**Student Technology Fee – AY 2018**

**Tech Initiatives Proposal Form**

*DUE April 2, 2018 (Students)*  
*DUE April 4, 2018 (Employees)*

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**Project Title:** ALTERNATIVE DIGITAL TEXTBOOKS PHASE 3

**Department/Organization:** Academic Technology & User Services

**Project Applicant(s):**

**Principal Contact**

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**Others**

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**Amount Requested for Project**

**Proposed Budget:**

1. Equipment total  
2. Plus site preparation (*not* STF funded) + $  
3. Total Project Cost (spreadsheet total from part III of this form, Total Project Budget) = $  
4. Less organization's contribution – $  
5. Less site preparation – $  
6. **STF Grant Request** = $ 15,000

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**IMPORTANT NOTE**

1. THE STF Committee will accept only *complete* proposals by the announced deadline. Every section (I–VIII) and all items of this proposal format must be addressed.

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**I. Relationship to STF Objectives / Impact on Current Academic Programs**

The STF Committee will use as its *primary assessment criteria* the three objectives—**quality, access, and integration**—defined in the STF mission (above). Given this criteria, describe your proposed project in detail.

1. Tell us—focusing on what the students would gain from the project—how the project would provide positive benefits to specific courses or instructional programs. Specifically, answer at least one of a, b, and c below:

   a. How would this project *broaden or enhance the quality* of the student’s academic experience through the proposed technology?
One of the most significant obstacles facing students today is the cost of a higher education. Since 2006 the cost of textbooks has increased over 82%, nearly three times the rate of inflation over that same period of time. For the 2017-2018 academic year the average student is looking at textbook costs in excess of $1,220 (where a single textbook can cost over $200) for both two- and four-year institutions. (see Footnote 5)

A 2013 U.S. Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) study found that not only did high textbook costs keep students from buying the required materials for their classes (despite the potential for a negative impact on grades), it also had a ripple effect on other academic decisions. Nearly half reported the cost of books had impacted how many or which classes they took in a given term. A decision such as this can impact the scope of their academic experience and has the potential to significantly lengthen the duration of their college careers leading to increased student debt. (See Footnote 1). Additionally, 65% of students surveyed reported they had decided against buying a particular textbook due to cost and 94% of those students were concerned about the impact that decision would have on their grades.

The Alternative Digital Textbook Project (ADTP) is designed to dramatically decrease textbook costs to students by supporting the adoption of digital alternatives for selected WWU courses. This project is modeled after an STF-funded program at the Tacoma Community College (TCC) which saved students over $1 million in just two years. (See Footnote 2)

### b. How would this project provide additional student access to technological resources?

The mission of the alternative text project is to increase access to course text materials while decreasing cost to students. One of the advantages of this process is the ongoing and escalating savings from year-to-year. Last year, this program saved WWU students approximately $175,000, with each subsequent year extending the savings. Because we have the expectation that the alternative textbook materials will be used for at least three years, total savings from this project would be $525,000 for Western students during that time. Phase three of this project could potentially save students an additional $165,000 per year.

Funding of phase three is essential in our effort to increase adoption of low-cost or free student materials in courses and establish the groundwork for a self-sustaining model. The funding will be used to support faculty for revising their courses as well as preparing accessible digital materials provided by ATUS and the WWU Library.

The requested funding will be used to finalize incorporation of the alternative text project into the existing, highly successful, professional development program offered to our faculty through the Center for Instructional Innovation and Assessment (CIIA). In the current program, faculty apply to participate in a week-long workshop where they re-design their courses, adopting new instructional strategies and current technologies. Faculty receive a grant for making these technology-related enhancements to their courses. This program has been very popular, attracting dozens of Western faculty each year who want to change the way they teach. For the past two years, the program has piloted Alternative Digital Textbooks with a focus on adopting free or licensed digital materials in order to replace existing and costly textbooks. The adoption of Open Educational Resources (OERs) is a significant part of the program. The Student Technology Fee Proposal Guidelines stipulate that electronic information resources fall within the definition of technology and can be considered for funding. (See Footnote 4)
Assistance in preparing accessible digital materials will be provided by Academic Technology & User Services (ATUS) and Library personnel, in kind, as a part of our existing services. (See Footnote 3)

We have already conducted a request for proposals from faculty and received over ten applications for the Alternative Digital Textbook Phase 3 project. For this granting period, we are recommending awards to the three participants with the greatest potential to impact the largest number of students.

Footnotes:


3 Faculty Development Summer Grant, accessed 03/15/2018, http://cii.wwu.edu/cii/award/


c. How would this project increase integration of technology into coursework?

The primary method of delivery for alternative textbooks and OER are a combination of desktop and mobile devices. We believe the adoption of alternative textbooks and OER will drive increased utilization of digital devices and WWU resources available in classrooms, labs, and the loan pools. These digital materials will be selected or designed to take advantage of features such as easy searching of content, portability on multiple devices, highlighting, and multiple, accessible modalities such as text-to-speech.

2. Would other departments be involved with this project?

   No ☐  Yes ☒  If yes, describe.

Because the project requires participation of instructors to create materials to be used in their classes, there will need to be the approval of the various department heads for the use of the Alternative Digital Textbooks and OER. Every application for the grant is approved by the appropriate department chair. In addition to ATUS, the Library will be providing consulting and assistance to the faculty in the design and preparation of accessible course materials.

3. Has any part of this project previously been funded by the Student Technology Fee?

   No ☐  Yes ☒  If yes, describe.
Last year, this project was funded for the second phase of the Alternative Digital Textbook track of the CIIA faculty development program. We had five participants (three of them funded by Student Technology fees) with all of them delivering their content for their 2017-2018 classes. Participants of last year’s program had the following words to say about their projects and the Alternative Digital Textbook track:

“After the valuable summer session, I was able to replace one of my two textbooks with a free, online textbook. Providing a free text is important to me for two reasons: textbooks are so expensive (and coupled with the skyrocketing cost of higher education, I wanted to reduce costs to students in this way) and since my class is fully online I thought an online text would be preferred.”

“The integration of thinking about instructional design and pedagogy alongside what digital technology offers. I spend heaps of time working through pedagogy questions and this workshop, instead of merely introducing possibilities afforded by tech, helped me reformulate questions regarding instructional design. In that way, we focused on students first and technology second.”

"I think the alternative textbook summer grant should be repeated. The whole experience was very informative and beneficial and it allowed me to network with other faculty and develop innovative approaches to teaching that I would have never considered on my own or simply working within my department."

4. Is the proposed project a pilot project?

[ ] No  ☒ Yes  

If yes, describe.

This proposal would support the final phase of incorporating the alternative textbook track as an on-going part of the Faculty Summer Grant program. Established data from the pilot can be used as a basis for permanent funding.

For this Alternative Digital Textbook project, we would continue to review overall cost savings and conduct a formal assessment of the program for quality instruction, access to digital materials, and technology integration.

II. Utilization

List the anticipated number of times and duration per each use—per quarter or per academic year—that students would use the proposed technology. The committee is looking for total student hours and total number of unique students who would use the technology in that period. Explain how you arrived at this utilization.

While the Alternative Digital Textbook project benefits students by saving them money, the program has many other advantages. Through the professional development program, faculty redesign their courses while incorporating new digital materials. The central goal for the redesign process is to make quality improvements to these courses. Because the instructional materials will be free or low cost and in widely accessible digital formats, all students of the selected courses will have the ability to use the digital copies of these materials.

By delivering accessible, free materials to all students, a WWU education can be provided more equitably. For those students who do not have access to digital devices for downloading these materials, WWU provides a significant number of computers and devices
for them to use that are available for on-campus use or checkout. For those students who still wish to read from printed materials, inexpensive printing options will be available.

Since an alternative digital textbook need not adhere to the traditional model of a what defines a printed textbook, these materials can also leverage various types of media, thereby providing opportunities for greater student engagement through audio, video, and interactive Web content.

Based on the top three applicants for this coming academic year and annual course enrollments where alternative textbooks are planned, approximately 1200 students will benefit. These alternative textbooks will be the primary textbook materials for these classes.

III. Project Budget

This section details the estimated total cost of the project. Include costs that would be covered—by your department or another source—for ongoing costs such as personnel or operating expenses.

1. For assistance in preparing your budget, please consult with relevant campus support departments (Academic Technology & User Services, Budget Office, Purchasing, Space Administration, etc.).

2. For more information about these contacts and helpful tools/links: from the STF website home page (http://www.wwu.edu/stf), choose “STF Tech Initiatives” on sidebar, then section “II. Tech Initiatives Instructions and Forms.”

Attach an Excel spreadsheet if you have additional details.

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<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Item Cost</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>12000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefit costs for the faculty</td>
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<td>320</td>
<td>960</td>
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<tr>
<td>Printing and licensing fees as needed</td>
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<td>Allowance for price increases (3% of subtotal)</td>
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Important Notes from the STF Committee:

- We recognize your proposed budget as an estimate. Final funding for successful projects will be established after thorough technical review; some costs may need adjusting due to price changes.
• We recommend that you include a 3 percent cushion to allow for price increases.

• We may impose special conditions on a proposal before approval. See STF Proposal Guidelines.

• Funding is not provided directly to departments for purchases. All purchasing is done via the Office of the VPIT/CIO and savings are retained in the Student Technology Fee fund.

3. What funding or contributions are available from your department or other sources?

   Note: "Contribution" is defined as a monetary contribution. A vendor discount, for example, is not considered a contribution.

   Contribution in-kind by ATUS will come in the form of 160 FTE hours dedicated to the development and delivery of the Alternative Digital textbook track of the CIIA faculty development workshops and ongoing support for the instructors as they develop their individual projects throughout Summer quarter 2018.

4. Could this project be divided into discrete elements that could be funded separately?

   Note: A "no" response to this question creates an “all or nothing” proposal. That is, if the STF Committee decides against funding your entire proposal, it will not consider any elements for partial funding. If elements could be funded separately, the applicant is responsible for prioritizing them before submitting the proposal.

   No ☐ Yes ☒ If yes, summarize and prioritize project elements with cost estimate for each.

   The project has proposals from ten instructors who have agreed to develop materials in the Alternative Digital Textbook Project for at least one of their classes scheduled for the 2018-2019 academic year. The top three applicants will receive grants of $4,000 each to support their efforts over the Summer quarter with the total for the grants being $15,000, including benefits and licensing costs for support materials. This portion of the project needs to be funded in order for the project to move forward.

   We anticipate a return in excess of $165,000 to students in the first year with projected savings of ~$500,000 over three years, with that number increasing, should the OER material be adopted by other instructors not included in this program.

5. Are course or lab fees charged for any of the courses that will use this equipment?

   No ☒ Yes ☐ If yes, describe. Please note: The total funding requested from the Student Technology Fee must reflect the amount collected from course fees for equipment replacement and/or equipment acquisition.

IV. Impact on Existing Resources

Your proposal must address the project’s potential impact on existing resources. Give special attention to the impact on data transmission networks (e.g., sources accessed, networking equipment, etc.), and personnel (e.g., staffing, administrative support, faculty support, etc.).

1. Describe how existing equipment is used. Contrast this to projected use if your project were funded.

   The content created for this project is digital in form and given the relatively small number of instructors participating the impact on existing resources would be limited to server space for the storage and distribution of these materials. Because one digital
textbook file can be distributed to an unlimited number of students, instructors are able to impact a large number of people with very small investments in resources.

2. Is similar equipment or technology available elsewhere on campus—such as the Student Technology Center, Classroom Services, Video Services, Western Libraries, a college lab?

No ☐ Yes ☒ If yes, describe why the existing equipment does not meet the needs outlined in this proposal.

3. If this project involves the replacement of equipment, including computers:

a. Describe the “before and after” configuration changes. (A spreadsheet reflecting these changes may be attached.) Or, write “N/A.”

N/A

b. Describe the costs and benefits of replacing vs. upgrading. Or, write “N/A.”

N/A

4. Would this equipment be available to students outside of your department?

No ☐ Yes ☒ If students outside of your department would use the proposed technology, describe how they would gain access, how equipment availability would be publicized, the hours/week when equipment would be available, and any costs that would apply.

Created material will be available as open educational resources and therefore available to any faculty and students wishing to use them.

5. Does this project involve the check-out of equipment to students?

No ☐ Yes ☒ If yes, discuss whether or not the Student Technology Center/ATUS Loan Pool could be assigned this task.

6. Does the department have adequate operating funds to provide ongoing maintenance and support?

No ☐ Yes ☒ If yes, describe.

When providing the grants to faculty, we will have the expectation that the faculty will maintain their course content for three years. ATUS will provide ongoing technical and instructional design support to faculty during this time.

7. Does the department have adequate personnel funds to provide ongoing staff support for the project?

No ☐ Yes ☒ If yes, describe.

Yes, we have three instructional designers and three instructional technologists on permanent staff. The Library also employs librarians who serve the campus with support on copyright and OER.

V. Space and Site Information
This section addresses any space alteration or site preparation necessary for the proposed project. Site alterations include painting, holes in walls, security systems, carpeting, construction, lighting changes, or conversion of a lab or office.

Special Note: If this project would require any site preparation, or if this project would use any space not currently under your department’s control:

a. You must submit a draft proposal to Space Administration by March 12, 2018.

b. Space Administration and Facilities Management will then conduct a site survey and respond to you by March 23, 2018 about project feasibility, cost, and schedule.

c. You must include the site survey response with your final proposal.

1. Location for installation of equipment or technology:
   All the materials will be available via cloud-based storage and/or web space. Depending on the best solution for distributing the materials it could be located on Western servers.

2. Would site modification be required?
   No ☐ Yes ☐ If yes, describe the modifications (e.g., electrical, air, painting, lighting, security, network access, etc.).

3. Would this project use space not currently assigned to your department or area?
   No ☐ Yes ☐ If yes, describe.

VI. Project Schedule

Describe your overall implementation schedule. (Remember that project awards are announced during spring quarter, and that projects are to be substantially completed by the end of the calendar year.) If any site preparation is involved (see section VI above), align your project schedule with the schedule provided by Space Administration and Facilities Management.

The CIIA-led faculty development workshop takes place the week of June 18, 2018. The instructors will be developing their Alternative Digital Textbooks throughout the Summer with the goal of having their materials ready for distribution to begin the savings in the 2018-2019 academic year with evaluations and a report delivered at the end of Spring of 2019. We will have the expectation that the materials will be maintained by the faculty for at least three years.

VII. Constraints

List or describe any external or internal factors/constraints that could affect your project schedule, project objectives, or the project budget (e.g., if external approval is required for curricular changes, or if funding must be received by a certain date).

We need to know if funding will be forthcoming in May 2018 in order to notify the instructors who have committed to the alternative digital textbook project.

VIII. Submitting the Proposal

1. Make sure your proposal does not exceed 12 pages (not including Tech Initiatives Summary Sheet).
2. Complete top portion of a 2018 Tech Initiatives Proposal Summary Sheet for the front of the proposal.

3. Electronically submit the proposal (Word version only) and the summary sheet (Word or PDF version) for prioritizing:
   a. Students: Submit by April 2 to AS VP for Academic Affairs at asvp.academics@wwu.edu.
   b. Faculty and staff: Submit by internal due date, per your unit’s process, which must be before proposal due date of April 4.

   Note: Step 4 is for the individuals prioritizing the submitted proposals.

4. Submit prioritized proposals:
   a. (student proposals) AS VP for Academic Affairs:
      i. Ensure AS President approval and priority are on Summary Sheet.
      ii. Email proposal (Word version only) and summary sheet (PDF only) to diane.bateman@wwu.edu (the STF Committee secretary) no later than April 4.
   b. (employee proposals) College Dean/unit head:
      i. Ensure appropriate approvals and priority are on Summary Sheet.
      ii. Email proposal (Word version only) and summary sheet (PDF only) to diane.bateman@wwu.edu (the STF Committee secretary) no later than April 4.

   Note: Paper copies of proposals are no longer required; please do not send.