Evaluation Plan

STEPP (Student E-rent Pilot Project) will maintain a comprehensive evaluation component consisting of a variety of methods for evaluating the program’s effectiveness. This highly integrated evaluation component is designed to achieve several purposes: (1) provide formative and summative data on how well the project meets its stated goals and objectives; (2) provide information necessary to make adjustments to activities and resources; (3) determine future activity and resource planning; and (4) document the impact and effectiveness of the project’s activities for communication to the Department of Education, all project stakeholders and external parties with a potential interest in replicating and/or expanding the benefits.

STEPP Goals:
1. To save students an average of 50% 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;
5. To increase knowledge and awareness of the need for and the profitability of providing universally accessible e-textbooks, amongst all players in the marketplace.

Project Objectives – Key Questions:
- Did students who rented e-textbooks, including students with disabilities, save an average of 50% off the retail cost for purchasing textbooks through CourseSmart? If so, what percentage of students saved 50%?
- Was the program marketed to students with disabilities? How did this type of marketing occur? How were individuals with disabilities made aware of the availability of renting universally accessible e-textbooks?
- Did students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in the program and experience cost savings? Were they provided with a positive customer service experience, if needed? Was the customer service information provided accessibly, if needed?
- Was there business models developed that can be used by other players in the marketplace for rendering e-textbooks for rent that are universally accessible to all? Is this business model viable? Is this business model cost-effective?
• Were players in the marketplace made aware of the need for universally accessible E-textbooks in the marketplace? Were these players made aware of the costs and/or profitability?

**Evaluation Plan Components:**
Internal and external evaluation activities will be used.

**Internal Evaluation –**

1. **Staff/Advisory Input and Feedback**
   Weekly phone meeting each Friday to be held with project team members to discuss issues, solve problems, and share information.

   There will also be regular and continual communication by E-mail.

   Communication will be maintained among project staff. Issues will be dealt with and gaps will be identified immediately. This will allow for immediate project modification, adjustments, and changes to be made, as needed.

   Twice a year a STEPP Advisory Panel (SAP) meeting will be held. The first scheduled meeting is March 24 and 25. At that initial meeting an overall introduction to the STEPP grant will be provided to the Advisory Panel. Information regarding the application and application procedure will be shared. The Advisory Panel will also get an extensive overview of the grant including a complete review and discussion of the evaluation plan. Future meetings will involve presentations of the STEPP grants progress, results, and challenges. Input from Advisory Panel members will be solicited at all meetings. In addition there will be one to two hour virtual meetings scheduled for panel member input.

   At the March 24th – 25th SAP meeting, members were provided information as to their role in the project. They were told that their feedback and recommendations were of vital importance in supporting the project’s success. Feedback and recommendations have begun to be provided by those members since the first SAP meeting.

2. **Data Collection**
   Recording and maintaining comprehension production and student usage data will be undertaken. Gathering that data will allow internal project analysis in regard to:
   • who is being served;
   • how they learned about the availability of the E-textbook rental program;
   • the effectiveness of the remediation title selection process; and
   • the level of student (usability) satisfaction of the program.
Ongoing data collection will occur as it relates to internal project analysis. Based on the feedback, changes may occur in the daily operation of the project or in its strategic plan. Specific changes might be indicated by that data, such as increased outreach to a specific group, establishment of new methods of communication, and/or changes in the staffing pattern or the manner in which tasks are assigned and handled.

**External Evaluation –**

1. **Interviews**
   Regular interviews will be held with project staff to determine project direction, successes, and needs. These interviews will document the impact and progress of the project.

   Formal internal interviews will be conducted twice a year following the school semester schedule. From those interviews the External Evaluator will give feedback to the Project Manager in support of the project goals and objectives.

2. **Questionnaire/Survey**
   A usability/feedback survey will be designed, implemented, and sent (via E-mail) to all stakeholders who have benefited from the project. The usability/feedback survey will be designed to assess information, such as, the rental program design, effectiveness of program marketing and marketing efforts, usability and usefulness of the materials provided, readability, accessibility (if needed), and overall stakeholder usability/satisfaction.

   A preliminary usability/feedback survey has been drafted and was reviewed by the STEPP Advisory Panel during the March 24th-25th meeting. Feedback from advisory members is starting to come in and those comments and recommendations will be taken into consideration in the continued development of the usability/feedback survey.

   The usability/feedback survey will be e-mailed to all students who rent e-textbooks through CourseSmart. Within that data one will be able to determine responses from individuals who needed accessible e-textbooks compared to those students who did not need accessible e-textbooks. In addition to information from the usability/feedback survey, a comparison of usability/feedback data from these two groups will be examined.

3. **Data Collection**
   Internal project systems will collect comprehensive production and student usage data for analysis. In addition, a usability/feedback survey, as indicated above, will be designed and sent (via E-mail) to all stakeholders. This will allow further analysis of:
   - who is being served;
   - how they learned about the availability of the E-textbook rental program;
• the effectiveness of the remediation title selection process; and
• the level of student usability/satisfaction of the program – in detail.

The Georgia Institute of Technology Institutional Review Board (IRB) requires training for Human Testing which the Evaluator, Project Manager, and Project Content Consultant (Liaison between CourseSmart and AMAC) plan to complete by July 1, 2011. Distribution of the initial questionnaire/survey to customers will begin during the Fall 2011 semester and collection of data will occur in the months following the initial distribution of the usability/feedback survey.

After sufficient data is collected, data will be analyzed over a 6 month period. Written findings will be ongoing after the first data collection.

Data collected will be used in modifying project activities if feedback warrants making changes. Project activities that could be modified midstream include the title selection process for remediated textbooks and marketing efforts such as outreach to a specific group. Additionally, changes may occur in the daily operation of the project or in its strategic plan, such as establishment of new methods of communication, and/or changes in the staffing pattern or the manner in which tasks are assigned and handled.

**Dissemination**

Information will be disseminated on the STEPP profile page of the FIPSE web site. Feedback will be shared with project partners on how successfully the project is meeting its goals and especially how it is meeting the needs of its stakeholders. Feedback will also be provided to individual staff members on a specific task or area of work regarding timeliness, quality and/or level of effort, and possible improvements.

The summative evaluation will be used in quarterly project updates and comprehensive annual reports to the Department of Education. Properly collected and appropriately analyzed summative evaluation data presents an excellent overview of project progress, problems, and accomplishments. The summative evaluation will present a clear and concise overview of the project’s impact on stakeholders such as Students, DSS Offices, Faculty, Professors, and Publishers, and this information will be shared with these stakeholders.

Project information will also be shared during numerous conference presentations and outreach efforts throughout the course of the project and beyond the project’s end date. Potential follow-up articles in, for example, professional association newsletters, reporting the successes and pitfalls of the project and need for awareness in regard to E-book rental availability, will be written. Project information will also be provided on the Alternative Media Access Center (AMAC) and STEPP web sites (http://stepp.gatech.edu is currently under development).