U.S. Department of Education Awards Grant to CourseSmart, Alternative Media Access Center and AccessText Network to Help Bring eTextbook Savings to Students with Disabilities

Grant will be used to improve accessibility and decrease cost of eTextbooks in higher education through STEPP, an innovative rental program

ANAHEIM, Calif., October 14, 2010 – CourseSmart, the world’s largest eTextbook provider, Alternative Media Access Center (AMAC), and AccessText Network (ATN) announced that their collaboration in providing lower-cost eTextbook rentals to postsecondary students with disabilities has received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education for $1.1 Million. Over the next two years, the funding will be used to support STudent E-rent Pilot Project (STEPP), an innovative, eTextbook rental program aimed to help improve low-cost access to higher education eTextbooks for all students, including those with print-related disabilities such as blindness or dyslexia.

AMAC is an initiative of the University System of Georgia, operating under the Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute, to improve national services for students with print-related disabilities. ATN is a national organization that facilitates and supports the delivery of alternative electronic textbooks to the Disabled Student Services offices found on every college and university in the nation.

STEPP is designed to offer eTextbooks that are especially modified for accessibility in support of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504. The eTextbooks will be digitally formatted for qualified students and distributed through CourseSmart.

"The primary purpose of STEPP is to provide all students with equal access and opportunity for educational success resulting from cost savings in obtaining accessible eTextbooks," said Dr. Christopher Lee, Department Head of AMAC and Director of ATN. "Our partnership with CourseSmart will help to further increase student's general awareness of eTextbook rental programs," he added.

The STEPP program marks the first time students with disabilities will enjoy the benefits of significant cost savings inherent in an eTextbook rental program, including:

- Savings of an average of 50% off the retail cost for purchasing textbooks
- Instant, anytime, anywhere access to materials via www.coursesmart.com
- Search functionality for topics within a single book or across an entire eTextbook stack
- Note-taking capabilities within the eTextbook, which can be easily retrieved or printed
- Page fidelity and preservation, mirroring the print edition’s page numbers, full text and page layout
"The Department of Education grant is vital in the launch and implementation of the STEPP program and in CourseSmart's commitment to providing equal access to our growing catalogue of eTextbooks," said Sean Devine, CEO of CourseSmart. "The STEPP program is an important stride in providing accessible learning materials to all post-secondary students."

In August 2009, CourseSmart began optimizing 80 percent of its top selling titles, to be made available through ATN’s federated search and offering students and faculty an enhanced method for accessing and using eTextbooks. For more information, www.coursesmart.com/accessibility.

AMAC, ATN and CourseSmart will accept the award at a Department of Education event in Washington, D.C. in December 2010.

About CourseSmart

CourseSmart provides eTextbooks and digital course materials that improve the educational process by offering instructors and students a unique combination of the right course material, anywhere, any-time access and a low cost. As the world's largest digital course materials supplier, CourseSmart has a rapidly growing digital library of more than 90% of core higher education textbooks offered as eTextbooks, the same titles produced by major publishers in print and recommended by faculty across North America. The company's eTextbooks can be purchased for up to 60% less than print texts and offer users the ability to print what they need as well as search and copy and paste features which help to streamline students' studies. Additional information can be found on the company's Web site: www.coursesmart.com.

About Alternative Media Access Center

The Alternative Media Access Center (www.amacusg.org) is a membership organization committed to removing academic barriers to individuals with physical, sensory, and print-related learning disabilities.

About AccessText Network

The AccessText Network (www.accesstext.org) is a national service initiative serving students with print-related disabilities to help them receive their alternative course materials and achieve their educational goals. AccessText Network was developed in collaboration with the Association of American Publishers and the University System of Georgia. The non-profit venture was launched August 24, 2009 through a donation of almost $1 million by higher education members of the Association of American Publishers. More than 600 colleges and universities nationwide have become members, receiving over 18,000 publisher textbook files via a web-based textbook management tool. There are more than 360,000 textbook titles available through the Network. AccessText includes an accessible textbook hosting and exchange library and search feature providing schools with access to multiple national libraries of student-ready accessible textbooks. Participating Charter leading publishers include: CQ Press, Pearson, Cengage Learning, McGraw-Hill, John Wiley & Sons, Bedford/St. Martin’s, W.H. Freeman and Worth, Reed Elsevier Inc., W.W. Norton and F.A. Davis.