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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:	Edward Whitelock
Appplication ID:	2585
Application Title:	385
Date Submitted:	09/11/2018 at 3:08 PM

Personal Details

Institution Name(s):	Gordon State College
Applicant First Name:	Craig
Applicant Last Name:	Soaries
Applicant Email Address:	csoaries@gordonstate.edu
Applicant Phone Number:	678-359-5154
Primary Appointment Title:	Assistant Professor of Communication
Submitter First Name:	Edward
Submitter Last Name:	Whitelock
Submitter Email Address:	e_whitelock@gordonstate.edu
Submitter Phone Number:	678-359-5050
Submitter Title:	Department Head of Humanities and Programs in Fine & Performing Arts

Application Details

Proposal Title

385

Final Semester of Project

Fall 2019

Requested Amount of Funding

$10,800.00

Type of Grant

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

Course Title(s)
HUMN 1501 Introduction to Humanities I and HUMN 1502 Introduction to Humanities II

Course Number(s)
HUMN 1501 and HUMN 1502

Team Member 1 Name
Craid Soaries

Team Member 1 Email
csoaries@gordonstate.edu

Team Member 2 Name
Masoud Nourizadeh

Team Member 2 Email
mnourizadeh@gordonstate.edu

Team Member 3 Name
Doug Davis

Team Member 3 Email
ddavis@gordonstate.edu

Team Member 4 Name
Caesar Perkowski

Team Member 4 Email
cperkowski@gordonstate.edu

Additional Team Members (Name and email address for each)

Sponsor Name
C. Jeffery Knighton

Sponsor Title
Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

Sponsor Department
School of Arts & Sciences

Original Required Commercial Materials (title, author, price)
HUMN 1501: Cunningham, Reich, and Fichner-Rathus, Culture & Values, vol. 1 (ISBN 978113952442), $189.50 +
Culture & Values, vol. 1 Mindtap 6 month access, $109.02

or

HUMN 1502: Cunningham, Reich, and Fichner-Rathus, Culture & Values, vol. 2 (ISBN 9781337102667) $189.50 +
Culture & Values, vol. 2 Mindtap 6 month access, $109.02

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

35

Average Number of Sections Affected by Project in One Academic Year

10

Total Number of Students Affected by Project in One Academic Year

350

Average Number of Students Affected per Summer Semester

35

Average Number of Students Affected per Fall Semester

175

Average Number of Students Affected per Spring Semester

140

Original Total Cost per Student

$298.52

Post-Project Cost per Student

$0.00

Post-Project Savings per Student

$298.52

Projected Total Annual Student Savings per Academic Year

$104,482.00

Using OpenStax Textbook?

No

Project Goals

Goal One: Student Savings: The current HUMN 1501/1502 textbook and supplemental publisher web materials cost students nearly $300.00 per course. The first goal of this proposal is to remove that cost by creating an electronic resource archive that instructors will utilize to provide free course content to students.

Goal Two: Student Engagement: Establishing an electronic resource archive of teaching materials for our Humanities courses will allow us to undertake a comprehensive review and revision of the HUMN 1501/1502 courses, increasing student engagement through development of course content representing a broader cultural heritage that reflects our students' own backgrounds and through innovative, interactive use of technology that will be more welcoming than a traditional textbook.

Goal Three: Student Success: The establishment of an electronic resource archive and redesigned course that better reflects our students' own varied cultural heritages will more fully engage students and encourage student success. Our goal is to improve the course's current ABC% of 61% to over 70%.

Statement of Transformation

HUMN 1501 (Introduction to Humanities I) and HUMN 1502 (Introduction to Humanities II) are courses that fit Area C of the core curriculum; they are also courses approved for students with Learning Support requirements in English or Math, who comprise 81% of GSC's fall 2018 enrollment. HUMN 1501 and 1502 were created prior to fall 2010, replacing a single HUMA 1500 (Introduction to Humanities) course. The purpose for the change was to allow for a better historical perspective for the courses, with HUMN 1501 covering the Classical period up to the pre-Renaissance, and HUMN 1502 covering the Renaissance to contemporary times. This change was inspired both by a wish to provide more focus upon particular historical periods and by the major publishers splitting most of their texts into this configuration. After nearly ten years, during which time course ABC% rates have hovered around 60%, the time is ripe to evaluate whether this has been beneficial to our students.

Instructors report particular challenges regarding the current textbook. Many students do not purchase the book and supplemental materials because of their high cost; others stop reading the book because it is written "above their heads." Instructors agree that it is unfair in a class where a significant portion of the students are receiving remedial reading instruction to assign readings from a book that is written in a level beyond where we have yet had a chance to prepare them. Additionally, students have commented negatively upon the Western-centric perspective of the current text, complaining that their own cultural heritages within the Humanities are not given equitable attention. Instructors have acknowledged student concerns noting that, while 40% of the GSC student population is African American (along with 100% of students in our Fort Valley State University / Gordon State College GAP Program, who are all required to take HUMN 1502) the text does not adequately acknowledge their cultural contributions and that it is not uncommon for many students to become disengaged from the course.

In light of the aforementioned sociocultural challenges and adjustments to academic life our students genuinely need a more relevant approach to the study of the Humanities as a discipline at Gordon State College. A major hurdle facing many GSC students is being a first generation college student and not being acquainted with the unique culture, including language, of their new environment. They are expected to assimilate to mainstream college life by exposure to information, lectures, and books that often are beyond their reach upon their initial entry. As Lave and Wenger imply in their seminal work Situated Learning – Legitimate Peripheral Participation, learning involves and engages the whole (total) person. The initial entry must be inviting and encouraging for the new participant to experience full engagement using the new language and rules. They note that "Learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of the community" (Lave & Wenger, 1991:29). To experience such engagement requires full participation in the "discourse community" while feeling welcomed into that community; therefore, learning is not an isolated experience but a reiterative, ongoing experience.

Because of the increasing percentage of nonwhite students at Gordon State College and in our Fort Valley State University GAP Program, the Humanities course requires a highly sensitive, socio-culturally based approach. Not only are most of our students first generation college attendees, but many come from low income homes where the first language of choice is not formal English. Knowing this, it is imperative that we seek the best method to educate and reach students at their level. Therefore, part of the need for grant funds is to create, develop, and design a Humanities course that relates to the diverse backgrounds of the students who populate the classes. White and Lowenthal (2011), in their article "Minority College Students and Tacit 'Codes of Power': Developing Academic Discourses and Identities," poignantly examine and recommend novel approaches to the education of college students. They observe that even though minority enrollment nationwide is ever increasing, the level of retention and graduation is not consistent with the increase. One reason for this phenomenon is the lack of inclusion many students sense along with an absence of "academic literacy." For students of color, this is further complicated by a subliminal fear of rejecting their host culture which is marked by distinctive, unique language and dialectal sets, which are generally not recognized or understood in a mono-cultural academic curriculum.

Students are expected to assimilate and not explore or appreciate multicultural approaches to education. Hence many standard textbooks, such as the currently used Culture & Values volumes, reflect the same. Conversely, L. Dee Fink in his Creating Significant Learning Experiences (An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses) encourages course designers to recognize that students are more inclined to learn and study unfamiliar or complex subject matters when they are made part of the process.

Following upon our research and, as well, upon faculty observation and assessment of the current courses (further described in the Transformation Action Plan), we propose to use the USG Affordable Learning Grant to undertake a comprehensive review and revision of the HUMN 1501 and 1502 courses. We seek to recombine the two historically-framed Western-centric courses into a single course with a thematic, multi-cultural course design. Further, we propose to develop an Electronic Resource Archive that will replace the current high-priced course materials with

free, shared course materials that faculty will build and curate to better reflect our thematic, multi-cultural approach.

Transformation Action Plan

In spring 2018 a group of faculty undertook a comprehensive review of textbooks for the Humanities courses, including open source works. Reviewing the current textbook, the Cengage volumes Culture & Values I and II, it was noted that less than 20% of the text content extended outside of the Western tradition. A review of other publisher's texts, including Experience Humanities vols. 1 and II (McGraw Hill), The Humanities through the Arts (McGraw Hill), and The Art of Being Human (Pearson), revealed this to be a common practice/problem. All of the major publisher textbooks reviewed, as well, were in the $150.00-or-higher price range, not considering electronic supplemental materials.

Reviewing open-sourced texts, the faculty group was in agreement that none met the needs for either improving the course's multi-cultural reach or demonstrating the breadth of the Humanities as a discipline. For instance, CORE: Open Access to the Humanities, a collection of shared articles and teaching materials, was praised for its coverage of American literature and Music history, but was found weak in its offerings of global literature, Art, Philosophy, and Theology. Similarly, Khan Academy's Smarthistory was limited to its presentation of Art. Especially disappointing was Richard Jewell's open textbook Experiencing the Humanities, which, while covering the full scope of the Humanities, did so with only minimal information and no visual illustrations of any sort (one reviewer noted that Wikipedia was superior in both text and illustrations).

In continued discussion, that group of faculty reached a consensus that the best means of addressing our student needs for an accessible guide to the breadth of cultural contributions to the humanities would be to first, comprehensively review and revise the two HUMN 1501/1502 courses, combining them into a single course (as had been so previous to 2008), one that breaks away from the historical perspective (trying to cover a large time period) in favor of immersing students in a problem or theme (such as Love, Faith, or War) that can be explored through multiple cultures as they have engaged with art, music, literature, philosophy, and theology. A revised HUMN 1500 course would introduce the broad humanities in a way that our Art, Music, or Theatre Appreciation courses do: providing students with an introductory foundation for understanding these intellectual pursuits while engaging them via material that reflects the breadth of their assorted cultural heritages and encouraging them to continue explorations of the field in both their continued education and their lives outside of school. Gordon State's students need the ability to move in more than one culture (world) simultaneously. And they need more than one lens to understand and appreciate the development of the Humanities, globally. The awarded funds will not only assist Gordon State in a course redesign but may serve as a cultural template for schools throughout the University System of Georgia.

In support of the new course, we will create an Electronic Resource Archive containing a collection of global materials referencing the visual arts, literature, music, philosophy, and theology, built and curated by faculty to share free learning materials with our students. This will erase the high cost of current course materials while offering new opportunities to connect with and engage our students.

Since the previously recommended text is often rejected by students due to language irrelevance to them, cultural insensitivity, and prohibitive costs, our task is to provide a way to inspire them to learn. The language is at their fingertips and we simply have to connect with the students' social need to belong to our academic discourse community and their familiarity with accessing the internet. One cannot separate language, culture and identity. As students learn to identify with the academic world as inviting and user friendly the topics we want to share with them will be readily received. Our challenge is not just to replace the textbook but the total approach to studying and learning Humanities. To replace a hard cover textbook with links that can be downloaded to phones and computers will be a step in the right direction in an ongoing process of educating our students.

Undeniably all of the students under discussion bring cell phones to school and class with them. It is their pen/pencil, their primary means of communication via social media, and their door to global information and data. Rather than challenge the almost addictive nature of our students' relationship with technology, it is recommended that our team be afforded the opportunity to use this tool as a source of language acquisition and knowledge. It can actually be a key to the redesign of Gordon State's Humanities course, offering easy access to information.

Again, technology is the pen and pencil of this generation and will continue to be. The success of developing an Electronic Resource Archive, covering traditional Humanities topics, will require the inclusion of a diverse database of culturally relevant articles, videos, online books, and other materials deemed appropriate to disseminate information. (There are some very intriguing and unique materials available with a nontraditional edge.) The key is to connect with our students successfully engaging them in our scholarly community in an inviting, rather than intimidating manner.

According to the State Board of Regents' Complete College Georgia report, "By 2025, it is projected that over 60 percent of jobs in Georgia will require some form of a college education, whether a certificate, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree. Today, only 45.3 percent of the state's young adults, its burgeoning workforce, qualify. Georgia's level of higher education attainment is not expected to notably increase in this time period." As endorsed in the Chancellor's College 2025 initiative, we are striving to be more adaptable in our approach to higher education, particularly through seeking cost effective and free educational resources for our students and in rethinking our practices, curriculum, and processes to better enable more students to achieve their goal of earning a college

degree.

References

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L. Dee Fink. (2003). Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/John Wiley & Sons.

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Nasir, N.S., Hand, V. M. (2006). "Exploring sociocultural perspectives on race, culture, and learning. Review of Educational Research, 76(4).

White, J. W. & Lowenthal, P. R. (2011). "Minority college students and tacit 'codes of power': Developing academic discourses and identities." The Review of Higher Education 34(2), 283-318.

White, J. W. (2007). "Sociolinguistic challenges to minority collegiate success: Entering the discourse community of the college." In A. Seidman (Ed.), Minority student retention: The best of Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice (pp. 271-295). Amityville, NY, US: Baywood Publishing Co.

The Gordon State College Team

Dr. Craig Soaries, Assistant Professor of Communication

Ph.D., Linguistic Anthropology & Organizational Management, Case Western Reserve University

M.A., Intercultural Communication, Old Dominion University

M.M., Music, Mercer University

B.A., Interdisciplinary Studies, Ithaca College

For the past thirty-five years Dr. Soaries has traveled, researched and taught domestically and internationally, particularly in the Caribbean, Asia and Africa among marginalized people. He is well versed in online and multimedia instruction and has worked with highly literate as well as semi-literate people.

As a seasoned ethnographer he maintains a meta awareness of students and the classroom. His research and experience focuses on the social significance of the African-American oral tradition and successful communication skills acquisition in mainstream society and institutions. The sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic elements of this course redesign are important and he has the ability to ensure that the critical components needed for success will not be overlooked. He has great success in engaging his classes in interactive learning and is passionate about igniting students with a passion to learn in culturally relevant ways. The end result is aiding students, who might otherwise be left out, acquire the language skills and knowledge necessary for academic success. His approach to curriculum creation is unique as he seeks to include pedagogically overlooked students eager to learn.

Dr. Masoud Nourizadeh, Professor of Art

Ph.D., Fine Arts, Ohio University

M.F.A., Theatre-Directing, Ole Miss University

M.A., Speech & Drama, Arkansas State University

B.F.A., Theatre arts, Arkansas State University

Dr. Nourizadeh comes from Iran (Persia). He studied Persian classical music in Iran and was a member of city of Shiraz's classical symphony. For the past twenty-eight years he has taught courses in humanities, art history, art appreciation, music appreciation, speech, theatre appreciation, acting, dramatic literature, directing, and first-year

college experience. He is proud to say that he is one of the pioneer professors who introduced Africa-American studies at Gordon State College—he developed and taught a colloquium course in history of African-American art.

While teaching and advising students at Gordon State College, his goal is to get students involved in the learning process. He wants to demonstrate to his students that learning is an enjoyable experience. His method of teaching and approaching students show that he is very compassionate about the humanities and the arts, and his aim is to pass this passion to students.

Dr. Doug Davis, Professor of English

Ph.D., Literary and Cultural Studies, Carnegie Mellon University

M.A., English, Temple University

B.A., English, Colgate University

Dr. Doug Davis has taught Humanities 1500, 1501, and 1502 at Gordon State College for the past fifteen years. His fields of expertise include 20th century British and American literature, science and technology studies, Cold War studies, and Georgia author Flannery O'Connor. Dr. Davis is well qualified to serve as a team member on this textbook transformation project. He has long taken a lead in the college's efforts to make innovative use of technology in the classroom. He developed some of Gordon State College's first online courses and served for many years as chair of the college's Instructional Technology committee.

Dr. Davis maintains an active scholarly agenda, guest editing issues of the scholarly journals Configurations and Flannery O'Connor Review and publishing essays in not only those journals but also Southern Quarterly and numerous critical anthologies. Many of Dr. Davis's publications are intended for use in the classroom. He has had articles published in two of the Modern Language Association's prestigious Approaches to Teaching series. He co-edited a collection of essays for high school and college teachers of science fiction, Science Fiction 101 (2014), and co-wrote the textbook for the USG's American Literature ecore course, Writing the Nation (2015), which to date has been downloaded over 4000 times. Most recently, Dr. Davis served as a grant reviewer for the National Endowment for the Humanities, judging submissions for the NEH's Humanities Initiatives for Community Colleges.

Dr. Caesar Perkowski, Associate Professor of English

Ph.D., English, University of Gdansk

M.A., English, University of Gdansk

M.A., Anthropology, Georgia State University

M.A., History, Georgia College & State University

M.Ed., Instructional Technology, Georgia College & State University

B.A., Brigham Young University

Grounded in both European and American higher education, Dr. Perkowski holds several degrees that make him a unique contributor to this course redesign. His background in anthropology, linguistics and history, combined with extensive travel and ethnographic research across the globe, offers a multicultural contribution to the proposal and ensures that a balanced distribution of course materials can be adhered to. On the other hand, Dr. Perkowski's training in English and instructional technology has kept him abreast with current trends in pedagogy in both traditional and online modes. With two decades of teaching under his belt, Dr. Perkowski has worked with students from varied backgrounds; he is, therefore, able to adapt to diverse educational challenges while keeping the focus squarely on increasing student success and engagement in the redesigned course.

Quantitative & Qualitative Measures

We will utilize a collection of both qualitative and quantitative measures to track student satisfaction with the revised HUMN 1500 Introduction to Humanities course and the Electronic Resource Archive.

- We will distribute a qualitative student satisfaction survey in all sections of HUMN 1501 and HUMN 1502 during fall 2018 and spring 2019 addressing course content and materials (current textbook and supplemental materials)
- We will distribute the same qualitative student satisfaction survey in all sections of the new HUMN 1500 during fall 2019 and spring 2020 addressing course content and materials (Electronic Resource Archive)
- We will conduct quantitative analysis of ABC% and D/W/F rates for HUMN 1501 and 1502 during fall 2019 and spring 2020.
- We will conduct quantitative analysis of ABC% and D/W/F rates for the new HUMN 1500 during each following semester starting in fall 2020.
- We will conduct quantitative analysis of longer term student success by tracking a sample of students who have completed the HUMN 1500 course (usually taken in freshman year) and gone on to complete the second Area C core requirement, a 2000-level Literature or Philosophy course (usually taken in sophomore year) through a review of HUMN 1500 objectives as demonstrated (via rubric) by an essay composed for the 2000-level course.
- We will conduct quantitative analysis of further long term student success by tracking a sample of students who have completed the HUMN 1500 course and enrolled in one of GSC's baccalaureate programs through a review of HUMN 1500 objectives as demonstrated (via rubric) by an essay composed in a junior/senior year 3000- or 4000-level course.
- Finally, we will collect qualitative data from teaching faculty through an annual survey of course content and objectives, measuring in particular faculty satisfaction with the materials collected in the Electronic Resource Archive and seeking suggestions for additional resources.

Timeline

Fall Semester 2018:

- October – November: Begin comprehensive examination HUMN 1501 and 1502 courses for revision into HUMN 1500 Design and distribute student and faculty surveysReview and revise course objectivesIdentify recommended areas of thematic focusCreate D2L shell for new course and collected pedagogical materials for instructorsPreliminary work with IT to create space for Electronic Resource Archive

Spring Semester 2019:

- January: Finalize new course proposal (HUMN 1500: Introduction to the Humanities) for submission to Academic Policy Committee
- February – April: Comprehensive work on collecting and creating materials for Electronic Resource Archive
- April – Distribute qualitative surveys to HUMN course faculty and students
- May: Presentation of revised HUMN 1500 course and progress report on Electronic Resource Archive to Humanities and Fine Arts faculty

Summer 2019:

- June – July: Finalization of materials and technical review of all links, etc. in Electronic Resource Archive

Fall Semester 2019:

- August: First sections of HUMN 1500 with Electronic Resource Archive offered.

Budget

HUMN 1500 Course Redesign Team:

- Dr. Craig Soaries Course release: $2,100.00
- Dr. Masoud Nourizadeh Course release: $2,100.00
- Dr. Doug Davis Course release: $2,100.00
- Dr. Caesar Perkowski Course Release: $2,100.00

Total cost for course releases: $8,400.00

Electronic Subscriptions: $1,600.00

Travel: $800.00

Total Estimated Expenses: $10,800.00

Sustainability Plan

The Electronic Resource Archive is a highly sustainable creation that will require ongoing upkeep in terms of both ensuring that all links and materials remain active and accessible while also maintaining relevance by adding new material.

We will establish and maintain a Humanities Course Review Committee of no fewer than three teaching faculty who will be responsible for overseeing the assessment of the course as described above. This committee will also meet regularly to conduct surveys of departmental faculty and/or students, discuss course content, design or acquire new content, and to oversee maintenance and upkeep of the Electronic Resource Archive.

After growing the archive over a period of three to five years, we will undertake a new grant to establish an open textbook based upon the Electronic Resource Archive.

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.

![Gordon State College — A Unit of the University System of Georgia]

September 8, 2018

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

Dear ALG Grant Review Team,

I am pleased to support the enclosed proposal from Dr. Craig Soaries, Dr. Masoud Nourizadeh, and Dr. Doug Davis. As you will see, this group has been working in close association with their department head, Dr. Ed Whitelock, to improve our popular Introduction to the Humanities courses (HUMN 1501 and HUMN 1502) not just by replacing an expensive textbook package but also by re-evaluating the courses to make them more relatable and engaging for our diverse student population. This grant will provide the time for our faculty to complete the work necessary to redesign the course outlines and objectives while creating a comprehensive, free online resource archive for student and faculty use by fall 2019.

This work is being conducted by a team of respected faculty who all teach the Humanities courses while representing a cross-curricular collection of academic fields (Communication, Art, English) and in consultation with faculty across the disciplines. I have no doubt that this work will be worth their efforts and a worthy investment of these grant resources. The Humanities courses contribute significantly to student completion of Area C of the core curriculum and prepare students for the kind of cross-curricular reasoning and critical thinking that is an important touchstone in the chancellor's College 2025 initiative.

Sincerely,

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

Affordable Learning Georgia

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	Dr. Craig Soaries
Applicant Email	csoaries@gordonstate.edu
Applicant Phone #	
Applicant Position/Title	Assistant Professor of Humanities and Communication
Submitter Name	Dr. Edward Whitelock
Submitter Email	e_whitelock@gordonstate.edu
Submitter Phone #	678-359-5050
Submitter Position	Department Head, Humanities and Programs in Fine & Performing Arts

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	Craig Soaries	csoaries@gordonstate.edu
Team Member 2	Masoud Nourizadeh	mnourizadeh@gordonstate.edu
Team Member 3	Doug Davis	ddavis@gordonstate.edu
Team Member 4	Caesar Perkowski	cperkowski@gordonstate.edu
Team Member 5		
Team Member 6		
Team Member 7		
Team Member 8		

If you have any more team members to add, please enter their names and email addresses in the text box below.

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

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

Project Information and Impact Data

Title of Grant Project	*Revising Introduction to the Humanities for Deeper Student Engagement and Broader Success*
Type of Grant	*3.2.2 Specific Core Curriculum Course*
Requested Amount of Funding	$10,800.00
Course Names and Course Numbers	HUMN 1501 Introduction to the Humanities I and HUMN 1502 Introduction to the Humanities II
Final Semester of Project	*Summer 2019*
Average Number of Students Per Course Section Affected by Project	35 students per section
Average Number of Sections Affected by Project in One Academic Year	10 sections offered per year
Total Number of Students Affected by Project in One Academic Year	350 students
Average Number of Students Affected per Summer Semester	*35*
Average Number of Students Affected per Fall Semester	175
Average Number of Students Affected per Spring Semester	140
Title/Author of Original Required Materials	*HUMN 1501: Culture & Values, vol. 1 (ISBN 978113952442) + Culture & Values, vol. 1 Mindtap 6 month access* *or* *HUMN 1502: Culture & Values, vol. 2 (ISBN 9781337102667) + Culture & Values, vol. 2 Mindtap 6 month access*

Original Total Cost Per Student	$189.50 + 109.02 = $298.52 per student
Post-Project Cost Per Student	$0.00
Post-Project Savings Per Student	$298.52
Projected Total Annual Student Savings Per Academic Year	$104,482.00
Using OpenStax Textbook?	No

Narrative Section

1. Project Goals

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Instructors report particular challenges regarding the current textbook. Many students do not purchase the book and supplemental materials because of their high cost; others stop reading the book because it is written "above their heads." Instructors agree that it is unfair in a class where a significant portion of the students are receiving remedial reading instruction to assign readings from a book that is written in a level beyond where we have yet had a chance to prepare them. Additionally, students have commented negatively upon the Western-centric perspective of the current text, complaining that their own cultural heritages within the Humanities are not given equitable attention. Instructors have acknowledged student concerns noting that, while 40% of the GSC student population is African American (along with 100% of students in our Fort Valley State University / Gordon State College GAP Program, who are all required to take HUMN 1502) the text does not adequately acknowledge their cultural contributions and that it is not uncommon for many students to become disengaged from the course.

In light of the aforementioned sociocultural challenges and adjustments to academic life our students genuinely need a more relevant approach to the study of the Humanities as a discipline at Gordon State College. A major hurdle facing many GSC students is being a first generation college student and not being acquainted with the unique culture, including language, of their new environment. They are expected to assimilate to mainstream college life by exposure to information, lectures, and books that often are beyond their reach upon their initial entry. As Lave and Wenger imply in their seminal work *Situated Learning – Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, learning involves and engages the whole (total) person. The initial entry must be inviting and encouraging for the new participant to experience full engagement using the new language and rules. They note that "Learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of the community" (Lave & Wenger, 1991:29). To experience such engagement requires full participation in the "discourse community" while feeling welcomed into that community; therefore, learning is not an isolated experience but a reiterative, ongoing experience.

Because of the increasing percentage of nonwhite students at Gordon State College and in our Fort Valley State University GAP Program, the Humanities course requires a highly sensitive, socio-culturally based approach. Not only are most of our students first generation college attendees, but many come from low income homes where the first language of choice is not formal English. Knowing this, it is imperative that we seek the best method to educate and

reach students at their level. Therefore, part of the need for grant funds is to create, develop, and design a Humanities course that relates to the diverse backgrounds of the students who populate the classes. White and Lowenthal (2011), in their article "Minority College Students and Tacit 'Codes of Power': Developing Academic Discourses and Identities," poignantly examine and recommend novel approaches to the education of college students. They observe that even though minority enrollment nationwide is ever increasing, the level of retention and graduation is *not* consistent with the increase. One reason for this phenomenon is the lack of inclusion many students sense along with an absence of "academic literacy." For students of color, this is further complicated by a subliminal fear of rejecting their host culture which is marked by distinctive, unique language and dialectal sets, which are generally not recognized or understood in a mono-cultural academic curriculum.

Students are expected to assimilate and not explore or appreciate multicultural approaches to education. Hence many standard textbooks, such as the currently used *Culture & Values* volumes, reflect the same. Conversely, L. Dee Fink in his *Creating Significant Learning Experiences (An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses)* encourages course designers to recognize that students are more inclined to learn and study unfamiliar or complex subject matters when they are made part of the process.

Following upon our research and, as well, upon faculty observation and assessment of the current courses (further described in the Transformation Action Plan), we propose to use the USG Affordable Learning Grant to undertake a comprehensive review and revision of the HUMN 1501 and 1502 courses. We seek to recombine the two historically-framed Western-centric courses into a single course with a thematic, multi-cultural course design. Further, we propose to develop an *Electronic Resource Archive* that will replace the current high-priced course materials with free, shared course materials that faculty will build and curate to better reflect our thematic, multi-cultural approach.

3. Transformation Action Plan

In spring 2018 a group of faculty undertook a comprehensive review of textbooks for the Humanities courses, including open source works. Reviewing the current textbook, the Cengage volumes *Culture & Values* I and II, it was noted that less than 20% of the text content extended outside of the Western tradition. A review of other publisher's texts, including *Experience Humanities* vols. 1 and II (McGraw Hill), *The Humanities through the Arts* (McGraw Hill), and *The Art of Being Human* (Pearson), revealed this to be a common practice/problem. All of the major publisher textbooks reviewed, as well, were in the $150.00-or-higher price range, not considering electronic supplemental materials.

Reviewing open-sourced texts, the faculty group was in agreement that none met the needs for either improving the course's multi-cultural reach or demonstrating the breadth of the Humanities as a discipline. For instance, *CORE: Open Access to the Humanities*, a collection of shared articles and teaching materials, was praised for its coverage of American literature and Music history, but was found weak in its offerings of global literature, Art, Philosophy, and

Theology. Similarly, Khan Academy's *Smarthistory* was limited to its presentation of Art. Especially disappointing was Richard Jewell's open textbook *Experiencing the Humanities*, which, while covering the full scope of the Humanities, did so with only minimal information and no visual illustrations of any sort (one reviewer noted that Wikipedia was superior in both text and illustrations).

In continued discussion, that group of faculty reached a consensus that the best means of addressing our student needs for an accessible guide to the breadth of cultural contributions to the humanities would be to first, comprehensively review and revise the two HUMN 1501/1502 courses, combining them into a single course (as had been so previous to 2008), one that breaks away from the historical perspective (trying to cover a large time period) in favor of immersing students in a problem or theme (such as Love, Faith, or War) that can be explored through multiple cultures as they have engaged with art, music, literature, philosophy, and theology. A revised HUMN 1500 course would introduce the broad humanities in a way that our Art, Music, or Theatre Appreciation courses do: providing students with an introductory foundation for understanding these intellectual pursuits while engaging them via material that reflects the breadth of their assorted cultural heritages and encouraging them to continue explorations of the field in both their continued education and their lives outside of school. Gordon State's students need the ability to move in more than one culture (world) simultaneously. And they need more than one lens to understand and appreciate the development of the Humanities, globally.   The awarded funds will not only assist Gordon State in a course redesign but may serve as a cultural template for schools throughout the University System of Georgia.

In support of the new course, we will create an *Electronic Resource Archive* containing a collection of global materials referencing the visual arts, literature, music, philosophy, and theology, built and curated by faculty to share free learning materials with our students. This will erase the high cost of current course materials while offering new opportunities to connect with and engage our students.

Since the previously recommended text is often rejected by students due to language irrelevance to them, cultural insensitivity, and prohibitive costs, our task is to provide a way to inspire them to learn. The language is at their fingertips and we simply have to connect with the students' social need to belong to our academic discourse community and their familiarity with accessing the internet. One cannot separate language, culture and identity. As students learn to identify with the academic world as inviting and user friendly the topics we want to share with them will be readily received. Our challenge is not just to replace the textbook but the total approach to studying and learning Humanities. To replace a hard cover textbook with links that can be downloaded to phones and computers will be a step in the right direction in an ongoing process of educating our students.

Undeniably all of the students under discussion bring cell phones to school and class with them. It is their pen/pencil, their primary means of communication via social media, and their door to global information and data. Rather than challenge the almost addictive nature of our students' relationship with technology, it is recommended that our team be afforded the opportunity to

use this tool as a source of language acquisition and knowledge. It can actually be a key to the redesign of Gordon State's Humanities course, offering easy access to information.

Again, technology is the pen and pencil of this generation and will continue to be. The success of developing an *Electronic Resource Archive*, covering traditional Humanities topics, will require the inclusion of a diverse database of culturally relevant articles, videos, online books, and other materials deemed appropriate to disseminate information. (There are some very intriguing and unique materials available with a nontraditional edge.) The key is to connect with our students successfully engaging them in our scholarly community in an inviting, rather than intimidating manner.

According to the State Board of Regents' *Complete College Georgia* report, "By 2025, it is projected that over 60 percent of jobs in Georgia will require some form of a college education, whether a certificate, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree. Today, only 45.3 percent of the state's young adults, its burgeoning workforce, qualify. Georgia's level of higher education attainment is not expected to notably increase in this time period." As endorsed in the Chancellor's *College 2025* initiative, we are striving to be more adaptable in our approach to higher education, particularly through seeking cost effective and free educational resources for our students and in rethinking our practices, curriculum, and processes to better enable more students to achieve their goal of earning a college degree.

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The Gordon State College Team

Dr. Craig Soaries, Assistant Professor of Communication
Ph.D., Linguistic Anthropology & Organizational Management, Case Western Reserve University
M.A., Intercultural Communication, Old Dominion University
M.M., Music, Mercer University
B.A., Interdisciplinary Studies, Ithaca College

For the past thirty-five years Dr. Soaries has traveled, researched and taught domestically and internationally, particularly in the Caribbean, Asia and Africa among marginalized people. He is well versed in online and multimedia instruction and has worked with highly literate as well as semi-literate people.

As a seasoned ethnographer he maintains a meta awareness of students and the classroom. His research and experience focuses on the social significance of the African-American oral tradition and successful communication skills acquisition in mainstream society and institutions. The sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic elements of this course redesign are important and he has the ability to ensure that the critical components needed for success will not be overlooked. He has great success in engaging his classes in interactive learning and is passionate about igniting students with a passion to learn in culturally relevant ways. The end result is aiding students, who might otherwise be left out, acquire the language skills and knowledge necessary for academic success. His approach to curriculum creation is unique as he seeks to include pedagogically overlooked students eager to learn.

Dr. Masoud Nourizadeh, Professor of Art
Ph.D., Fine Arts, Ohio University
M.F.A., Theatre-Directing, Ole Miss University
M.A., Speech & Drama, Arkansas State University
B.F.A., Theatre arts, Arkansas State University

Dr. Nourizadeh comes from Iran (Persia). He studied Persian classical music in Iran and was a member of city of Shiraz's classical symphony. For the past twenty-eight years he has taught courses in humanities, art history, art appreciation, music appreciation, speech, theatre appreciation, acting, dramatic literature, directing, and first-year college experience. He is proud to say that he is one of the pioneer professors who introduced Africa-American studies at Gordon State College—he developed and taught a colloquium course in history of African-American art.

While teaching and advising students at Gordon State College, his goal is to get students involved in the learning process. He wants to demonstrate to his students that learning is an enjoyable experience. His method of teaching and approaching students show that he is very compassionate about the humanities and the arts, and his aim is to pass this passion to students.

Dr. Doug Davis, Professor of English
Ph.D., Literary and Cultural Studies, Carnegie Mellon University
M.A., English, Temple University
B.A., English, Colgate University

Dr. Doug Davis has taught Humanities 1500, 1501, and 1502 at Gordon State College for the past fifteen years. His fields of expertise include 20th century British and American literature, science and technology studies, Cold War studies, and Georgia author Flannery O'Connor. Dr. Davis is well qualified to serve as a team member on this textbook transformation project. He has long taken a lead in the college's efforts to make innovative use of technology in the classroom. He developed some of Gordon State College's first online courses and served for many years as chair of the college's Instructional Technology committee.

Dr. Davis maintains an active scholarly agenda, guest editing issues of the scholarly journals Configurations and Flannery O'Connor Review and publishing essays in not only those journals but also Southern Quarterly and numerous critical anthologies. Many of Dr. Davis's publications are intended for use in the classroom. He has had articles published in two of the Modern Language Association's prestigious Approaches to Teaching series. He co-edited a collection of essays for high school and college teachers of science fiction, Science Fiction 101 (2014), and co-wrote the textbook for the USG's American Literature ecore course, Writing the Nation (2015), which to date has been downloaded over 4000 times. Most recently, Dr. Davis served as a grant reviewer for the National Endowment for the Humanities, judging submissions for the NEH's Humanities Initiatives for Community Colleges.

Dr. Caesar Perkowski, Associate Professor of English
Ph.D., English, University of Gdansk
M.A., English, University of Gdansk
M.A., Anthropology, Georgia State University
M.A., History, Georgia College & State University
M.Ed., Instructional Technology, Georgia College & State University
B.A., Brigham Young University

Grounded in both European and American higher education, Dr. Perkowski holds several degrees that make him a unique contributor to this course redesign. His background in anthropology, linguistics and history, combined with extensive travel and ethnographic research

across the globe, offers a multicultural contribution to the proposal and ensures that a balanced distribution of course materials can be adhered to. On the other hand, Dr. Perkowski's training in English and instructional technology has kept him abreast with current trends in pedagogy in both traditional and online modes. With two decades of teaching under his belt, Dr. Perkowski has worked with students from varied backgrounds; he is, therefore, able to adapt to diverse educational challenges while keeping the focus squarely on increasing student success and engagement in the redesigned course.

4. Quantitative and Qualitative Measures

We will utilize a collection of both qualitative and quantitative measures to track student satisfaction with the revised HUMN 1500 Introduction to Humanities course and the Electronic Resource Archive.

- We will distribute a qualitative student satisfaction survey in all sections of HUMN 1501 and HUMN 1502 during fall 2018 and spring 2019 addressing course content and materials (current textbook and supplemental materials)
- We will distribute the same qualitative student satisfaction survey in all sections of the new HUMN 1500 during fall 2019 and spring 2020 addressing course content and materials (Electronic Resource Archive)
- We will conduct quantitative analysis of ABC% and D/W/F rates for HUMN 1501 and 1502 during fall 2019 and spring 2020.
- We will conduct quantitative analysis of ABC% and D/W/F rates for the new HUMN 1500 during each following semester starting in fall 2020.
- We will conduct quantitative analysis of longer term student success by tracking a sample of students who have completed the HUMN 1500 course (usually taken in freshman year) and gone on to complete the second Area C core requirement, a 2000-level Literature or Philosophy course (usually taken in sophomore year) through a review of HUMN 1500 objectives as demonstrated (via rubric) by an essay composed for the 2000-level course.
- We will conduct quantitative analysis of further long term student success by tracking a sample of students who have completed the HUMN 1500 course and enrolled in one of GSC's baccalaureate programs through a review of HUMN 1500 objectives as demonstrated (via rubric) by an essay composed in a junior/senior year 3000- or 4000-level course.
- Finally, we will collect qualitative data from teaching faculty through an annual survey of course content and objectives, measuring in particular faculty satisfaction with the materials collected in the *Electronic Resource Archive* and seeking suggestions for additional resources.

5. Timeline
Fall Semester 2018:

- *October – November*: Begin comprehensive examination HUMN 1501 and 1502 courses for revision into HUMN 1500
  - Design and distribute student and faculty surveys
  - Review and revise course objectives
  - Identify recommended areas of thematic focus
  - Create D2L shell for new course and collected pedagogical materials for instructors
  - Preliminary work with IT to create space for Electronic Resource Archive

Spring Semester 2019:

- *January:* Finalize new course proposal (HUMN 1500: Introduction to the Humanities) for submission to Academic Policy Committee
- *February – April:* Comprehensive work on collecting and creating materials for Electronic Resource Archive
- *April* – Distribute qualitative surveys to HUMN course faculty and students
- *May:* Presentation of revised HUMN 1500 course and progress report on Electronic Resource Archive to Humanities and Fine Arts faculty

Summer 2019:

- *June – July:* Finalization of materials and technical review of all links, etc. in Electronic Resource Archive

Fall Semester 2019:

- *August*: First sections of HUMN 1500 with Electronic Resource Archive offered.

6. Budget
HUMN 1500 Course Redesign Team:

- Dr. Craig Soaries
  - Course release: $2,100.00
- Dr. Masoud Nourizadeh
  - Course release: $2,100.00
- Dr. Doug Davis
  - Course release: $2,100.00
- Dr. Caesar Perkowski
  - Course Release: $2,100.00

  Total cost for course releases: $8,400.00

  Electronic Subscriptions: $1,600.00

  Travel: $800.00

Total Estimated Expenses: $10,800.00

7. Sustainability Plan

The *Electronic Resource Archive* is a highly sustainable creation that will require ongoing upkeep in terms of both ensuring that all links and materials remain active and accessible while also maintaining relevance by adding new material.

We will establish and maintain a Humanities Course Review Committee of no fewer than three teaching faculty who will be responsible for overseeing the assessment of the course as described above. This committee will also meet regularly to conduct surveys of departmental faculty and/or students, discuss course content, design or acquire new content, and to oversee maintenance and upkeep of the *Electronic Resource Archive*.

After growing the archive over a period of three to five years, we will undertake a new grant to establish an open textbook based upon the *Electronic Resource Archive*.

Note: Letter of Support

Dr. C. Jeffrey Knighton, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, has composed a letter of support for this grant proposal. It is attached with the application.