

Archived Information

Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE)

FY 2010 Project Abstracts – Pilot Program for Course Material Rental

P116T100007 – West Los Angeles College Instructional Materials Rental Initiative

Project Period: 10/01/2010 – 09/30/2012
Total Funding: \$999,309

Project Director: Larry Packham, College Enterprise Manager, West Los Angeles
College Bookstore
Los Angeles Community College District
770 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90017
E-mail: packhald@wlaac.edu
Telephone: 310-287-4424
Fax: 310-837-9320

West Los Angeles College will implement the innovative Instructional Materials Rental Initiative (IMRI). The design is uniquely posed to lead to four key outcomes: (1) significantly reduce of the cost of textbooks for students, enabling them to have necessary, affordable course materials for all aspects of course work; (2) engage with faculty to create and implement a rental-friendly materials adoption policy; (3) develop and implement a transformative and sustainable business model for the bookstore enabling it to thrive in an ever-changing environment; and (4) add to the body of knowledge on instructional materials rentals. In doing this, there will be significant reduction in textbook costs for students, faculty will make more-informed, longer-term decisions about textbooks, and a model for sustainability will be developed that will be applied at the other eight Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) bookstores and be available for adoption, in full or in part, at other colleges across California and the nation.

Evaluation of IMRI will reveal that: (1) a fully functional course materials rental program is established by the end of the grant period; (2) the rental program saves students significant sums of money; (3) faculty will develop an enhanced understanding of the course material needs of students; (4) IMRI is an effective methodology; (5) sister colleges in the Los Angeles Community College District learn from and adopt/modify IMRI for their emerging rental programs; and (6) IMRI is sustainable when the federal funding is no longer available.

**P116T100008 – Florence-Darlington Technical College
Florence-Darlington Technical College's Technology's Books Course Materials
Rental Program**

**Project Period: 10/01/2010 - 09/30/2012
Total Funding: \$736,092**

Project Director: Terry Miller, Assistant, Florence-Darlington Technical College
Bookstore
2715 W. Lucas Street
P.O. Box 100548
Florence, SC 29502-0548
E-mail: terry.miller@fdtc.edu
Telephone: 843-661-8327

The cost of course materials is one of the biggest expenses for technical and community college students, approximating 42 percent of tuition nation-wide and in South Carolina. In northeastern South Carolina there is high poverty, high unemployment and educational attainment rates are low. Florence-Darlington Technical College (FDTC) in Florence, South Carolina proposes to expand a pilot textbook rental program into the ***Tech's Books Course Materials Rental Program (TBCMRP)***. The pilot program demonstrated significant department head and/or faculty support (buy in), student utilization, and financial viability and sustainability for the college.

The TBCMRP is an ambitious, innovative approach to easing the barrier of the high costs of course materials, thus increasing student access and persistence. It is an important component of an integrated effort by FDTC to help students succeed and obtain their postsecondary credentials. The **goal of** the FDTC's TBCMRP is to increase accessibility and persistence rates among disadvantaged FDTC students while lowering the costs of obtaining postsecondary credentials through the establishment of the TBCMRP. The goal will be achieved by expanding the number of rental units and titles, implementing the rental of technology products, expanding the number of department heads/faculty who participate, renovating to include extra storage and shelving areas, acquiring new terminals, evaluating all procedures and components, and disseminating information to other postsecondary institutions.

The TBCMRP will reduce the costs of textbooks by 50-60 percent and include ancillary technologies such as graphing calculators in the rental program. This program will work cooperatively with other innovative programs at FDTC to provide a tapestry of support and assistance to students. FDTC has committed to using 100 percent of the rental income for course materials purchases. TBCMRP is a model program that includes a strong evaluation and a plan for disseminating best practices to encourage replication at other colleges.

**P116T100009 – Columbia College
Model Course Material Rental Program for Small IHE's**

**Project Period: 10/01/2010 - 09/30/2012
Total Funding: \$220,875**

Project Director: Jeffrey Whalen, Auxiliary Services Manager, Manzanita Bookstore
11600 Columbia College Drive
Sonora, CA 95370
E-mail: whalenj@yosemite.edu
Telephone: 209-588-5319
Fax: 209-588-5280

Columbia College, located near Yosemite National Park in Tuolumne County, serves approximately 3,500 students annually, the vast majority of whom face economic, physical, and social disadvantages. Columbia is one of nearly 3,000 small institutions of higher education (IHE's defined as those serving 5,000 students or less) in the nation.

Columbia College proposes to develop a fully functional and sustainable Course Materials Rental (CMR) program that saves substantial money for students and can be easily replicated by other similar IHE's. Columbia began piloting textbook rentals at its non-profit bookstore two years ago; the program has been successful so far and will provide a solid framework from which to expand into a more comprehensive CMR program. The college will contribute appropriate facilities, staff, and other resources that will be critical to the success of the program. If selected for funding, FIPSE grant funds would be used to:

- Expand the availability of materials for rent at the college bookstore, including additional textbooks, laptops, and eBooks;
- Further develop the infrastructure necessary to successfully operate the program on a larger and long-term basis, including building an open source software system and establishing additional procedures for materials that will be new to the program (laptops and eBooks);
- Promote the CMR program to the student population and broader community in order to maximize the number of students able to take advantage of the cost savings; and
- Document and disseminate program materials and results, such as a *How-To Guide for Successfully Implementing a CMR Program at a Small IHE*, open source software, and results of the on-going external evaluation and advisory committee review. On-site technical assistance visits will be conducted to ensure successful replication by other small IHE's.

**P116T100017 – Delaware Valley College of Sciences and Agriculture
Delaware Valley College Bookstore Textbook Rental Program**

Project Period: 10/01/2010 - 09/30/2012

Total Funding: \$351,321

Project Director: Robert J. Hirsch, Bookstore Manager, Delaware Valley College of Sciences and Agriculture Bookstore
700 East Butler Avenue
Doylestown, PA 18901
E-mail: robert.hirsch@delval.edu
Telephone: 215-489-6365

The cost of course materials is one of the biggest unanticipated expenses for college students today. While the overall costs, when compared to the total cost of higher education may be small, they are certainly not insignificant. This is one area that we have targeted as potentially controllable. Delaware Valley College has actively been promoting textbook affordability strategies through textbook alternatives such as ebooks, a strong used-book program and a limited rental program, and the results are measurable. The current textbook rental pilot program has a broad base of institutional and community support. Delaware Valley College already has the technology, experienced staffing and systems in place for accommodating its expansion. The amount of the grant we are requesting is small when compared to other grant applications, but we have determined that we can meet the needs of many low-income, first-generation students with this small amount.

Delaware Valley College has crafted an innovative approach to textbook affordability – a comprehensive textbook rental program that satisfies the diverse needs of students, including the large community of first-generation students and low-income students, and is suitable for courses that extend across two semesters. This program will work in collaboration with a state-funded agency to help the neediest of our students. The rental program will reduce the cost of the textbooks by 63 percent to 65 percent and will cover 42 percent of the total enrollment for the entire college. The textbook rental program is fully sustainable and allows for growth. The unique, two-semester rental program we have developed will be a model program – one that includes a plan for disseminating best practices, project results, and materials to facilitate replication at other colleges.

This textbook rental program will prove to be a viable and cost-effective alternative to the ever-increasing cost of textbooks.

**P116T100022 – St. Johns River Community College
Supporting a Value Education: Openly Navigating the Expensive Textbook Scene**

Project Period: 10/01/2010 - 09/30/2012

Total Funding: \$956,646

Project Director: Albert Little, Vice President for Business Affairs, College Administration
5001 St. Johns Avenue
Palatka, FL 32177
E-mail: allittle@sjrcc.edu
Telephone: 386-312-4116
Fax: 386-312-4167

Students continue to feel “priced out” of higher education, and the cost of textbooks is often the tipping point. St. Johns River Community College (SJRCC) proposes the **Supporting a Value Education: Openly Navigating the Expensive Textbook Scene** (SAVE ON TEXTS) project, an initiative to build the infrastructure and capacity to offering a unique textbook solution based on best practices and innovative technological approaches. SJRCC serves more than 10,000 students in an economically and educationally disadvantaged services area that includes Putnam, Clay, and St. Johns Counties, Florida. Textbook costs often exceed the cost of tuition at SJRCC and many students (55 percent) indicated that funding their education is difficult. Led by a highly-qualified team of administrators and staff, the project aims to lower course material costs to students by 70 percent. The goals of the SAVE ON TEXTS project strategically align with the five identified key goals of the Course Rental Materials grant program. The College will use existing rental models, needs of students, and perspectives of faculty to inform the design of the SJRCC rental model. After piloting the program in 10-20 courses in the fall of 2011, SJRCC will implement a college-wide program in the spring of 2012. The college proposes to renovate the bookstores to better accommodate the rental program and will develop Web-based software to manage inventory and student rentals. The project includes both formative and summative evaluations to ensure that the process and outcomes are achieved.

The national significance of the textbook problem requires a national dissemination plan. All deliverables developed by the project including policies and procedures, textbook rental software, project reports, and key “lessons learned,” will be shared with other institutions in the Florida college system, as well as through identified regional and national associations.

**P116T100023 – Mountain San Antonio College
Mt. San Antonio College Pilot Course Material Rental Program**

Project Period: 10/01/2010 - 09/30/2012

Total Funding: \$983,469

Project Director: Suzanne Luetjen, Director, Auxiliary Services - Bookstore
1100 N. Grand Avenue
Walnut, CA 91789
E-mail: sluetjen@mtsac.edu
Telephone: 909-274-4490

Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC), located in the eastern part of Los Angeles County, is California's largest single-campus community college district, with an enrollment of nearly 33,000 credit students each semester. Mt. SAC is both a federally-designated Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI), and its overall student population is 78 percent non-white. More than 70 percent of credit students are low-income and/or first-generation college students. A Pilot Program for Course Material Rental grant will enable the college to implement a textbook rental program to more adequately serve its 23,270 low-income and/or first-generation college students.

During the first year of the proposed two-year grant project, Sac Book Rac's pilot textbook rental program will offer 34 titles with a total number of 4,230 units. During the second year, the project will purchase additional inventory of existing titles and add nine new titles, which will bring the total units available for rental to 5,955 each semester. By December 31, 2012, the proposed project will satisfy the following performance measures: (1) disseminate best practices and successful models to at least 20 college and university bookstores; (2) create a self-sustaining textbook rental program with at least 40 titles and 10,000 units; (3) serve at least 10,000 students through the textbook rental program; and (4) save full-time students participating in the rental program an average of \$200 each semester.

Project personnel will conduct ongoing, formative evaluations of the project design, successes and challenges, and success in achieving the stated performance measures. The project director will disseminate results through regional and national conferences and one-on-one visits to local college bookstores. The textbook rental program will be self-sustaining beyond grant funding and will positively impact the most financially disadvantaged students.

**P116T100030 – Bellevue College
21st Century Bookstore: E-Course Materials Rental**

Project Period: 10/01/2010 - 09/30/2012

Total Funding: \$783,135

Project Director: Kristen Connely, Director, Bellevue College Bookstore
3000 Landerholm Circle
Room B – 127
Bellevue, WA 98007
E-mail: kristen.connely@bellevuecollege.edu
Telephone: 425-564-2388
Fax: 425-564-2482

Bellevue College (BC) is a comprehensive and innovative college that advances the lifelong education of its students consistent with their needs, interests, and abilities while strengthening the economic, social and cultural life of its diverse community. It is the largest community college and third largest institution of higher learning in Washington. BC serves over 35,000 students annually who come to the college from rural, urban, and suburban communities throughout the region. The college's students are diverse, multicultural, and globally-connected. BC enrolls more than 800 international students from about 60 countries and 1,100 pre-college level learners. BC students are of varied socio-economic status, with more than 3,000 of its students currently living within 200 percent of the federal level poverty, a growing trend.

BC Bookstore has a five-year track record of making course materials more affordable for postsecondary students through a traditional textbook rental program. Although the traditional program is effective, the shifting emphasis in the course materials industry is towards electronic materials. There is a growing need to facilitate student access and use of this new format for course materials. Bellevue College proposes to apply criteria from the traditional rental program, which is based on the most frequently used course materials over the minimum faculty-use periods, toward an electronic offering of rental materials via netbook laptops with preloaded electronic materials for rent on a term-by-term basis. Students will be charged a rental fee of \$35 which will include the netbook and e-course materials for one class for the quarter. The students will be guaranteed at least a 60 percent savings compared to purchasing traditional textbooks at the standard retail price. The project will target and prioritize low-income students but will be available for all the students. Five hundred netbooks will be available for students to rent at the beginning of each quarter. Bellevue College's project team will demonstrate financial sustainability and growth capacity during the two-year grant period.

**P116T100032 - Georgia Institute of Technology
Student E-rent Pilot Project**

Project Period: 10/01/2010 - 09/30/2012
Total Funding: \$1,055,228

Project Director: Christopher Lee, Enterprise Innovation Institute – Provost Office
75 Fifth Street, N.W., Suite 314
Atlanta, Georgia 30308
E-mail: christopher.lee@amac.gatech.edu
Telephone: 404-894-7655

Summary: The **Alternative Media Access Center** (AMAC) in partnership with **CourseSmart** and the **AccessText Network** (ATN) have come together to request funding in support of an innovative, e-textbook rental program entitled the **STudent E-rent Pilot Project (STEPP)**. While **STEPP** is designed to meet the textbook rental needs of any postsecondary student, the program is unique in that its textbook offerings are specially modified for accessibility, and comply with Section 504 requirements under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

In brief, **STEPP** leverages the expertise of AMAC, one of the nation's leaders in producing accessible educational text, with the established distribution network of CourseSmart, the nation's number one electronic textbook rental service, and the reach of ATN, the nation's only "one-stop shop" for disability service providers with a need for alternative format text files. For the first time, students with disabilities will enjoy the benefits of significant cost savings inherent in a textbook rental program, as **STEPP** provides universally accessible e-textbook files for top titles.

Goals:

The goals of the **STEPP** initiative are as follows: (1) To save students an average of 50 percent off the retail cost for purchasing textbooks; (2) To provide students with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in textbook rental programs and experience cost savings; (3) To develop and demonstrate a viable business model for rendering e-textbooks for rent, which are universally accessible to all; (4) To create awareness of the availability of universally accessible e-textbooks for rent; and (5) To increase knowledge and awareness amongst all players in the marketplace of the need for and the profitability of providing universally accessible e-textbooks.

**P116T100033 – San Diego State University
Rent to Save: Pilot Program for Course Material Rental**

Project Period: 10/01/2010 - 09/30/2012

Total Funding: \$1,099,152

Project Director: Todd Summer, Director, Campus Stores Division
5500 Campanile Drive
San Diego, CA 92182
E-mail: todd.summer@sdsu.edu
Telephone: 619-594-7539
Fax: 619-265-7504

The San Diego State University (SDSU) Bookstore, part of Aztec Shops, Ltd., began renting books in 2006. The program started with two titles and expanded to 49 titles in the academic year 2009-2010. In recent years, students have saved over \$100,000 per academic year renting books as compared to purchasing books at the SDSU Bookstore. In the fall of 2010 the SDSU Bookstore will be expanding the rental program and 2,000 of the 3,500 titles in the store will be offered for rent. The SDSU Bookstore estimates student savings in an academic year will increase to somewhere between \$1,000,000 and \$2,000,000.

The SDSU Bookstore has found that students who rent books acquire more course materials in a single transaction, spending between 80 percent and 150 percent more on course materials than students who do not rent.

Scope of the Project for FIPSE Grant:

- 1) To add 1,000 titles to the SDSU Bookstore Textbook Rental program and reduce current book rental prices by 50 percent for 1,500 or more students each semester.
- 2) To evaluate through direct (objective) and indirect (subjective) measures student shopping patterns and eventual student learning outcomes when a low cost rental textbook(s) is part of a student purchase at the SDSU Bookstore. Data will be measured for students who rent compared to students who do not rent with breakout data on at-risk students with financial need.
- 3) Increase the system efficiency (i.e., Point-of-Sale system) of the bookstore for the rental program.
- 4) Sustain the SDSU Bookstore rental program with more titles at lower price points over the long term.
- 5) Create educational programs for the bookstore industry and universities.

**P116T100041 – Western Oregon University
Western Oregon University College Textbook Rental Pilot Program**

Project Period: 10/01/2010 - 09/30/2012

Total Funding: \$999,973

Project Director: David McDonald, Associate Provost
345 N. Monmouth Avenue
Monmouth, OR 97361
E-mail: mcdonald@wou.edu
Telephone: 503-838-8919

Western Oregon University (WOU) will develop a fully-functional textbook and course material rental program by the end of the two-year grant cycle. The sustainable rental program will provide students a significant cost savings when compared to purchasing textbooks. Through the use of Fixen's Implementation model (2005), the project will ensure that the best model has been selected and implemented. Additionally, Fixen's model will provide a framework for gathering, analyzing, and disseminating sufficient data for replication. The project is designed to remain sustainable after the conclusion of the grant, based upon the adoption of the supplement not supplant philosophy in which grant funds are used to build capacity.

WOU is a comprehensive, master's degree institution with a strong history of providing quality higher education to a diverse student body. Among public master's institutions, WOU ranks in the nation's top ten institutions for closing the gap in college graduation rates between underrepresented minority students and non-underrepresented students. The 6,000 students on campus represent the most ethnically diverse student body with a high percentage of Latino students. Over half of WOU's undergraduates are first-generation college students (52 percent); almost one-quarter are low-income students (21.1 percent) and 13 percent are both first-generation college and low-income. The financial and aspirational barriers that confront low-income, first generation, and ethnically diverse students are of particular concern at WOU.

WOU's project will focus extra attention on ensuring that the project serves the needs of low-income, first generation and ethnically diverse students taking the liberal arts core curriculum courses. Campus-wide involvement will be crucial and is represented in the advisory committee comprised of students, faculty, staff, and administrators to ensure that all constituent groups' needs are addressed. The project will have a strong foundation in the collection and use of assessment data to make on-going program decisions.

**P116T100045 – Illinois Central College
Illinois Central College Textbook Rental Pilot Project Program**

Project Period: 10/01/2010 - 09/30/2012

Total Funding: \$748,256

Project Director: Carla Greer, Manager, Illinois Central College Bookstore
Bookstore Room 201
1 College Drive
East Peoria, IL 61635-0001
E-mail: cgreer@icc.edu
Telephone: 309-694-5793

Illinois Central College (ICC) is a two-year, public community college that offers programs of study leading to occupational certificates and Associate degrees in Arts and Sciences and Applied Sciences. In fiscal year 2009, the college served 18,993 students through credit offerings and 14,866 students through non-credit offerings. The student profile in 2009 was 81.7 percent white, non-Hispanic, 11.7 percent African-American, 2.7 percent Hispanic, 2.1 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.3 percent American Indian/Alaskan Native. The full-time fall 2009 census of students was 7,855. In the fall of 2009, the college employed 196 full-time and 468 part-time faculty. The student-to-faculty ratio is one to 14.

A college education provides a critical advantage to anyone seeking employment. Some reports suggest that nearly two-thirds of all jobs now require at least some level of postsecondary education. One of the current challenges for obtaining a college education is funding. College tuition rates have been increasing at alarming rates for both two- and four-year institutions of higher education. Also increasing at an alarming rate is the cost of textbooks. In 2007, the national average for the cost of textbooks for a student enrolled full-time in a two-year, public community college was \$850. With a current tuition rate of \$95 per semester hour at Illinois Central College, the cost of textbooks can approach 76 percent of the tuition cost. This additional expense may make the difference in a low-income student's ability to attend college.

The "Pilot Program for Course Material Rental" at ICC is designed to offer all students, but especially low-income and traditionally underserved student populations, a lower cost alternative to purchasing textbooks. This project focuses on moderate to higher-cost books for courses for which these students are most likely to enroll. By taking advantage of this program the student will realize a substantial savings. In some cases this may approach nearly \$100 in savings per textbook.

A successful project will provide a roadmap for ICC and other interested institutions to develop, implement, and sustain a cost containment methodology that will benefit students. The success of this project will also open the doorway to exploring other innovative cost-saving measures for students.

**P116T100056 – Pratt Institute
Pratt Institute Course Material Rental Program**

**Project Period: 10/01/2010 - 09/30/2012
Total Funding: \$991,300**

Project Director: Roy Muraskiewicz, Bookstore Manager, Pratt Store
200 Willoughby Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11205
E-mail: rmuraski@pratt.edu
Telephone: 718-636-2915
Fax: 718-789-1109

Pratt Institute (Pratt) is one of the largest independent colleges of art and design in the United States, offering undergraduate and graduate degree programs to more than 4,450 undergraduate and graduate students from 47 states and 70 foreign countries in the Schools of Architecture, Art and Design, Information and Library Science, and Liberal Arts and Sciences. The growing cost of course materials for higher education has been a subject of significant concern. Arts and design students across the country have particularly challenging needs due to the unique supplies required for a course of study that encompasses both classroom and hands-on creative work. The average Pratt student can expect to spend \$3,000 or more on course materials, approximately 170 percent more than the average U.S. student at a four-year public college. At the same time, the nature of these supplies presents an exciting opportunity to offer student cost savings — a large portion of items are durable goods, such as equipment and supplies, that are ideal for rental.

Pratt seeks funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Pilot Program for Course Material Rental to launch the **Pratt Institute Course Material Rental Program**, designed to provide an affordable alternative that addresses the unique needs of art and design students. Leveraging the existing infrastructure of PrattStore, Pratt's unique campus store, the program will offer for rental on an annual, semester, weekly or daily basis a range of equipment and tools required for ongoing study and specific class assignments. The goal will be to offer opportunities for cost savings to students, particularly those with financial need. A rigorous evaluation plan will ensure ongoing feedback to strengthen the program during the pilot, identify key findings and best practices, and support model development and dissemination. Pratt will share findings and disseminate information about the model in partnership with the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD), a nonprofit consortium of 36 leading art schools in the United States that serves 50,000 art students, 70 percent of whom receive financial aid.

Pratt is particularly well suited for this pilot effort: 75 percent of its diverse student body receives financial aid, and initial findings on student/faculty interest in a textbook rental program have resulted in a pilot effort that will launch in the fall of 2010. In addition, PrattStore's existing facilities and infrastructure enable Pratt to develop this program as an extension of current operations and initiatives. Pratt is prepared to commit strategic resources and leadership to this effort.

Project evaluation and research will be an integral part of this pilot program. Evaluation components will include: survey and evaluation of other programs; collection of baseline information on current costs, analysis of a qualitative survey on costs with the highest burden on students and an estimate of current student expenses; calculation of a necessary sample size and identification of a control group; identification of rental categories; a strategy for and training on documentation of expenses; a formative evaluation of student expenses and student and faculty perceptions; and for dissemination, an identification of program features and best practices towards development of guidelines for a rental program.

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