

Name of Principle Investigator: Dean Hendrix

Project Title: The E-Textbook Opportunity: The Time is Now for SUNY, Phase 2

1. Please consider the original timeline and deliverable targets. How is your project progressing compared with the original estimates?

For certain aspects of the project, we ran a few weeks behind, but the main deliverable, e-textbook access, was provided to students and faculty before the start of the spring semester. We will not have any problems meeting targets for the second half of the project as the majority of work occurred in the Fall 2013.

The aspects that were on-time included identifying intracampus partners and getting their buy-in; identifying common classes; hosting vendor demonstrations; working with CourseSmart on unique campus issues related to distribution, LMS integration, faculty training, accessibility, and student privacy; and implementation of e-textbooks into the LMS at three campuses.

The aspects that ran behind included identifying common textbooks; getting faculty buy-in; negotiating and signing contracts that worked for the business officers at three campuses; creating assessment tools.

2. How is spending progressing when compared with the original budget estimates?

Spending is progressing in line with our original budget estimates. In fact, we are going over budget for licensing e-textbook content to accommodate a large class in UB's nursing school. The overage is being covered by the UB Libraries.

3. Please provide feedback regarding your experience with the project execution. In particular, any issues or roadblocks you've encountered that may have been unexpected.

The only issue that was completely unexpected was the amount of participating students to leverage discounts. We qualified for the smallest discount (5% off the online price) due to the number of students served by our pilot. It must be noted that the online price is already heavily discounted (ranging from 42%-68% off the new print price).

The following general issues were expected, however, the specifics of each issue posed campus-specific challenges. These included:

- Compliance with accessibility policy and contact with local accessibility offices
- Compliance with local computing and student privacy policies

- Intercampus negotiations when presented with boilerplate contracts with unacceptable terms
 - The process of identifying textbooks used on campuses
 - The difficulty of identifying common textbooks with faculty willing to participate across the three participating campuses
 - Getting institutional approval to collect grade data
 - Getting participating faculty to allow the collection of grade data
4. What are your positive observations or pleasant surprises about your team's interaction or project process that might would be helpful to other PI's?

There were several positive observations regarding this working within this team:

- Early and regular communications (starting in September, talking/emailing every 2 weeks on average) between the three participating schools has made this process easier and manageable.
- The three schools coalesced quickly around one vendor, CourseSmart.
- Even with three disparate Learning Management Systems (Blackboard, Angel and Moodle), integration of CourseSmart's building blocks were relatively hassle-free and easy.
- All three schools involved IT staff and procurement staff early in the process.
- We knew each other from last year's pilot, so things progressed much smoother (i.e., less time devoted to implementation than last year).

5. Please describe any challenges you've encountered working with your project team that you've found solutions for that might be helpful to other PI's.

The challenge of getting busy professionals together at multiple institutions is a logistical challenge. To mitigate this, we ended every phone call by scheduling future phone calls. Do not leave scheduling to email. This challenge is magnified when you are involving multiple departments at the various campuses. It is helpful to involve your intracampus partners as early as possible. Include your campus partners on emails. Over communication is better than under communication. This includes IT staff, faculty, procurement staff, budget officers, and other relevant campus staff.

Another challenge for our group was the lack of the collaborative work tools available through SUNY. This would include shared storage and screen sharing software. To create a more robust virtual workspace, our group relied on third party tools such as Google Docs. We never employed screen sharing software though it would be helpful.

IRBs at the participating institutions have different requirements as this project's data needs have escalated (e.g., grade data).