

Table of Contents

Ligon, Jan - #4738 - 525 1

Letter of Support..... 11

Proposal Narrative..... 14

Application Summary

Competition Details

Competition Title:	Textbook Transformation Grants, Round Seventeen (Summer 2020 - Summer 2021)
Category:	University System of Georgia
Award Cycle:	Round 17
Submission Deadline:	04/20/2020 at 11:59 PM

Application Information

Submitted By:	Scott Jacques
Application ID:	4738
Application Title:	525
Date Submitted:	04/21/2020 at 8:44 AM

Personal Details

Institution Name(s):	Georgia State University
Applicant First Name:	Jan
Applicant Last Name:	Ligon
Applicant Email Address:	jligon@gsu.edu
Applicant Phone Number:	404 413 1066
Primary Appointment Title:	Associate Professor & Undergraduate Program Director
Submitter First Name:	Scott
Submitter Last Name:	Jacques
Submitter Email Address:	sjacques1@gsu.edu
Submitter Phone Number:	706 296 8707
Submitter Title:	Associate Professor of Criminal Justice & Criminology, Director of AYS Open

Application Details

Proposal Title

525

Requested Amount of Funding

\$10,000

Priority Category (if applicable)

None / N/A

Course Title(s)

Introduction to Social Work

Course Number(s)

SW 2000

Team Member 1 Name

Jan Ligon

Team Member 1 Email

jligon@gsu.edu

Team Member 2 Name

Lionel Scott

Team Member 2 Email

lscottjr@gsu.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**

Brian Bride

Sponsor Title

Distinguished University Professor and Director

Sponsor Department

School of Social Work

Total Number of Student Section Enrollments Affected by Project in One Academic Year

662

Average Number of Student Section Enrollments Affected per Summer Semester

30

Average Number of Student Section Enrollments Affected per Fall Semester

367

Average Number of Student Section Enrollments Affected per Spring Semester

265

Original Required Commercial Materials (title, author, price, and bookstore or retailer URL showing price)

Social Work: An Empowering Profession, 9th Edition, 2019, DuBois & Miley.

ISBN-10: 0134747399

ISBN-13: 978-0134747392

Available at <https://www.pearson.com/us/higher-education/program/Du-Bois-Social-Work-An-Empowering-Profession-plus-My-Lab-Helping-Professions-with-Enhanced-Pearson-e-Text-Access-Card-Package-9th-Edition/PGM1767305.html>

Original Total Cost per Student

\$101.32 at publisher website

Post-Project Cost per Student

\$0

Post-Project Savings per Student

\$101.312

Projected Total Annual Student Savings per Academic Year

\$67,073.84

Using OpenStax Textbook?

No

Project Goals

This proposal is to transform all Georgia State University (GSU) sections of Introduction to Social Work (SW 2000) to no-cost learning materials. The course is required for all Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) majors, and taken by many other students. It is delivered at GSU's main campus, as part of its BSW program. It is also taught at GSU's Perimeter College, which offers two-year Associate's Degrees. (Note that for brevity, the rest of this proposal refers to GSU's main campus as "Downtown" and Perimeter College as "Perimeter.")

Goal 1 is to eliminate the cost of learning materials for the course, and thereby reduce students' financial burden. As currently taught at both Downtown and Perimeter, the textbook costs just over \$100. This is a substantial sum for any student, but especially ours: almost 60% qualify for a Pell grant, which are only available to students from low-income households. By replacing that textbook with no-cost materials, the proposed transformation will save GSU students about \$67,000 per academic year.

Goal 2 is to increase students' timely access to course materials and thereby improve student success. Due to the cost of textbooks generally, many students forgo purchasing them, or wait too long to do so. This impedes their ability to complete assignments, score well on quizzes/tests, succeed in the course, and, more generally, succeed in higher education (which, of course, affects their post-education life). These student outcomes add up, resulting in higher drop/withdraw/fail (DWF) rates, lower GPAs, lower retention rates, and longer time to graduation. Thus, by bringing the cost of textbooks to zero, the transformation will improve student outcomes.

Goal 3 is to attract more students to the social work profession by removing the first cost unique to it (i.e., not shared by other programs): the textbook for Introduction to Social Work. Students seek out courses with lower textbook costs; in turn, some go on to elect majors that, otherwise, they would not have selected. Georgia needs more social workers, especially in times like these. Their job is to address needs in health, child welfare, aging services, addictions, trauma, among others.

Tying back to this section's beginning, Goal 4 is to standardize the course sections across Downtown and Perimeter. This involves not only adopting the same no-cost materials, but also (1) aligning course goals, objectives and content; (2) create a common course "shell" in iCollege/D2L that is built to be delivered by any modality, e.g. online, hybrid, or seated; and, (3) creating a common course module in iCollege/D2L that, for instance, introduces students to the field and profession of social work, describes the courses that students should take while earning an Associate's degree if they want to earn a BSW at Downtown, introduces them to faculty who can help them learn more about becoming a social worker, all of which is meant to create a "pipeline" for students to transition smoothly to Downtown, should they choose.

Here is the best place to note that though serving Perimeter students is a key motivation for this proposal, a Perimeter faculty member is not a "Team Member" on this proposal, unfortunately. This is only because Perimeter does not have a faculty member who is the dedicated person for delivering Introduction to Social Work. Rather, this responsibility is fulfilled by adjuncts who come and go. Indeed, for this very reason, the goal (4) to create a no-cost, standardized version of the course is of special importance for it. For further details, please refer to the level of support from the Dean of Perimeter College (who is also a faculty member in GSU's School of Social Work), Nancy Kropf.

Statement of Transformation

GSU's School of Social Work is working to reduce the financial woes, both during and after college, of its students. Textbooks and other learning materials are a large part of the cost. Thus, it is essential to transform its courses to no-cost. Already, four of the BSW's required courses are no-cost: Communication Skills for Social Workers (SW 3700); Social Work Methods I (SW 4100); Social Work Methods II (SW 4200); and, Field Education I (SW 4500). (Those transformations were not supported by ALG. If funded, this transformation will be the first funded by ALG for our School.)

Of any course in our curriculum, the most important to transform is Introduction to Social Work. As mentioned above for Goal 1, the course is required for all BSW majors, plus many other students choose to take it as an elective. By far, it serves more students than any other course offered by our School, and is the only social work course offered by both Downtown and Perimeter. Introduction to Social Work is a gateway to becoming a social worker, plus an important way for non-majors to gain appreciation for this profession and their work.

By transforming the course to no-cost, not only will students save up to about \$100 each (see Goal 1), but they should also benefit from greater academic success (see Goal 2), and help usher students to meaningful careers as social workers (see Goal 3). Post-transformation, the no-cost version of the course will be the only one delivered at both Downtown and Perimeter (see Goal 4).

In addition to going no-cost, we will achieve Goals 2, 3, and 4 by delivering Introduction to Social Work in an online, asynchronous format. At both Downtown and Perimeter, it is currently delivered that way. Both of us have substantial experience in developing and delivering such courses, which provide maximum flexibility in the pursuit of a college degree.

Regarding Goals 2 and 3: For students with multiple commitments, such as parenting or work, it can be difficult to attend seated classes. Also, for students who live off campus, especially if outside Atlanta and commuting to Downtown, it takes considerable time and resources (e.g., money for gas and parking; see Goal 1). These factors deter students from attending class, which harms the student outcomes noted previously. A practical way to counter those problems is to offer this course and all materials in an online, asynchronous format.

Regarding Goal 4: The nature of online courses, versus seated ones, makes them easier to share and adopt across instructors, making their delivery more consistent and helping to ensure all students receive the same high quality instruction.

Transformation Action Plan

The project team consists of two subject matter experts: Jan Ligon and Lionel Scott. They will have responsibility for undertaking the following tasks. To help, they have many personnel resources at their disposal, including a subject librarian, La Loria Konata; GSU's ALG Champion, Denise Dimsdale; and, experts in GSU's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

For this transformation, we will replace the current for-purchase textbook – used at both Downtown and Perimeter – with texts and other course materials that are free to us and our students (among others). There are three key steps, described below.

Step 1 is to identify and review textbooks for Introduction to Social Work. To do so, we will search amazon.com and chegg.com, which are major providers of university textbooks. For the first ten books listed on each site for each course (excluding those “sponsored” on amazon.com), we will analyze their respective table of contents to identify their 1) major topics, 2) subtopics, and 3) ordering of those. The findings will be used to decide what topics and subtopics to cover in the courses, and in what order. At the same time, we will begin the process of developing the course structure, sequencing, goals, objectives, content, products, and measures.

Step 2 is curating one or more texts for each topic (including its subtopics) in Introduction to Social Work. The texts may be articles, chapters, books, or another type of publication (e.g., legal cases, government reports). To select between texts, we will take into account ALG's evaluation criteria: clarity, comprehensibility, readability, content accuracy and technical accuracy, adaptability, appropriateness, and accessibility. We will only consider texts that are open access (i.e., free to everyone), in the public domain (and thus also free to everyone), or available as unlimited e-versions via the GSU library (e.g., articles available via Galileo). Based on our preliminary evaluation (see next paragraph), we do not think it will be necessary to take advantage of the “fair use” doctrine. However, should that change, USG's Fair Use Checklist will guide our use of texts that are crucial but otherwise unavailable for free to students. Should there be any uncertainty about the fair use of a particular reading, we will consult copyright experts (e.g., GSU's Gwen Spratt) about how to proceed.

As part of step 2, we will extensively evaluate potential no-cost texts to adopt in Introduction to Social Work. To prepare this ALG proposal, we made a preliminary evaluation. The results make us fully confident that we can successfully transform the course to no-cost and achieve our goals. This is despite there being very few open textbooks for the course, with none appropriate to our students (e.g., due to being geared to students in the UK). Otherwise, fortunately, there is a substantial body of solid and very relevant open educational resources that can be used in developing the course. In addition to scholarly text, we will seek out a wide range of educational content, including websites, audio files, videos, and more. With the support of CETL, we will also produce original content in the forms of audio recordings, video productions, PowerPoints, and other materials.

Step 3. The course will be hosted on iCollege. For material that is open access or in the public domain, students will be directed to an external link that hosts the content. For works only available at no-cost via the GSU library, students will be directed to an internal link that can be used to access the text. Should we need to use the fair use doctrine, the work will be uploaded in iCollege, with a clear warning to students that the work is copyrighted and not to be redistributed. As part of step 3, we will consult with CETL to optimize the organization and presentation of texts on iCollege. Among other considerations, this entails deciding how best to integrate and connect each text with other course activities.

With those steps complete, we will make our no-cost content publicly available in the form of LibGuides posted on GSU's website. A LibGuide is a set of webpages that directs users to resources on a particular topic or course subject. LibGuides are typically prepared by librarians and appear as university library webpages. At present, we do not intend to create course materials suitable for sharing on GALILEO Open Learning Materials. Should we create such materials, they will be shared on that website.

Quantitative & Qualitative Measures

The transformations' success will be assessed by obtaining and analyzing data bearing on (1) student satisfaction, (2) student performance, and (3) course-level retention.

(1) Student satisfaction will be ascertained with two surveys. Both surveys include quantitative and qualitative components. The first student satisfaction survey is that administered by GSU to evaluate all course sections, every semester. In addition to facilitating within-course comparisons (pre-transformed versus transformed), this survey will allow us to make between-course comparisons. This is because for each course section, GSU automatically compares its averages to other sections of the same course (if more than one), all department course sections, and all college course sections. The survey generates quantitative data by asking students to evaluate each of the following from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree):

- The instructor followed the plan for the course as established in the syllabus.
- The instructor gave assignments relevant to the goals of this course.
- The instructor explained the course grading system clearly.
- The instructor was willing and able to answer students' questions.
- The instructor was receptive to students' and others' opinions. Test questions clearly related to course content.
- The instructor communicates effectively.
- The instructor was well prepared.
- The instructor demonstrated extensive knowledge of the subject.
- The instructor stimulated me to intellectual effort beyond that required by most courses. The instructor's teaching methods aid students in understanding the material.
- The instructor provided helpful feedback on assignments. The instructor was accessible to students outside of class.
- The overall structuring and sequencing of topics in this course facilitated learning.
- Course assignments, including examinations, required creative and original thinking beyond mere memorization of material.
- I am pleased with how much I learned in the course.
- Considering the subject matter of the course, the instructor was effective as a teacher.

Also, students are asked to evaluate from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Superior):

- Considering both the limitations and possibilities of the subject matter and course, how would you rate the overall teaching effectiveness of this instructor?
- What is your overall rating of this course?

Before presenting open-ended questions that prompt qualitative data, students are asked to choose a response category for the following:

- Generally, how many hours per week did you spend outside of class preparing for class? (0-2; 3-4; 4-8; 9-14)
- What is your grade point average at GSU? (4.3-4.00; 3.99-3.75; 3.74-3.00; 2.99-2.50; 2.50-0.00; New GSU Student (No GPA))
- For undergraduates only, which best applies to you? (freshman; sophomore; junior; senior; other)

Finally, qualitative data are produced by asking students to describe "Course strengths"; "Course weaknesses"; "Instructor strengths"; "Instructor weaknesses"; "Suggestions for course improvement"; "Suggestions for instructor improvement"; and, "Comments on classroom environment."

The second student satisfaction survey is specific to textbooks. In collaboration with CETL, this survey was crafted to reflect the GSU-wide survey (see above) and garner further insight into textbooks. Within each course section, it will be delivered via iCollege during the last week of the course. First, the survey will generate quantitative data by asking students to evaluate each of the following from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree):

- Generally, I think textbooks are too expensive.
- Generally, I think the cost of textbooks is more than I can afford.
- Generally, I think students would do better in college if textbooks were less expensive.

For the pre-transformed courses, students are asked to evaluate the following with the same scale:

- For this class, I think buying the textbook(s) led me to learn more.

For the transformed courses, students are asked to evaluate the following with the same scale:

- For this class, I think I would have learned more if I had to purchase a textbook.

Because students may choose to buy a physical version of free digital textbooks, the following question applies to, and thus will be asked of, students in the pre-transformed and transformed courses:

- For this class, how much did you spend on the textbook(s)?
- For this class, how did you obtain the textbook(s)? (I didn't obtain it; Bought/rented from bookstore; Bought/rented from online seller; Bought/rented from individual you know; Borrowed from individual you know; Borrowed physical version from library; Free e-version via library website; Free e-version via non-library website; Other, describe.)

The second way we will assess student performance is through a test that will not count toward student grades, but will measure their learning and, unlike the above grades, be developed and delivered in the same way across all four courses involved in the transformation. First, course learning objectives will be mapped to multiple-choice questions. These questions will reflect the essential knowledge that students should “walk away with”. Then at the beginning, midpoint, and conclusion of the course, students will be given the test via iCollege. The results will allow us to measure progressive learning throughout the course, and compare this progression across pre-transformed and transformed versions. Note that to counter testing effects, the questions found on any given test (e.g., that of Jane Doe at midpoint) will be drawn at random from a large question bank.

(3) Course-level retention will be determined with IPORT, which is GSU's “web-based application that provides access to data stored in the University Data Warehouse” (<https://oie.gsu.edu/decision-support-services-dss/iport/>). For each GSU course section, IPORT has a daily record of how many students dropped it (or added it); the number of students who failed; and, the number of students who withdrew. These are just a few of the variables available via IPORT. We will use others, as appropriate, to better understand the range of factors that shape the effect of textbook costs on DWF rates, in addition to measures of student performance (e.g., mean, median, and mode of final grades).

Timeline

May 8, 2020: Notification of award

May 29, 2020, 9am-3pm: Kickoff Meeting

June-July 2020: Compile textbooks and conduct a content analysis of their chapter and section contents, focusing on topic coverage and order in which topics are covered. Also, map learning objectives to multiple-choice questions that reflect the essential knowledge that students should “walk away with” from taking the course.

August-December 2020: Based on findings, decide which topics to cover and in what order; identify, review, and select new reading materials; curate and develop non-reading materials; upload materials to iCollege. Consult with CETL to optimize organization/presentation of materials on iCollege; consider incorporation of other non-reading materials; and develop/integrate them as appropriate.

January 2021: Begin delivering transformed course; publish LibGuide.

June 2021 and after: Based on findings (see assessment timeline, below), refine course for future semesters.

The following bulleted timeline outlines dates at which course assessment actions will be completed. (For further details, refer back to section on Qualitative and Quantitative Measures.) The Fall 2020 dates are to collect data on the pre-transformed course, and the Spring 2021 dates are to collect data on the transformed course.

- July 2020: Upload tests on the knowledge to “walk away with” for course; put everything in place that will be needed for data entry (e.g., data labels in statistical software program).
- August 2020: At semester start, administer “walk away with” tests; enter results into dataset.
- October 2020: At semester midpoint, administer “walk away with” tests; enter results into dataset.
- December 2020: At semester end, administer “walk away with” tests; provide students with student satisfaction survey that is specific to learning materials; enter those results, those from GSU-wide student satisfaction survey, and information on IPORT into dataset.
- January 2021: Upload tests on the knowledge to “walk away with” for each course; put everything in place that will be needed for data entry (e.g., data labels in statistical software program).
- March 2021: At semester start, administer “walk away with” tests; enter results into dataset.
- May 2021: At semester end, administer “walk away with” tests; provide students with student satisfaction survey that is specific to learning materials; enter those results, those from GSU-wide student satisfaction survey, and information on IPORT into dataset;
- June-July 2021: Analyze data; write and submit final report.

Budget

The requested budget is \$10,000. This total breaks down as follows:

Contract Overload:

1. Jan Ligon \$5,000.
2. Lionel Scott \$5,000.

Sustainability Plan

As outlined in the Statement of Transformation section, the proposed project will have a lasting impact on GSU students. Since the BSW was first accredited by the Council on Social Work Education in 1981, the Introduction to Social Work course has been offered every fall and spring semester. It will continue to be offered for the foreseeable future. When the project is complete, all sections of the course at both Downtown and Perimeter will have the distinction of being no-cost.

Post-transformation, the course will be continually updated. Because multiple instructors will adopt the same version of the course, they can – and will – efficiently identify and act on ways to improve it, semester by semester. Moreover, this project will provide useful insight, and serve as a good example, for transforming other social work courses to no-cost. The School of Social Work is committed to this pursuit.

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.

Note:

Page 2 has the letter of support from Brian Bride, Director of the School of Social Work.

Page 3 has the letter of support Nancy Kropf, Dean of Perimeter College.



ANDREW YOUNG SCHOOL
OF POLICY STUDIES

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

404-413-1050 TEL
404-413-1075 FAX

www.andrewyoungschool.org

140 Decatur Street, Suite 1243
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Mail:
School of Social Work
P.O. Box 3995
Atlanta, Georgia 30302-3995

March 8, 2020

This letter is to certify that the School of Social Work at Georgia State University supports the development of Introduction to Social Work as a course offered with no cost-materials. The elimination of those costs is particularly beneficial at GSU, given our prevalence of students from low-income families, with almost 60% Pell Grant eligible, and over 50% with federal student loan debt.

The transformed course is fully sustainable. I am very supportive of this project, as is the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies. I am completely confident that an excellent no-cost course will result from their efforts.

I am particularly pleased that the following faculty members will serve as team members for the grant:

Jan Ligon has been our BSW Program Director for many years, has significant online teaching experience, and, four years ago, transformed two upper-level courses to no-cost materials.

Lionel Scott has consistently taught undergraduate social work courses (we also have a graduate program) and has experience in moving one of our required courses, Social Work Research Methods, to a fully online format.

Both professors have been acknowledged for their teaching excellence through various awards at several institutions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. E. Bride'.

Brian E. Bride, Ph.D., M.S.W., M.P.H.
Distinguished University Professor
Director, School of Social Work

3251 Panthersville Rd.
Suite 3200
Decatur, GA 30034

Phone 678-891-2700
Fax 678-891-2710
Web perimeter.gsu.edu



April 1, 2020

Re: Affordable Learning Georgia (ALG) Grant Support Letter

To whom it may concern:

On behalf of Perimeter College, this letter endorses Drs. Ligon and Scott's ALG Grant proposal to transform the "Introduction to Social Work" to no-cost learning materials. This transformation will be very helpful to our students, not only by saving them money but also by improving their academic outcomes. It will also be useful to our instructors who deliver the course.

Though we offer several sections each semester, we do not have regular faculty responsible for its continuous delivery and improvement. Thus, both the Perimeter College students and faculty will benefit from the availability of a high quality, standardized, no-cost version of the course.

As former Director of the GSU School of Social Work, I am very familiar with Drs. Ligon and Scott, so I am confident that they will deliver on their commitment.

I hope to see this proposal move forward and highly recommend it be funded.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nancy P. Kropf".

Nancy P. Kropf, PhD
Dean, Perimeter College
Professor, Social Work



Textbook Transformation Grants, Round Seventeen (Summer 2020 – Summer 2021)

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 17 RFP Page](#).
- The italic text provided below 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, just list the applicant as the submitter.

Title: No-Cost Learning Materials for Introduction to Social Work: A Proposal to Improve the Course for Students in Bachelor's and Associate Degree Programs

Institution(s)	Georgia State University
Applicant Name	Jan Ligon
Applicant Email	jligon@gsu.edu
Applicant Phone #	404 413 1066
Applicant Position/Title	Associate Professor & Undergraduate Program Director
Submitter Name	Scott Jacques
Submitter Email	Sjacques1@gsu.edu
Submitter Phone #	706 296 8707
Submitter Position	Director of AYS Open, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and Criminology

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	Jan Ligon	jligon@gsu.edu
Team Member 2	Lionel Scott	lscottjr@gsu.edu

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

Brian Bride, Distinguished University Professor and Director, School of Social Work

Project Information and Impact Data

Priority Category / Categories	None
Requested Amount of Funding	\$10,000
Course Names and Course Numbers	Introduction to Social Work (SW 2000)
Final Semester of Project	Summer 2021
Total Number of Student Section Enrollments Affected by Project in One Academic Year	662
Average Number of Student Section Enrollments Affected per Summer Semester	0 at GSU-Downtown 30 at GSU-Perimeter (1 section)
Average Number of Student Section Enrollments Affected per Fall Semester	218 at GSU-Downtown (1 section) 149 at GSU-Perimeter (5 sections)
Average Number of Student Section Enrollments Affected per Spring Semester	170 at GSU-Downtown (1 section) 95 at GSU-Perimeter (3 sections)
Original Required Commercial Materials	<i>Social Work: An Empowering Profession, 9th Edition, 2019, DuBois & Miley.</i> ISBN-10: 0134747399 ISBN-13: 978-0134747392 Available at https://www.pearson.com/us/higher-education/program/Du-Bois-Social-Work-An-Empowering-Profession-plus-My-Lab-Helping-Professions-with-Enhanced-Pearson-e-Text-Access-Card-Package-9th-Edition/PGM1767305.html
Average Price of Original Required Materials Per Student Section Enrollment	\$101.32 at publisher website
Average Post-Project Cost Per Student Section Enrollment	\$0
Average Post-Project Savings Per Student Section Enrollment	\$6,097.62
Projected Total Annual Student Savings Per Academic Year	\$67,073.84
Using OpenStax Textbook?	No

Narrative Section

1. Project Goals

This proposal is to transform all Georgia State University (GSU) sections of Introduction to Social Work (SW 2000) to no-cost learning materials. The course is required for all Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) majors, and taken by many other students. It is delivered at GSU's main campus, as part of its BSW program. It is also taught at GSU's Perimeter College, which offers two-year Associate's Degrees. (Note that for brevity, the rest of this proposal refers to GSU's main campus as "Downtown" and Perimeter College as "Perimeter.")

Goal 1 is to eliminate the cost of learning materials for the course, and thereby reduce students' financial burden. As currently taught at both Downtown and Perimeter, the textbook costs just over \$100. This is a substantial sum for any student, but especially ours: almost 60% qualify for a Pell grant, which are only available to students from low-income households. By replacing that textbook with no-cost materials, the proposed transformation will save GSU students about \$67,000 per academic year.

Goal 2 is to increase students' timely access to course materials and thereby improve student success. Due to the cost of textbooks generally, many student forgo purchasing them, or wait too long to do so. This impedes their ability to complete assignments, score well on quizzes/tests, succeed in the course, and, more generally, succeed in higher education (which, of course, affects their post-education life). These student outcomes add up, resulting in higher drop/withdraw/fail (DWF) rates, lower GPAs, lower retention rates, and longer time to graduation. Thus, by bringing the cost of textbooks to zero, the transformation will improve student outcomes.

Goal 3 is to attract more students to the social work profession by removing the first cost unique to it (i.e., not shared by other programs): the textbook for Introduction to Social Work. Students seek out courses with lower textbook costs; in turn, some go on to elect majors that, otherwise, they would not have selected. Georgia needs more social workers, especially in times like these. Their job is to address needs in health, child welfare, aging services, addictions, trauma, among others.

Tying back to this section's beginning, Goal 4 is to standardize the course sections across Downtown and Perimeter. This involves not only adopting the same no-cost materials, but also (1) aligning course goals, objectives and content; (2) create a common course "shell" in iCollege/D2L that is built to be delivered by any modality, e.g. online, hybrid, or seated; and, (3) creating a common course module in iCollege/D2L that, for instance, introduces students to the field and profession of social work, describes the courses that students should take while earning an Associate's degree if they want to earn a BSW at Downtown, introduces them to faculty who can help them learn more about becoming a social worker, all of which is meant to create a "pipeline" for students to transition smoothly to Downtown, should they chose.

Here is the best place to note that though serving Perimeter students is a key motivation for this proposal, a Perimeter faculty member is not a "Team Member" on this proposal, unfortunately. This is only because Perimeter does not have a faculty member who is the dedicated person for delivering Introduction to Social Work. Rather, this responsibility is fulfilled by adjuncts who

come and go. Indeed, for this very reason, the goal (4) to create a no-cost, standardized version of the course is of special importance for it. For further details, please refer to the level of support from the Dean of Perimeter College (who is also a faculty member in GSU's School of Social Work), Nancy Kropf.

2. Statement of Transformation

GSU's School of Social Work is working to reduce the financial woes, both during and after college, of its students. Textbooks and other learning materials are a large part of the cost. Thus, it is essential to transform its courses to no-cost. Already, four of the BSW's required courses are no-cost: Communication Skills for Social Workers (SW 3700); Social Work Methods I (SW 4100); Social Work Methods II (SW 4200); and, Field Education I (SW 4500). (Those transformations were not supported by ALG. If funded, this transformation will be the first funded by ALG for our School.)

Of any course in our curriculum, the most important to transform is Introduction to Social Work. As mentioned above for Goal 1, the course is required for all BSW majors, plus many other students choose to take it as an elective. By far, it serves more students than any other course offered by our School, and is the only social work course offered by both Downtown and Perimeter. Introduction to Social Work is a gateway to becoming a social worker, plus an important way for non-majors to gain appreciation for this profession and their work.

By transforming the course to no-cost, not only will students save up to about \$100 each (see Goal 1), but they should also benefit from greater academic success (see Goal 2), and help usher students to meaningful careers as social workers (see Goal 3). Post-transformation, the no-cost version of the course will be the only one delivered at both Downtown and Perimeter (see Goal 4).

In addition to going no-cost, we will achieve Goals 2, 3, and 4 by delivering Introduction to Social Work in an online, asynchronous format. At both Downtown and Perimeter, it is currently delivered that way. Both of us have substantial experience in developing and delivering such courses, which provide maximum flexibility in the pursuit of a college degree.

Regarding Goals 2 and 3: For students with multiple commitments, such as parenting or work, it can be difficult to attend seated classes. Also, for students who live off campus, especially if outside Atlanta and commuting to Downtown, it takes considerable time and resources (e.g., money for gas and parking; see Goal 1). These factors deter students from attending class, which harms the student outcomes noted previously. A practical way to counter those problems is to offer this course and all materials in an online, asynchronous format.

Regarding Goal 4: The nature of online courses, versus seated ones, makes them easier to share and adopt across instructors, making their delivery more consistent and helping to ensure all students receive the same high quality instruction.

3. Transformation Action Plan

The project team consists of two subject matter experts: Jan Ligon and Lionel Scott. They will have responsibility for undertaking the following tasks. To help, they have many personnel resources at their disposal, including a subject librarian, La Loria Konata; GSU's ALG Champion, Denise Dimsdale; and, experts in GSU's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

For this transformation, we will replace the current for-purchase textbook – used at both Downtown and Perimeter – with texts and other course materials that are free to us and our students (among others). There are three key steps, described below.

Step 1 is to identify and review textbooks for Introduction to Social Work. To do so, we will search amazon.com and chegg.com, which are major providers of university textbooks. For the first ten books listed on each site for each course (excluding those “sponsored” on amazon.com), we will analyze their respective table of contents to identify their 1) major topics, 2) subtopics, and 3) ordering of those. The findings will be used to decide what topics and subtopics to cover in the courses, and in what order. At the same time, we will begin the process of developing the course structure, sequencing, goals, objectives, content, products, and measures.

Step 2 is curating one or more texts for each topic (including its subtopics) in Introduction to Social Work. The texts may be articles, chapters, books, or another type of publication (e.g., legal cases, government reports). To select between texts, we will take into account ALG's evaluation criteria: clarity, comprehensibility, readability, content accuracy and technical accuracy, adaptability, appropriateness, and accessibility. We will only consider texts that are open access (i.e., free to everyone), in the public domain (and thus also free to everyone), or available as unlimited e-versions via the GSU library (e.g., articles available via Galileo). Based on our preliminary evaluation (see next paragraph), we do not think it will be necessary to take advantage of the “fair use” doctrine. However, should that change, USG's Fair Use Checklist will guide our use of texts that are crucial but otherwise unavailable for free to students. Should there be any uncertainty about the fair use of a particular reading, we will consult copyright experts (e.g., GSU's Gwen Spratt) about how to proceed.

As part of step 2, we will extensively evaluate potential no-cost texts to adopt in Introduction to Social Work. To prepare this ALG proposal, we made a preliminary evaluation. The results make us fully confident that we can successfully transform the course to no-cost and achieve our goals. This is despite there being very few open textbooks for the course, with none appropriate to our students (e.g., due to being geared to students in the UK). Otherwise, fortunately, there is a substantial body of solid and very relevant open educational resources that can be used in developing the course. In addition to scholarly text, we will seek out a wide range of educational content, including websites, audio files, videos, and more. With the support of CETL, we will also produce original content in the forms of audio recordings, video productions, PowerPoints, and other materials.

Step 3. The course will be hosted on iCollege. For material that is open access or in the public domain, students will be directed to an external link that hosts the content. For works only available at no-cost via the GSU library, students will be directed to an internal link that can be used to access the text. Should we need to use the fair use doctrine, the work will be uploaded in iCollege, with a clear warning to students that the work is copyrighted and not to be redistributed. As part of step 3, we will consult with CETL to optimize the organization and presentation of texts on iCollege. Among other considerations, this entails deciding how best to integrate and connect each text with other course activities.

With those steps complete, we will make our no-cost content publicly available in the form of LibGuides posted on GSU's website. A LibGuide is a set of webpages that directs users to resources on a particular topic or course subject. LibGuides are typically prepared by librarians and appear as university library webpages. At present, we do not intend to create course materials suitable for sharing on GALILEO Open Learning Materials. Should we create such materials, they will be shared on that website.

4. Quantitative and Qualitative Measures

The transformations' success will be assessed by obtaining and analyzing data bearing on (1) student satisfaction, (2) student performance, and (3) course-level retention.

(1) Student satisfaction will be ascertained with two surveys. Both surveys include quantitative and qualitative components. The first student satisfaction survey is that administered by GSU to evaluate all course sections, every semester. In addition to facilitating within-course comparisons (pre-transformed versus transformed), this survey will allow us to make between-course comparisons. This is because for each course section, GSU automatically compares its averages to other sections of the same course (if more than one), all department course sections, and all college course sections. The survey generates quantitative data by asking students to evaluate each of the following from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree):

- The instructor followed the plan for the course as established in the syllabus.
- The instructor gave assignments relevant to the goals of this course.
- The instructor explained the course grading system clearly.
- The instructor was willing and able to answer students' questions.
- The instructor was receptive to students' and others' opinions. Test questions clearly related to course content.
- The instructor communicates effectively.
- The instructor was well prepared.
- The instructor demonstrated extensive knowledge of the subject.
- The instructor stimulated me to intellectual effort beyond that required by most courses. The instructor's teaching methods aid students in understanding the material.
- The instructor provided helpful feedback on assignments. The instructor was accessible to students outside of class.

- The overall structuring and sequencing of topics in this course facilitated learning.
- Course assignments, including examinations, required creative and original thinking beyond mere memorization of material.
- I am pleased with how much I learned in the course.
- Considering the subject matter of the course, the instructor was effective as a teacher.

Also, students are asked to evaluate from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Superior):

- Considering both the limitations and possibilities of the subject matter and course, how would you rate the overall teaching effectiveness of this instructor?
- What is your overall rating of this course?

Before presenting open-ended questions that prompt qualitative data, students are asked to choose a response category for the following:

- Generally, how many hours per week did you spend outside of class preparing for class? (0-2; 3-4; 4-8; 9-14)
- What is your grade point average at GSU? (4.3-4.00; 3.99-3.75; 3.74-3.00; 2.99-2.50; 2.50-0.00; New GSU Student (No GPA))
- For undergraduates only, which best applies to you? (freshman; sophomore; junior; senior; other)

Finally, qualitative data are produced by asking students to describe “Course strengths”; “Course weaknesses”; “Instructor strengths”; “Instructor weaknesses”; “Suggestions for course improvement”; “Suggestions for instructor improvement”; and, “Comments on classroom environment.”

The second student satisfaction survey is specific to textbooks. In collaboration with CETL, this survey was crafted to reflect the GSU-wide survey (see above) and garner further insight into textbooks. Within each course section, it will be delivered via iCollege during the last week of the course. First, the survey will generate quantitative data by asking students to evaluate each of the following from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree):

- Generally, I think textbooks are too expensive.
- Generally, I think the cost of textbooks is more than I can afford.
- Generally, I think students would do better in college if textbooks were less expensive.

For the pre-transformed courses, students are asked to evaluate the following with the same scale:

- For this class, I think buying the textbook(s) led me to learn more.

For the transformed courses, students are asked to evaluate the following with the same scale:

- For this class, I think I would have learned more if I had to purchase a textbook.

Because students may choose to buy a physical version of free digital textbooks, the following question applies to, and thus will be asked of, students in the pre-transformed and transformed courses:

- For this class, how much did you spend on the textbook(s)?
- For this class, how did you obtain the textbook(s)? (I didn't obtain it; Bought/rented from bookstore; Bought/rented from online seller; Bought/rented from individual you know;

Borrowed from individual you know; Borrowed physical version from library; Free e-version via library website; Free e-version via non-library website; Other, describe.)

(2) Student performance will be determined in two ways. One is through student grades, including not only final grades but also those on specific topics (e.g., modules devoted to policing versus corrections), based on various assessment tools (e.g., quizzes versus discussion posts), at different points in the semester. This information will be available via iCollege, as instructors will solely use it to record grades. In addition, our School is required to collect learning outcome data for the Council on Social Work Education, which accredits our BSW program. Those outcomes will also be used.

The second way we will assess student performance is through a test that will not count toward student grades, but will measure their learning and, unlike the above grades, be developed and delivered in the same way across all four courses involved in the transformation. First, course learning objectives will be mapped to multiple-choice questions. These questions will reflect the essential knowledge that students should “walk away with”. Then at the beginning, midpoint, and conclusion of the course, students will be given the test via iCollege. The results will allow us to measure progressive learning throughout the course, and compare this progression across pre-transformed and transformed versions. Note that to counter testing effects, the questions found on any given test (e.g., that of Jane Doe at midpoint) will be drawn at random from a large question bank.

(3) Course-level retention will be determined with IPORT, which is GSU’s “web-based application that provides access to data stored in the University Data Warehouse” (<https://oie.gsu.edu/decision-support-services-dss/iport/>). For each GSU course section, IPORT has a daily record of how many students dropped it (or added it); the number of students who failed; and, the number of students who withdrew. These are just a few of the variables available via IPORT. We will use others, as appropriate, to better understand the range of factors that shape the effect of textbook costs on DWF rates, in addition to measures of student performance (e.g., mean, median, and mode of final grades).

5. Timeline

May 8, 2020: Notification of award

May 29, 2020, 9am-3pm: Kickoff Meeting

June-July 2020: Compile textbooks and conduct a content analysis of their chapter and section contents, focusing on topic coverage and order in which topics are covered. Also, map learning objectives to multiple-choice questions that reflect the essential knowledge that students should “walk away with” from taking the course.

August-December 2020: Based on findings, decide which topics to cover and in what order; identify, review, and select new reading materials; curate and develop non-reading materials;

upload materials to iCollege. Consult with CETL to optimize organization/presentation of materials on iCollege; consider incorporation of other non-reading materials; and develop/integrate them as appropriate.

January 2021: Begin delivering transformed course; publish LibGuide.

June 2021 and after: Based on findings (see assessment timeline, below), refine course for future semesters.

The following bulleted timeline outlines dates at which course assessment actions will be completed. (For further details, refer back to section on Qualitative and Quantitative Measures.) The Fall 2020 dates are to collect data on the pre-transformed course, and the Spring 2021 dates are to collect data on the transformed course.

- July 2020: Upload tests on the knowledge to “walk away with” for course; put everything in place that will be needed for data entry (e.g., data labels in statistical software program).
- August 2020: At semester start, administer “walk away with” tests; enter results into dataset.
- October 2020: At semester midpoint, administer “walk away with” tests; enter results into dataset.
- December 2020: At semester end, administer “walk away with” tests; provide students with student satisfaction survey that is specific to learning materials; enter those results, those from GSU-wide student satisfaction survey, and information on IPORT into dataset.
- January 2021: Upload tests on the knowledge to “walk away with” for each course; put everything in place that will be needed for data entry (e.g., data labels in statistical software program).
- March 2021: At semester start, administer “walk away with” tests; enter results into dataset.
- May 2021: At semester end, administer “walk away with” tests; provide students with student satisfaction survey that is specific to learning materials; enter those results, those from GSU-wide student satisfaction survey, and information on IPORT into dataset;
- June-July 2021: Analyze data; write and submit final report.

6. Budget

The requested budget is \$10,000. This total breaks down as follows:

Contract Overload:

- | | |
|-----------------|----------|
| 1. Jan Ligon | \$5,000. |
| 2. Lionel Scott | \$5,000. |

7. Sustainability Plan

As outlined in the Statement of Transformation section, the proposed project will have a lasting impact on GSU students. Since the BSW was first accredited by the Council on Social Work Education in 1981, the Introduction to Social Work course has been offered every fall and spring semester. It will continue to be offered for the foreseeable future. When the project is complete, all sections of the course at both Downtown and Perimeter will have the distinction of being no-cost.

Post-transformation, the course will be continually updated. Because multiple instructors will adopt the same version of the course, they can – and will – efficiently identify and act on ways to improve it, semester by semester. Moreover, this project will provide useful insight, and serve as a good example, for transforming other social work courses to no-cost. The School of Social Work is committed to this pursuit.