

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chief Academic Officers

FROM: Alexandra W. Logue, Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost

SUBJECT: Request for Proposals - eBooks

DATE: March 2, 2010

In response to rising textbook costs, as well as new federal and state laws, CUNY has made it a priority to help students save money when purchasing textbooks. As part of this effort, we are exploring the role that eBooks can play in classes. By eBooks, we mean electronic versions of printed books readable on a personal computer or hand-held device and often offering features unavailable in print books (e.g., searchability, note sharing, knowledge transfer via social networking). eBooks are typically offered at lower prices than new textbooks and can even be cheaper than used textbooks.

We request proposals to explore the educational role, use patterns, and cost savings of eBooks for courses offered in the Fall 2010 semester. Our purpose is two-fold: 1) to assess the utility of eBooks in a specific discipline (e.g., math, psychology, English) and 2) to compare the eBook experience across a variety of disciplines. In order to accomplish this we will examine the findings within each discipline and then compare those findings across disciplines. For example, a multi-campus math effort and a multi-campus psychology effort might be evaluated individually and then compared to each other.

Additionally, our interest is in evaluating eBook content that can be accessed over multiple devices. While one of those devices may include an eBook reader, your focus should not be on evaluating the reader itself, but on evaluating eBook content. Moreover, please take care to ensure that any initiatives involving eBook readers utilize devices that are fully compliant with ADA requirements. The National Federation of the Blind might be a good resource in this capacity (<http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Default.asp>).

Proposals may be submitted by individual faculty members, a group of faculty members, individual campuses or a group of campuses.

The evaluation committee is interested in proposals that adhere to as many of the following criteria as possible.

- A commitment to the use of eBooks rather than printed books. eBooks may come bundled with other online interactive material and may take on other forms than just "page true" electronic renderings.
- A commitment to enhance the teaching and learning experience by utilizing features of eBooks not available with print textbooks.
- A commitment to work with other participating faculty/administrators to evaluate the teaching and learning experience of using eBooks.

- A commitment to provide feedback to the college community, including feedback from students.
- A commitment to collaborate to develop coursework and methodologies that may be scalable CUNY-wide.
- Consideration of using open access materials (materials free of charge to users). For more information about open access consult the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), <http://www.arl.org/sparc/>.
- Budgeting so as to provide direct benefits to students (e.g., using part of the award to subsidize eBook costs for students to increase participation in the study).

Depending on the size and scope, successful proposals are eligible for up to \$10,000 in funding. Please name the primary applicant(s) on the proposal. Awards will be dispensed to and through the primary applicant(s). Proposals must include a detailed budget with a justification for each budget item. Funds for faculty stipends and/or summer salary are preferred over reassigned time. Acceptance of an award carries with it an agreement to share information on, and support the development of, best practices for other faculty. CUNY will utilize data and feedback to determine best practices for eBook use going forward.

Proposals will be evaluated according to the extent to which they provide evidence of the commitments outlined above.

Proposals should be emailed by March 29, 2010 to eBookProposals@mail.cuny.edu. Proposals should identify the primary applicant and any other team members, outline the scope of the project and a timetable for implementation, and identify methods and metrics for securing feedback on the experience using eBooks (including feedback from both faculty and students). Proposals are to be no longer than ten pages. Cross-campus proposals focusing on a single discipline are encouraged and should identify a team leader.

For further information or clarification, please contact George Otte, University Director of Academic Technology (george.otte@mail.cuny.edu).

cc: Chancellor's Cabinet
Council of Presidents
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