

Name of Principle Investigator: Roberta (Robin) Sullivan

Project Title: Tools of Engagement Project (TOEP): On-demand Discovery Learning Professional Development (Phase 2)

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

The project website can be accessed at: <http://suny.edu/toep>.

The TOEP Phase 2 project was introduced to campuses at the times projected in the project's proposal. A recruitment rollout for Phase 2 registration began on 10/31/14. To be eligible for first- and second-place award incentives, faculty and staff must have registered no later than 1/31/14, completing Discovery Exercises by 3/3/14. The deadline to complete activities was adjusted from the prior year's project, to make it more compatible with the 13-14 FY IITG timeline. This timeline continues to be a continuing implementation concern, relevant to the academic calendar and its impact on participants' work flow.

Three enhancements have been added to this round of implementation, consistent with the proposal:

- TOEP Google + Community: We have built a learning community that provides a common focus and publishing platform for all participants. This is a significant revision from the Phase 1 individual participant blogs. It is gaining momentum, as participants register for the project and post updates about their progress, and as Fellows, participants, and Co-PIs mentor each other.
- Badging System: Participants may request badges as recognition of their accomplishments in project discovery learning activities.
- TOEP Fellows: In addition to the project Steering Team, each of the 10 partnering campuses has an in-place implementation team of one to three Fellows. With campus "Leads" and Co-PIs, these faculty and staff leaders assist in spreading the word for recruitment, as well as in mentoring locally and via our Google+ Community. A total of 28 Fellows are involved, along with 7 Co-PIs.

A number of face-to-face workshops/events have been conducted across partner campuses (e.g., Buffalo, 21; Cortland, 11; Fredonia, 5). Virtual introductory sessions were also conducted with two of the campuses that do not have a team member from Phase 1 in residence on their campus. These sessions have received positive feedback, and have resulted in solid participant start-up in the project.

Sample statistics as of 1/31/14 (the deadline to register to be eligible for 1st and 2nd place incentives) include the following:

- 302 = Registrations
- 199 = Community members
- 183 = Badges earned

The TOEP site has been visited ~3000 times by more than 1500 unique visitors. On average, these visitors have looked at 3 to 4 pages on each visit, and have spent about 6 to 7 minutes per visit. There were 500+ unique visitors to the TOEP site just during the month of December. The majority of site visitors are in New York, but hits some other states and international traffic have been tracked. Mobile devices - including smartphones and tablets - have accounted for 10% of the site's web traffic.

Outreach on all 10 campuses has proceeded, to both recruit participation and to mentor faculty/staff as they learn about/use web tools to support learning. These efforts have used materials that have exceeded promised products in the proposal. Links to some of these materials are as follows:

- TOEP Phase 2 - Press release & recruitment announcements. Variations were sent out through the different TOEP campuses to announce the project and advertise introductory seminars and workshops.
 - https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nswTXBCdDta-rTVPUBxTw75rhsRRbLX8A8upxxUhc_s/edit?usp=sharing
- TOEP Fellow Duties: Mentor/Coach Role & Responsibilities.
 - http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Ftinyurl.com%2FTOEPfellow&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNEvZynaklAUPx_X4KBKAVWjn9TWsw
- Short video to introduce the project, linked to from the TOEP homepage.
 - <https://www.google.com/url?q=https%3A%2F%2Fsites.google.com%2Fsite%2Fsunytoep%2F&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNFBTzGdpBogKPF4v-LtdDNhDslZWQ>
- Presentation to introduce TOEP, linked from project homepage (also used for marketing and in many of the introductory face-to-face campus sessions).
 - <http://prezi.com/zmkup2glyufr/tools-of-engagement-project-toep/>
- Additional recruitment materials: Generic posters; take-away postcards; campus-specific posters, Animotos, etc. (e.g., poster example from Cortland, and Animotos from Buffalo State and Fredonia).
 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9itBASxXf3raEFxUjlnNGgyYkk/edit?usp=sharing>
 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3K3KeiLarV1eEd0aDZiR3VLdU0/edit?usp=sharing>
 - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3K3KeiLarV1eEd0aDZiR3VLdU0/edit?usp=sharing>
 - <http://animoto.com/play/RgcqBVU9Kp1PGX0Fh4A50A>
 - <http://animoto.com/play/n0ezm1WwP2v3L5hOhNb66w>

Email announcements, distributed through campus listservs, and used in targeted campus outreach.

Statewide and international outreach has included:

- Proposal to CIT (currently under review), to report on both the final dissemination platform and impacts.
 - <https://www.hetl.org/events/2014-anchorage-conference/>

Accepted presentation at the International Higher Education Teaching and Learning Conference, May 2014.

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

We are generally on-target with expenditures.

We have put into place a mechanism for “pushing” the stipend funding for each campus directly to the campus. As of 1/31, stipends for Fellows have been processed and distributed to the 10 TOEP participating campuses.

Despite this year’s significant efforts to ensure less time-consuming funds expenditures, it is still difficult for individual campuses to use the funds conveniently/directly. For example, a duplicating center on one campus could not charge the printing cost of posters/postcards. Such a seemingly minor but critical matter produced significant PI and Co-PI time and energy.

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 work involved in getting TOEP to its current status has been more significant than anticipated, for a few reasons:

- An aspect of providing support for emerging technologies is simply the constant evolution in both tools and information about their use. This has required ongoing updating of our materials, even though TOEP focuses on teaching and learning, instead of focusing exclusively on tools (e.g., photo sharing, social bookmarking, and presentations). We have also added material to more directly address teaching/learning in each tool area, as well as information on (a) mobile access, and (b) use of learning theory. If faculty can become familiar with the principles behind the tools, they may more easily be able to adapt when one tool falls out of favor and another takes its place, or when their teaching needs dictate changes. TOEP stresses that an important skill for both faculty and students is to become a self-directed and lifelong learner who is able to search out tools, support, and information to effectively use the tools to communicate, collaborate, curate, and learn.
- An ongoing challenge has been scheduling of work, meetings, and communication (both asynchronous and synchronous). With both faculty and

staff on the project team, we have experienced challenges both in terms of daily schedules and also the ebb and flow of the academic vs. 12-month calendar. Although we reported these challenges in Round 1, this effort - with the 10-campus involvement - has grown.

- As reported in Round 1, the overall effort to meet project goals is not commensurate with the level of grant funding. Thus, it is essential that local campuses recognize the level of effort needed and delivered, in these projects. Without sufficient grant funding to support substantial extra service or course releases, the support of local supervisors is critical.

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?

The team has worked well together, using exclusively virtual communication. All project files (e.g., project timelines, agendas, meeting notes, the final project website) have been built using collaborative online tools such as those being introduced to participants through the Tools of Engagement Project (TOEP).

The opportunity to work with faculty and staff who are not on our individual campuses has been generally positive. We are finding a fair amount of commonality in needs and services on the 10 TOEP campuses. This has reinforced our belief in the need for a project like ours, to extend affordable options.

The mix of teaching faculty and staff (including instructional designers) in the project extends opportunities for participants to benefit from each other's strengths. We are finding that both tech-savviness and pedagogy experience are essential to making the experience work both from the delivery and participant ends.

TOEP Fellows are playing a critical role in recruiting and mentoring participants across the 10 TOEP campuses. There is an average of 3 Fellows at each campus, with an additional PI at 7 of the campuses. In addition to campus impact, many of the Fellows and Co-PIs have been instrumental in supporting valuable exchanges in our Google+ Community, where campus "identities" virtually disappear. In addition, many Fellows serve as direct supports to faculty and staff, as they encounter challenges both on campus and virtually.

Diligence, patience, and persistence are critical to the progress of projects such as ours, involving both faculty and staff from multiple campuses. Regardless of the challenges, the frequency of grant meetings, and demands of communication through multiple channels, the results of this collaborative effort have been substantive.

Additional outreach from IITG has been helpful. For example, information on the recent NSF workshop was a valuable resource communicated through the IITG network. The PI and a Co-PI were able to take advantage of this opportunity.

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 IITG process continues to be a great learning opportunity for everyone involved. One of the main principles of TOEP is to promote lifelong learning skills to allow participants to master the changing needs of instructional technologies, and to seek out the information and resources as needed. The TOEP team regularly practices what we preach, as we move forward on the project's timeline. Highlights of the challenges that we have experienced follow.

Operations across the multiple facets of the project require constant attention. Growing from 5 to 10 campuses has been an operational challenge, especially given the addition of our Fellows structure. In addition, we have been working toward a more distributed leadership model, which requires both a changed mindset and "staying power" among the project's leadership team. With our new components, there have been increasing demands for daily attention to the operations, including especially (a) admissions to the private Google+ Community; (b) mentoring in the Google+ Community; and (c) processing badges.

Scheduling meetings and asynchronous work on products has been a continuing challenge. Because of everyone's already stretched commitments and priorities, we have struggled with identifying common synchronous meeting times. This is continuing to help us get better at making the most of asynchronous communication strategies.

Another obstacle has been that nuances of the grant administration process are new to some members of the team, especially with respect to budgetary needs. This has been exacerbated by the stepping down of the TOEP Administrative Assistant, and the Administrative Secretary in the PI's department once again being in a transition. Therefore, no secretarial staff has been available who have been able to take on the administrative responsibilities relating to budget management. This has resulted in the PI continuing to manage both the budget and other administrative tasks, with little guidance or assistance. Thankfully, resourcefulness and the ability to reach out and ask questions as needed have resulted in getting answers to needs that arise. Moving forward into the second half of TOEP Phase 2 should be somewhat easier, since departmental resources from the PI's local campus have been designated to provide some assistance.

IRB needs have also been a continuous learning process. It would be beneficial if the IITG central staff could provide more guidance on this matter to applicants.