as campus specific occurrences or policies that may have led to student suspension. As an example, the Fall 2017 student cohort had the largest number of academic suspensions in a number of years. Due to institutional research we are aware of issues that helped lead to this spike. This project would allow the STAR course the flexibility to engage these specific issues during this period, while allowing for different interventions for the next cohort of student based on our drive for continuous improvement for student success.

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4. Quantitative and Qualitative Measures
Quantitative Assessments

Pre- and Post- Course Assessments

Each student enrolled within the STAR course will be provided a survey that will cover the major learning outcomes of the course. The survey will be used to determine the student's understanding and achievement of these outcomes. These assessments will be compared to surveys provided prior to the implementation of the new free materials to explore the potential improvement provided by the new free materials.

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expanded to all sections to determine if the creation of the no-cost materials has affected the habits of the students in relation to the purchasing of required texts across their curriculum.

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The purpose of the STAR course is to improve student outcomes throughout their academic programs. As such, the students' grade distribution in their non-STAR classes will be compared from previous semesters to determine if there is any difference in the outcomes for these students with the new materials.

Qualitative Assessments

Focus Groups

Focus groups will be created to discuss the potential benefits of the new material. These focus groups will include former STAR course students, STAR course faculty (past and present), and current STAR course enrollees. These groups will provide the opportunity for continuous improvement through the providing of their input on needed sections, changes in delivery, and positive changes made through the process. These focus groups will meet to discuss needs that need to be met through this project and then again at the beginning and end of the implementation semester.

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Focus Groups Incidentals and Supplies: $1200

Assistance for Development and Creation (Content and Design): $2,400

Grant Team: Matthew Little: $2,800 (Course funding for Fall and Spring), Peter Higgins: $3,500 (Course funding for Fall, Spring, and Summer)

Total: $10,700

7. Sustainability Plan
The STAR 0098 class is a key facet in Gordon State's student success initiatives. The course is offered each semester and is a focus area for Academic Affairs. This project will provide a sizable portion of our population, often the most vulnerable, with the opportunity to be successful and increase the rate of graduation. The materials designed for this course are designed to not only support the students in this course, but to also provide a suite of materials for use in any other class as well in addition to departmental needs related to student success. The content used within the redesigned STAR class will be pertinent to all students, and thus it will allow us to leverage this work across campus.

Recently, talks have been had regarding changing the STAR 0098 class from a recovery course to an intervention course. This would assist all students who find themselves in academic distress.

However, the cost of the textbook and the ability to serve an even greater population with it has stymied this possible move. This project would allow the institution to move forward with a variety of options to support this group including offering workshops using this material or the creation of a new class to support students either through intervention or in recovery. This could conceivably triple the number of students directly affected by this change through the creation of new sections.

The Assistant Vice-President for Academic Excellence would maintain and update the materials in conjunction with the course faculty of the STAR 0098 course. Evaluation and assessment would remain included in the course to help create more opportunities for improvement and to keep an eye out for changes that each generation of students need. The assessments and conversations had with the students enrolled will be used to update materials semester by semester and academic year after academic year. As technology changes so will the methods used within the course to deliver the content. The evaluation process will include work in this area as well.

This redesign will hopefully change the success rates of our students and provide us with a wealth of data to determine the best ways to support our students within this class, but also throughout campus. If we realize the change we hope to find on our campus our goal is to share it with our colleagues throughout the USG as well as present our findings at various student success and advising events.