

Application Details

Manage Application: ALG Textbook Transformation Grant

Award Cycle: Round 4

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

Application Title: 172

Submitter First Name: Kathleen

Submitter Last Name: Barrett

Submitter Title: Lecturer

Submitter Email Address: kbarrett@westga.edu

Submitter Phone Number: 678-839-6504

Submitter Campus Role: Proposal Investigator (Primary or additional)

Applicant First Name: Kathleen

Applicant Last Name: Barrett

Applicant Email Address: kbarrett@westga.edu

Applicant Phone Number: 678-839-6504

Primary Appointment Title: Lecturer

Institution Name(s): University of West Georgia

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

Dr. Kathleen Barrett, Lecturer, Political Science and Planning, University of West Georgia, kbarrett@westga.edu

Brian Jones, Graduate Assistant, Political Science and Planning, University of West Georgia, bjones32@my.westga.edu

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

Dr. Sal Peralta, Chair, Department of Political Science and Planning, University of West Georgia

Proposal Title: 172

Course Names, Course Numbers and Semesters Offered:

American Government, POLS 1101, Fall 2016, Spring 2017

Final Semester of Instruction:	Spring 2017
Average Number of Students per Course Section:	150
Number of Course Sections Affected by Implementation in Academic Year:	4
Total Number of Students Affected by Implementation in Academic Year:	600
List the original course materials for students (including title, whether optional or required, & cost for each item):	Enduring Democracy (With Minhdtap) 4th Edition by Kenneth Dautrich and David A. Yalof, required, \$177.20
Proposal Categories:	No-Cost-to-Students Learning Materials
Requested Amount of Funding:	\$10,000
Original per Student Cost:	\$177.20
Post-Proposal Projected Student Cost:	\$0
Projected Per Student Savings:	\$177.20
Plan for Hosting Materials:	D2L

Project Goals:

This transformation has three goals. First is to transform the current American Government class using readings and resources that are no cost to the student. American Government is a required, entry level course, part of Core Area E. While there is no set text for this course across all sections at University of West Georgia (UWG), the most common textbook provides significant tools for the students but is costly. This places a significant burden on students who are already struggling to pay college costs. This transformation will eliminate this cost for four large (150 person) sections of American Government (two sections for each of two semesters). Consequently the transformation will impact 600 students in the first year for a cost savings of \$106,320. As additional sections begin using the transformed course materials 50 to 150 students per section will no longer need to pay for course materials. Additionally, this course will be available for use by the online American Government Instructors.

Second, this transformation incorporates exercises and tools, comparable to expensive texts such as Enduring Democracy (with Mindtap), that encourage the students to participate in the class. These exercises and tools also allow the instructor to measure the students' progress continually during the semester rather than waiting for a test or exam. This allows the

instructor to intervene with the student as early as possible to student success with this required course.

Finally, this transformation establishes a template for the American Government course that can be copied and used by other American Government instructors at UWG and other schools with access to D2L. The template will include resources for both students and instructors thus providing incentives for its use. Since methods and procedures to keep the content current without major revisions are included in the transformation this will result in a tool that remains both timely and effective. This propagates the use of Affordable Learning materials and reduces course preparation time for the instructors.

Statement of Transformation:

Currently, the American Government classes at UWG use costly texts and resources associated with those texts to encourage students to participate in the class and monitor their progress. This transformation will develop a course and course materials that achieve the same ends but at no cost to the student.

There are three stakeholders in this transformation. The first is the student. American Government is a required course. When the course materials are costly this puts an undue burden on the students who are already struggling with the heavy cost of higher education. Eliminating the cost to the student of the course materials for this required course makes it easier for them to meet the requirements necessary for graduation. Since many of those taking American Government are freshmen and first generation college students this is particularly daunting and frustrating at a time when they are already overwhelmed and scared.

Many of the students taking this course are not interested in politics and do not see its value in their lives. The transformation of this course allows the creation of timely, interesting, and relevant material as well as interactive exercises. An important part of the transformation is development of a process and procedure to ensure that materials are updated each semester. Furthermore, the transformation can include material on Georgia's government which is required by the Georgia Legislature but not included in the commonly used textbooks.

Since this is a required course providing students timely feedback and support is necessary to ensure their success. Transforming this course to include tools for both instructors and students to monitor progress and provide timely interventions, without costly materials, will improve student retention, progress, and graduation (RPG). When students struggle with a course that is required but not in their major, and frequently of no interest to them, they risk becoming frustrated and not completing college. This transformation will help mitigate that risk.

The current use of materials puts a tremendous financial and learning burden on the students. Even if students rent or use ebooks the cost of the books is significant. If the student is struggling to afford school this puts a further financial burden on them. Students with scholarships often have to wait until well into the semester before they have the funding thus reducing their ability to learn from the texts. Those students who rent or use ebooks to save on costs are unable to easily highlight or make notes to facilitate their thinking and recollection. Other students will either spend time hunting a less expensive version of the book, frequently purchasing an older version of the book that is missing material and does not have the current information. Some students choose not to purchase the class materials which makes their

learning harder and, particularly in the case of the American Government text, prevents them in participating in the learning activities. This can also impact their grade, particularly where the instructor bases grades on activities available only through the text.

The second stakeholder is the Political Science department of UWG. This transformation will allow the department to offer a lower cost version of the required American Government class both in the classroom and online. This will allow the department to fulfill both its requirements for the University but also provide outreach for other members of the community.

Instructors within the department will also be impacted because they will not be required to spend time and effort choosing textbooks and other materials for the course as well as dealing with issues at the bookstore. Selecting the appropriate text for a class is time consuming as is incorporating and or creating other materials that correspond with the text. This is complicated when the bookstore either makes finding the text difficult, does not clarify which texts are required by which classes/instructors, or orders incorrect material.

UWG is also a stakeholder in this transformation. As a result of this transformation the University will be able to offer a required course that does not require students to pay for texts or resources. This removes a barrier to student retention, continued progression, and timely graduation. Additionally, by transforming this class with the help of a course designer the ability to ensure student success will be part of the course thus further increasing the likelihood that students will complete college.

Because it is important to student success that the American Government instructors track progress throughout the semester, many instructors are using costly tools provided by publishers. Since American Government is a required course for UWG it is imperative that the Political Science Department support the students in every way possible to be successful in the class to ensure their retention and graduation (RPG). By providing an Affordable Learning option for this class the cost barrier, particularly for non-Political Science majors, is removed. By formatting the class in a way that ensures timely monitoring and intervention by the instructor student retention, progression, and graduation rates increase. Providing tools similar to those provided by publishers (such as Mindtap) used by American Government instructors will allow progress tracking and intervention needed to ensure increased RPG rates.

As the ability of the student to both afford and be successful in the American Government class increases the ability for students to remain in college, progress through their courses, and graduate increases.

Transformation Action Plan:

Action plan:

- * Determine material needed to meet Learning Objectives designated by UWG for American Government.
- * Develop Syllabus outline.
- * Review existing Affordable Learning materials and assess appropriateness to achieve Learning Outcomes designated by UWG for American Government.
- * Identify gaps between existing materials and needs.
- * Identify or develop materials to fill gaps.

- * Identify and develop tools to monitor student progress through the semester.
- * Complete syllabus using Affordable Learning tools.
- * Establish access to materials through D2L.
- o Set up course template to follow syllabus.
- o Establish access to resources, activities, tools associated with each topic in the syllabus.
- * Develop and incorporate success measurements.
- * Develop procedures to review and update materials and resources.
- * Develop appropriate documentation for students and instructors.
- * Develop D2L course template for incorporation into future American Government courses.

Quantitative & Qualitative Measures:

Quantitative Measures

- * Student responses to pre/post test measuring progress against Learning Outcomes
- * Based on responses to an anonymous, ungraded quiz given at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester
- * Questions included will be tied to learning outcomes and affordable materials used during the class
- * The difference between the two tests will demonstrate an increase in student knowledge based on the affordable material
- * Student performance in the class based on grades compared to grades in the same semester and previous semesters that were not based on Affordable Learning materials
- * Particular attention will focus on at-risk students
- * Measures of access of materials
- * Depending on technology available, access to materials by students will be assessed
- * To be considered successful students must be accessing the materials as appropriate for the class
- * Student rating of course and materials
- * At the end of the semester the student is asked to rate, among other aspects, the effectiveness of the class and appropriateness of class materials on a 5 point scale
- * These measures will be used as an indication of student impact from the student's perspective

Qualitative Measures

- * Problems reported by students in accessing materials
- * A problem log will be maintained throughout the semester to track problems encountered by students
- * To be considered successful the students should have minimum problems accessing the materials
- * Problem logs will be used to resolve any common issues and/or complaints logged by students
- * Comments provided in the student's exit survey
- * The student rating survey includes a place for the student to comment on the course

and materials

* These comments will be used to determine the student's assessment of the materials in relation to the course

* Student comments in answer to a question on about the change in their 1)

understanding of government, 2) interest in American Government and Politics, and 3) ability to influence American Government

* Feedback provided by student to an open ended question at the end of the course

* This will provide more detailed information on the student's view of the materials

Timeline:

Note: The bulk of the work will occur during the Summer of 2016. Work prior to that time is preparatory.

October 2015

* Attend Kickoff meeting

January 2016

* Determine types of material needed to meet Learning Objectives designated by UWG for American Government.

February 2016

* Develop Syllabus outline.

March/April 2016

* Review existing Affordable Learning materials and assess appropriateness to achieve Learning Outcomes designated by UWG for American Government.

May 2016

* Identify gaps between existing materials and needs.

* Graduate Assistant training on Learning Technology Methodology

June 2016

* Identify or develop materials to fill gaps (including readings, websites, films, and simulations).

July 2016

* Identify and develop tools to monitor student progress through the semester.

* Complete syllabus using Affordable Learning tools.

* Establish access to materials through D2L.

o Set up course template to follow syllabus.

o Establish access to resources, activities, tools associated with each topic in the syllabus.

o Incorporate success measurements

* Develop D2L template for incorporation into future American Government courses.

August 2016

* Develop procedures to review and update materials and resources.

* Develop appropriate documentation for students and instructors.

* Develop teaching tools (presentations, lecture notes)

Fall 2016

* First two sections

December 2016

* Review metrics

- * Review materials
 - * Make revisions as appropriate
- Spring 2017
- * Second two sections

Budget:

Project Expense:

Travel to Kickoff Meeting \$800

Transformation Expense:

Salary Release Barrett Spring 2016 \$1500

Salary Release Barrett Summer 2016 \$3500

Salary Brian Jones March, April 2016 \$1400

Salary Brian Jones May, June, July, August 2016 \$2800

Total: \$10,000

Sustainability Plan:

Initially this transformation is for multiple sections of American Government by one instructor, although the other American Government instructors will be included in the design and review of the course. Included in the transformation is a template D2L class that can be copied into future sections for use by any and all American Government instructors. This material will also be available as a template for online offerings of the course.

By including a Graduate Assistant trained on the learning technology and involved with the process a resource is available to help and support the efforts of others as they begin using this material. The Graduate Assistant will be available to train other instructors and assistants in the learning technology. The Graduate Assistant will also be able to be able to train other Graduate Assistants in the process to ensure continual updating of the material so it remains timely and relevant. Additionally, graduate assistants will provide support to the instructors as they begin using this material.

There are also two inherent incentives for other instructors to use the course resulting from this transformation. Because the design of the course is based on tying the Affordable Learning materials to the Learning Outcomes for the American Government course it provides a clear and documented link and measure for achieving the Learning Outcomes. This prevents future instructors from having to develop and document those links themselves. Additionally, the availability of the template reduces time spent by instructors in developing and establishing the course in D2L. They will be able to easily copy the course materials into their course, review the materials, and provide any supplements they feel necessary. This allows the instructors more time to spend supporting and interacting with students.

September 4, 2015

Affordable Learning Georgia

To Affordable Learning Committee Members,

I write to you to lend our department's full support to Dr. Kathleen Barrett's transformation of American Government classes. This is an extremely important effort for my department because it will contribute to UWG's effort to increase retention, progression and graduation. Of equal importance, it will save students \$106,320 in the first year with increased earnings as more of our instructors use the transformed course.

American Government is a required course in Core Area E. A majority of the students are freshmen, many first generation college students, and most struggling with college costs. Having to purchase texts for this class puts an added burden and stress on them that jeopardizes their success in the class and, consequently, their ability to remain in college and graduate.

This transformation designs and establishes a D2L based course that replaces expensive textbooks and associated tools with interesting and innovative material and exercise.

This Affordable Learning Transformation grant for American Government benefits students by removing the stress of finding and purchasing resources and providing more interesting and timely material. It benefits both instructors and students by providing tools that track student progress and allow instructors to provide timely interventions thus ensuring student success in the course. It benefits instructors by reducing the time required to find and provide access to class materials and resources thus increasing the time they can spend directly helping students. These benefits apply equally to both classroom and online American Government classes.

As Chair of the Department I am in a position to ensure that this transformation will be both sustainable and applicable to multiple sections of American Government. To ensure that the transformation is sustainable a Graduate Assistant will be assigned work with the American Government Instructors. Part of the responsibilities of the Graduate Assistant assigned to this transformation will be to ensure that future Graduate Assistants understand the workings of the course, are able to keep the material current, and help instructors use the course effectively. These efforts will ensure both the sustainability and dissemination of the transformed course.

I urge you to support and fund this worthwhile and beneficial transformation.



J. Salvador Peralta, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Chair
Department of Political Science
University of West Georgia
Carrollton, GA 30118-2100
jperalta@westga.edu