

## **“Orienting Student Veterans to the Library”: Abstract**

Texas A&M University Libraries is partnering with the Texas A&M University Veteran Resource and Support Center (VRSC) to request IMLS National Leadership Grant funding in the Community Anchors category. Sparks grant funding is requested in order to develop a pilot solution to a unique challenge in higher education: how to make academic libraries more accessible to student veterans. Student veterans, an underserved group on college campuses, are a difficult population for academic libraries to reach. They are post-traditional students who are likely to have educational gaps, attend school on a part-time basis, live and work off-campus, and have family responsibilities. Traditional outreach strategies such as presentations and resource fairs can miss student veterans, as they require that veterans attend an event at a specific date and time, when they may have conflicts or when it would require a special trip to campus. This proposal identifies a solution: a flexible, differentiated student veterans’ orientation that is based upon a construct familiar to those with military experience: the in-processing checklist.

During the time period of October 2017-September 2018, we propose to design an in-processing checklist, colloquially known to many veterans as a “dance card,” that incoming student veterans can use to become oriented to the library. The dance card, which will be developed and made available in an online format, will include two primary components: 1) a pre-assessment that librarians will use to identify specific library resources and services appropriate for each student veteran, and 2) an accompanying series of modules that will guide the student veteran to visit library spaces and services and become familiar with the resources available to them. For example, when the pre-assessment reveals a first-year engineering student veteran with no previous experience in higher education, librarians might choose to assign that student veteran a few appropriate tasks:

- To visit the library’s course reserves where engineering textbooks and laptops with engineering software are available;
- To find one of the library’s group study rooms, frequently used by first-year engineering students for group projects;
- To make an appointment with one of the engineering librarians.

When the student veteran completes these three tasks, their checklist is complete and they are considered oriented to the library.

This project is intended to help student veterans better achieve the University Libraries’ established outreach goals. Each of the outreach goals listed below has three associated and scaffolded learning objectives (e.g. 1.1, 1.2, 1.3) that will be measured as part of the assessment plan for the “Orienting Student Veterans to the Library” project.

- 1) Outreach Goal 1: Reduce Library Anxiety
- 2) Outreach Goal 2: Promote Library Collection Awareness
- 3) Outreach Goal 3: Promote Library Service Awareness

Performance goals for this project are that at least 70% of student veterans participating in the pilot project will accomplish second-tier learning outcomes. (1.2, 2.2, and 3.2) and at least 50% of student veterans participating in the pilot project will accomplish at least one third-tier learning outcome (1.3., 2.3, and 3.3). The ultimate objective of this pilot project is to effect measurable change in student veterans’ library usage behavior, with student veterans achieving upper-tier outcomes such as reported usage of multiple library services or collections.

In addition to the specific performance goals and learning outcomes, the goal of this pilot project is to develop both a model and a product that can inform the outreach strategies of other academic libraries working with student veterans. This product will develop a fully-functional prototype of an online dance card for student veterans that can be adopted as a whole by other academic institutions with similar content licenses as Texas A&M University. It will also develop content, including a pre-assessment and modules for differentiated content areas, that can be extracted and implemented in whole or in part by other academic institutions whether or not they have access to the same software licenses as are available at Texas A&M University.

## “Orienting Student Veterans to the Library”: Narrative

### 1. Statement of National Need

Following the passage of the Post-9/11 GI Bill in 2008, the number of student veterans enrolled in higher education spiked dramatically as a new generation of veterans took advantage of generous educational opportunities. This spike in student veteran enrollment has been sustained as the war in Afghanistan has become the longest war in U.S. history. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) data reveals that one million students enrolled in institutions of higher learning used VA educational benefits in 2015 (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2016). This number does not capture the full picture of veteran and military-affiliated students on college and university campuses, as many student veterans exhaust their VA benefits before completing their studies, while others are simply not eligible for VA benefits. Still others use supplementary benefits related to their military service. For example, a 2014 report estimated 275,000 current service members were enrolled using Department of Defense tuition assistance benefits (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2014). The State of Texas provides veterans with the Hazlewood Act tuition exemption, which covered over 2,000 students at Texas A&M University alone in 2015 (Jauer, Blagg, & Benton, 2016). The sustained influx of student veterans and service members on college and university campuses has led colleges and universities in general, and Texas A&M University in particular, to treat veteran and military-affiliated students as an important and unique population on campus.

Veterans are one of the underserved groups targeted in IMLS’ Community Anchors category. Indeed, in recognition of the unique nature of the veteran and military community, IMLS created its Community Salute initiative in 2016. The Community Salute initiative encourages libraries of all types to improve services for veterans and build connections with the veteran and military community. The Community Salute initiative builds upon the research and expertise of those in the veteran and library communities, as well as those established in both communities, including the work of the project lead for this proposal (LeMire and Mulvhill, 2017). This proposal recognizes veterans as an underserved group in libraries and as an academically at-risk group in higher education.

Recent research has indicated that nearly all veteran and service member undergraduates exhibit at least one U.S. Department of Education-identified risk factor for non-completion of their degrees, with some student veterans exhibiting as many as six risk factors (Molina & Morse, 2015). Risk factors include identifiers such as delayed college enrollment, no high school diploma, part-time enrollment and full-time work while in college, which can limit full engagement in the academic community. Because student veterans often experience interruptions in their education as well as frequent transfers, they can be unaware of the major changes in libraries in recent years and unfamiliar with the full extent of the resources available in the modern academic library that aid student success.

Texas A&M University enrolls hundreds of student veterans and service members each year. These students can benefit from targeted orientation efforts because they have several characteristics that can make their transition more challenging than other students. First, student veterans and service members are non-traditional students. Student veterans and service members are typically several years older than traditional college students, and their military service means that most veterans and service members are classified as financially independent regardless of their age. This means that veterans and service members may have a substantial gap between their most recent educational experience and their enrollment in college, and also that they may not have direct family support to help navigate college and university systems. Also, many student veterans and service members enter college as transfer students, often having accumulated credits through military experience as well as by attending classes at other institutions. This means that student veterans and service members may not participate in common first-year orientation programs. Finally, many veterans and service members have jobs and families, which means that their time is valuable. For these and many other reasons, orienting student veterans and service members to the full extent of programs, services, and collections in the campus library is something that many librarians struggle with.

To help student veterans achieve their potential, librarians first need to help students understand the full extent of the resources available to them. A number of colleges have developed approaches to orienting student veterans to their campuses and to their libraries. Many colleges have developed a separate orientation for veterans, an established best practice for supporting student veterans, and some libraries have become embedded in these orientations (McBain et al., 2012; Atwood et al., 2016). Still other libraries are working to develop marketing materials to draw student veterans into the library (WVU Libraries, 2015). While these efforts are important steps to reaching student veterans, they rely upon outreach and orientation strategies that are native to higher education. Furthermore, these efforts tend to be less successful than is desired, often due to low participation rates or the inevitable information overload of campus-wide orientations. To reach student veterans more effectively, librarians should consider employing strategies that are native to the military. By adopting military-style processes in orientations, libraries can build upon student veterans' prior knowledge and experiences to effectively convey their message and provide student veterans with a sense of belonging in the academic environment.

## 2. Project Design

The Texas A&M University Libraries, in collaboration with the campus Veteran Resource and Support Center (VRSC), seeks to develop a more effective library orientation model for student veterans by building upon a familiar structure to veterans and service members: the in-processing checklist. Although veterans' military experiences can vary widely, there are some elements common across military branches and periods of service. One common element is the in-processing checklist, frequently referred to as the "dance card." When arriving at a new military installation, service members are provided with an in-processing checklist. The service member must visit each location to accomplish a specific task and complete this checklist – for example, they might visit the finance office to complete paperwork to receive their paycheck. Service members visit each location on the checklist, and when the form is full of signatures from officials at each office, their orientation process is complete. Versions of the in-processing checklist are ubiquitous across all branches of the military, and each branch has regulations governing use of in- and out-processing checklists or has centralized versions available (U.S. Air Force, 2014; U.S. Army, 2015; U.S. Coast Guard, 2015; U.S. Marine Corps, n.d.; U.S. Navy, n.d.). This project proposes to use the dance card model to orient student veterans to library services and resources essential to academic success and acculturation to campus.

### *Outreach Goals*

Orientation for student veterans is one element of the University Libraries' robust outreach program. The University Libraries has established outreach learning outcomes for orientation events for first-year students:

#### Outreach Goal 1: Reduce Library Anxiety

- Outcome 1.1: Students will be able to identify the library as a friendly place
- Outcome 1.2: Students will feel comfortable using the library or engaging with a librarian
- Outcome 1.3: Students will become active library users

#### Outreach Goal 2: Promote Library Collection Awareness

- Outcome 2.1: Students will be able to identify that the library provides more than just books
- Outcome 2.2: Students will be able to identify at least 3 types of resources they can check out
- Outcome 2.3: Students will try out/use at least three types of library collection resources

#### Outreach Goal 3: Promote Library Service Awareness

- Outcome 3.1: Students will be able to identify librarians as an authorized help resource on campus
- Outcome 3.2: Students will be able to identify at least 3 types of library services
- Outcome 3.3: Students will try out/use at least three types of library services

These outreach learning outcomes are scaffolded across the orientation outreach program, which is aimed at all incoming students, but which includes other events and activities in which student veterans are likely to participate. This scaffolded model allows the University Libraries to introduce each outreach goal at a limited level appropriate for many outreach events, while also providing space for reinforcing concepts and increasing

depth with each interaction. In the current model, library orientation outreach specifically adapted to student veterans is limited to a resource table at Vet Camp, the University's veteran-specific orientation. This format provides an opportunity to reinforce base-level outreach learning outcomes (1.1, 2.1, and 3.1) but, due to limited time and crowds, gives little opportunity to introduce more advanced outreach learning outcomes.

The student veteran orientation "dance card" provides the University Libraries with a more focused orientation that will provide librarians with a chance to increase the depth of their outreach learning outcomes for student veterans. By completing the proposed dance card, student veterans will be able to accomplish all mid-level outreach learning outcomes (1.2, 2.2, and 3.2), with the ultimate goal of accomplishing all advanced outreach learning outcomes (1.3, 2.3, and 3.3).

### *Assumptions and Risks*

Although several institutions have attempted library-specific orientations for student veterans, this model is primarily speculative and has not been demonstrated to successfully draw attendees (Atwood et al., 2016; Mills, Paladino, & Klentzin, 2015; Witteveen, 2016). Because student veterans are nontraditional students who often have jobs and family commitments, they may have difficulty attending events at a fixed time (LeMire, 2015). Therefore, the dance card model operates on the assumption that student veterans will be more likely to participate in a library orientation if they can complete it at a time that is convenient for them. Although a voluntary, out-of-class activity typically bears the risk of low participation rates, the University Libraries has mitigated this risk by active partnership with the campus VRSC. The VRSC plays an intensive role in coordinating student veterans and service members' transition to campus, including rigorous military admissions counseling, and maintains a close connection with student veterans and service members throughout their degree programs and beyond. The VRSC has also been partnering with units across campus, including Military Admissions, the Veteran Services Office, the Money Education Center, the Academic Success Center, and the Career Center, to develop new, data-driven strategies for improving student veteran retention rates and academic success. Fortuitous timing allows the University Libraries to serve as the first campus department to develop a veteran-oriented pre-assessment and self-directed orientation model.

### *The Dance Card*

Over the course of the IMLS Sparks Grant, the Texas A&M University Libraries will partner with the VRSC to create a virtual library "dance card," or orientation checklist, to familiarize student veterans with library resources appropriate to their level of expertise, major, and degree program requirements.

The dance card will have multiple components:

- 1) The first element of the dance card project is the pre-assessment. The pre-assessment is critical to identifying the unique needs of a given student veteran. The pre-assessment will be developed by the University Libraries but will be given to students by the VRSC as part of their standard orientation paperwork. The pre-assessment will identify critical data such as the student veteran's intended department or major, degree program, previous experience in college and using academic libraries, and familiarity with specific library programs.
- 2) Based upon pre-assessment data, librarians will be able to provide student veterans with a dance card tailored to their specific circumstances. For example, a graduate student studying civil engineering might receive a dance card assigning them to visit the civil engineering subject librarian and the graduate student study room in the main library, review a tutorial on retaining publication rights, and attend a workshop on engineering resources for graduate students. Alternatively, a first-year student with no previous college experience might receive a dance card assigning them to visit Course Reserves, meet with the first-year experience librarian, take a library tour, and reserve a study room.
- 3) Completion of the tailored library orientation dance card will be a point of consideration when distributing VRSC-managed scholarship funds.
- 4) Although beyond the scope of this grant, long-term goals for the veteran orientation dance card is to develop follow-up dance cards that student veterans will complete as they reach designated points in

their academic careers. For example, while the most important resources for a first-year student veteran may be general services such as Course Reserves and study rooms, when that student veteran reaches the upper-division level, they may also need to become familiar with resources such as their subject librarians and disciplinary collections. A graduate student who initially needed to know about graduate study spaces and citation management systems may benefit from learning about dissertation embargoes and copyright as they move into later stages of their programs. The dance card model is flexible enough to adapt to a scaffolded model once it moves beyond the pilot stage.

### *Technology*

To facilitate content delivery, data collection, and data analysis, the dance card will be developed and delivered online. To limit costs and development time, the dance card components will be constructed using software that is readily available on the Texas A&M campus and in the University Libraries. Although final software selections will be determined during the initial phase of the grant period, preliminary selections are as follows:

1) Qualtrics

The University maintains a site license to the survey software Qualtrics. This software is frequently used by departments and student services units to request information from current and incoming students, and is therefore familiar to both grant personnel and the student body. Qualtrics is the most likely software to be used for the pre-assessment segment of the dance card, as it will allow data to be easily extracted and analyzed in order to develop tailored dance cards.

2) Blackboard

Texas A&M University also maintains a site license to the course management system Blackboard, branded as eCampus. This site license includes a free mobile download for Texas A&M students, which means students will be able to download the application for free. Blackboard is the most likely software to be used to house the dance card. Librarians and the University Libraries' IT consultant can design, build, and manage a Blackboard Community site and enroll student veterans in pre-designed modules based upon the results of the pre-assessment. Blackboard also provides some capacity to incorporate external software for additional affordances; for example, QR codes could be used as a proxy for geolocation by directing students who scan the code back to a Blackboard assignment or quiz. VRSC staff can be enrolled as instructors in the Blackboard Community to verify student veterans' dance card completion status.

3) Articulate Storyline

Although many of the tasks for the dance card will require in-person visits to locations in the Libraries (e.g. Course Reserves, study rooms, librarian offices), some content may be best delivered virtually. Examples of virtual content could include tutorials for graduate students on scholarly communication topics such as retaining publication rights or data preservation. The University Libraries' tutorial program uses Articulate Storyline to develop ADA-accessible and SCORM-compliant tutorials that can easily be embedded in Blackboard and viewed from mobile devices or computers.

While this project may include supplemental or alternate software based upon findings in the initial stage of the grant, the investigators' focus is on selecting and implementing software that will cost nothing for student veterans to download and use. Furthermore, in order to limit potential hardware costs, the University Libraries and the VRSC will promote the availability of iPads and laptops on Course Reserves, all of which can be checked out to current University students at no cost.

### *Timeline*

This proposal includes a detailed timeline available in the Schedule of Completion.

#### **Phase 1: Software Selection (October 1, 2017-November 30, 2017)**

The initial phase of the grant will be dedicated to identifying, testing, and selecting existing software for usability, accessibility, and feasibility. Primary considerations in software selection will include accessibility, cost, testing capabilities, reporting functionality, and multimedia elements.

- *Action Item 1: Test capabilities of Blackboard*  
The project team will investigate the preliminary software selection of Blackboard and identify capabilities, constraints, and accessibility considerations.
- *Action Item 2: Identify supplementary software*  
The project team will review and identify the capabilities of supplementary software including the preliminary selections of Qualtrics and Articulate Storyline as well as additional possibilities such as Google Forms, QR codes, and the augmented reality software Layar.
- *Action Item 3: Construct Blackboard Community site with supplementary plug-ins*  
The project team, led by the team's IT consultant, will develop a pilot Community site in Blackboard. Any Blackboard add-ons identified during Action Item 2 will be incorporated at this time.
- *Action Item 4: Feedback from external advisors and student veterans*  
The project team will consult with identified external advisors from West Virginia University, Virginia Tech University, and Westminster College, all of whom have included letters of support for this grant application. Each of these external advisors works with student veterans at their institutions, either as a librarian or through their campus' veteran center. External advisors will provide feedback on the selected software, the pilot Blackboard Community site, and the feasibility of implementing this technology on their campuses. This step will also involve feedback from the target community of student veterans. During Phase 1, a grant-funded student worker position for a student veteran will be posted and, if possible, a student veteran will be hired to facilitate solicitation of student veteran feedback. The student veteran will conduct focus groups or interviews with student veterans to receive feedback on the usability and accessibility of the pilot Blackboard Community site.

## **Phase 2: Content Development (November 30, 2017-June 1, 2018)**

The second phase of the grant will be content development.

- *Action Item 1: Tours, focus groups, and surveys of student veterans*  
The first step to developing content will be to investigate current student veterans' familiarity with library resources and to ask what they wish they would have known about the library when they entered the University. The project team will recruit student veterans to participate in tours of the Libraries and gather input about specific services and spaces of interest to student veterans. Librarians and the grant-funded student worker/veteran will conduct interviews and focus groups with student veterans to identify potential problem areas for student veterans using the Libraries as well as gaps in their knowledge of the Libraries when entering the University. Incentives for student veteran participation in tours, interviews, and focus groups at this stage as well as other stages will include food (i.e. pizza), small prizes, and potentially a prize drawing using funding allocated within the grant budget.
- *Action Item 2: Identify differentiated knowledge areas*  
Based upon feedback from student veterans as well as librarian expertise, librarians on the project team will identify differentiated knowledge areas. These knowledge areas will inform the pre-assessment, as they represent the differentiated content areas about which student veterans will learn. For example, major knowledge areas may be graduate research skills, upper division research skills, and lower division research skills. Within the graduate knowledge area may fall familiarity with the graduate reading room, information literacy for teaching assistants, or searching for theses and dissertations.
- *Action Item 3: Develop pre-assessment*  
After identifying knowledge areas, librarians will develop a self-assessment that incoming student veterans will take to evaluate their knowledge of the University Libraries and its resources. Questions may include demographic questions (e.g. graduate student vs. undergraduate student, major or degree program) as well as questions to gauge familiarity with the types of services and resources available at an academic or research library.

- *Action Item 4: Develop content for each knowledge area*

The next step will be to develop modules for each knowledge area. Each module will contain no more than five knowledge areas, as student veterans will be asked to complete no more than five knowledge areas based upon their pre-assessment. Content for a knowledge area may include such elements as:

- A visit to a service point where they scan a QR code that brings up questions about the space
- An interactive tutorial to complete
- A requirement to attend a library workshop and upload a photograph of the workshop handout

This phase will also include the creation of the learning modules including such multimedia elements as tutorials and videos.

- *Action Item 5: Embed content in Blackboard*

As content is developed, it will be uploaded or incorporated into the pilot Blackboard Community site by the project team's IT consultant.

- *Action Item 6: Feedback from external advisors and student veterans*

The final step of Phase 2 is to seek feedback from external advisors and student veterans on campus. The project team will meet virtually with external advisors to gain feedback on the developed content and will allow the external advisors time to explore content and provide feedback for improvement. The project team and the grant-funded student worker/veteran will solicit feedback from student veterans on campus, who will try out elements of the developed content and provide feedback about clarity and content level.

### **Phase 3: Testing and Revisions (June 1, 2018-August 15, 2018)**

The project team will assess the application and the developed content for accuracy, ease of use, time required to complete, and accessibility. Feedback will be gathered from a focus group of student veterans, which will inform the iterative redesign of the dance card for implementation.

- *Action Item 1: Recruit student veteran testers*

The first step of Phase 3 will be to recruit a cohort of student veterans to test the combined Blackboard Community site and developed content. The project team will focus on selecting a broad range of student veterans, including both male and female veterans, graduate and undergraduate students, and students from as many branches of the military as possible. Particular attention will be paid to student veterans new to Texas A&M University, especially those enrolling for the first time during summer term.

- *Action Item 2: Testing*

During this step, volunteer student veterans will conduct extensive testing of the Blackboard Community site and developed content. Student veterans will take the pre-assessment, be assigned modules based upon the assessment, and be asked to complete the assigned modules.

- *Action Item 3: Feedback from external advisors and student veterans*

Based upon their experiences during the testing stage, student veterans will provide feedback via survey, focus group, and interviews. The project team and the student worker/veteran will collect feedback from student veterans and share it with external advisors, who will add their own feedback during a scheduled virtual meeting, via survey, and via email.

- *Action Item 4: Revisions*

Based upon feedback from volunteer student veterans and external reviewers, the project team will make revisions to the Blackboard Community site, pre-assessment, and modules.

### **Phase 4: Piloting and Assessment (August 15, 2018 -September 30, 2018)**

The project team will have a fully-functional prototype dance card to pilot for the Fall 2018 semester.

- *Action Item 1: Implement pre-assessment with pilot cohort of student veterans.*

Student veterans entering the university in Fall 2018 will receive the pre-assessment from the VRSC as part of their normal campus onboarding.

- *Action Item 2: Assign tasks based on pre-assessments*  
Based upon the pre-assessment, this pilot cohort of student veterans will be assigned modules with differentiated knowledge areas.
- *Action Item 3: Pilot cohort completes checklist*  
Student veterans will be asked to complete the dance card modules by the end of the grant period, which is midway through the Fall semester.
- *Action Item 4: Feedback from external advisors and student veterans, assessment, and revisions*  
After the grant period ends, the project team will gather feedback from student veterans and make necessary adjustments ahead of full implementation in Spring 2019.

### **Phase 5: Dissemination (2019)**

“Orienting Student Veterans to the Library” is a pilot project, but it is intended to support not only student veterans at Texas A&M University, but other academic libraries and veteran centers that are interested in orienting student veterans to library resources. This phase will involve sharing the results of the project with other institutions via presentations, publications, and direct sharing of the dance card and its components and structure with other institutions for customizing it to their local library environments.

#### *Project Roles*

“Orienting Student Veterans to the Library” is a collaborative project between Texas A&M University Libraries and the VRSC. All members of the project team are either military veterans or military family members.

Texas A&M University Libraries:

- a. Sarah LeMire, the project lead, is the First Year Experience and Outreach Librarian and an Assistant Professor at the University Libraries. She also serves as the library’s liaison to the VRSC. An Army and Iraq War veteran, she has focused her research extensively on student veterans. She recently co-authored a book on library services for veterans, *Serving Those Who Served: Librarian’s Guide to Working with Veteran and Military Communities*. Her primary role will be to maintain the project vision, supervise the student worker, coordinate project work, and contribute to content development.
- b. Stephanie Graves is the Director of Learning and Outreach and an Associate Professor at the University Libraries. She has extensive experience using instructional technology in both library instruction and outreach. She is also the daughter of a Vietnam War veteran. Her primary role will be to contribute to content development.
- c. Sean Buckner is the Digital Preservation Librarian and a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University Libraries. He is also a current service member; he is a Sergeant First Class in the Army National Guard and a veteran of the war in Afghanistan. He lends his expertise both in the preservation of digital learning objects and in the prior knowledge and expectations of current service members. His primary role will be to assist in software selection.
- d. Michael Hawkins is a University Libraries’ IT consultant with Learning and Outreach His expertise is in maintaining instructional technology, including course management systems such as Blackboard, as well as creating digital learning objects such as Articulate Storyline tutorials. He is also the son of a retired Army warrant officer. His primary role will be to assist in software selection, construct the Blackboard Community site and add developed content, and assist in developing tutorials.

Texas A&M University Veteran Resource and Support Center (VRSC):

- a. Colonel (Retired) Gerald L. Smith retired from the Marine Corps after 30 years, and is now serving as the director of the VRSC. He leads eighteen student veteran programs on campus and is strongly focused on the academic success of student veterans, including their success in finding employment



post-graduation. His primary role will be to provide feedback on content and to assist in recruitment and implementation during the Testing and Revisions phase.

- b. Sergeant Major (Retired) Donald D. Freeman retired from the Army after 28 years and now serves as the operations manager for the VRSC. He liaises with many campus departments, including the Veteran Services Office, the Career Center, and the Academic Success Center, and supervises VRSC student workers. His role will be to provide feedback on content and to assist in recruitment and implementation during the Testing and Revisions phase.

This proposal includes funding to hire a current student veteran to work on the project and provide their perspective as well as to facilitate feedback from their student veteran peers. Depending on project needs, the VRSC may also be able to coordinate additional student worker support through the VA work study program. Although the vast majority of the budget for this project is dedicated to staff and faculty compensation, funds are also allocated to experiment with supplemental technology (i.e. augmented reality applications) and incentives to encourage student veteran participation in testing and feedback (i.e. pizza and gift cards).

Following the conclusion of the grant period, revisions and updates to the dance card content will be carried out by the project lead, Sarah LeMire, in partnership with Stephanie Graves and Michael Hawkins and in consultation with Donald Freeman and Gerald Smith from the VRSC.

#### *Project Management and Dissemination*

In order to maintain the pace delineated in the project schedule of completion, the project team will have regularly scheduled meetings as a whole and with external advisors, as well as meetings with small groups within the project team. For example, the project lead will meet regularly with the IT consultant during the content development phase of the project plan in order to deliver completed content and review progress on uploading completed content into the Blackboard Community course.

Evaluation and performance management are an essential part of the project plan. During Phase 3: Testing and Revisions, the project team, led by the project lead/principal investigator, will submit an institutional review board (IRB) application in order to gain permission to collect, analyze, and report on data gathered during the following phase of the project. Phase 4: Piloting and Assessment will end with a concentrated effort to collect both qualitative and quantitative feedback from student veteran participants, including the following IMLS performance measurement statements:

1. The museum or library offers programs, services, or resources that address community needs.
2. The museum or library is an active contributor to problem solving in the community.

Findings from the project assessment will be disseminated in a number of library and student services venues. The project will be disseminated to external advisors at West Virginia University, Virginia Tech University, and Westminster College. Project team members from the VRSC will take the lead on submitting proposals to share about the project at NASPA, the Texas A&M and University of Texas System Symposium, and SoACE. Project team members from the University Libraries will take the lead on submitting proposals to share about the project at library conferences such as the American Library Association Annual Conference, ACRL 2019, the Library Assessment Conference, and Evidence Based Library & Information Practice Conference. Finally, findings from the project will be disseminated in the form of a peer-reviewed journal article in a library journal such as *College & Research Libraries*, *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, and *Reference & User Services Quarterly*.

### **3. National Impact**

As academic libraries become increasingly involved with their college or university's efforts to support student veterans, the demand for effective and impactful models for student veteran outreach will increase. "Orienting Student Veterans to the Library" pilots an innovative new model that has the potential to inform practice in any academic library interested in supporting student veterans as a unique population.

The dance card model has the potential to have a sustained impact nationwide on library approaches to student veterans for a few important reasons:

- 1) The dance card model relies on well-established constructivist learning theory, building upon the concept that knowledge is constructed from prior knowledge and experiences. Student veterans and service members, regardless of their military branch or even the duration of their service, will be familiar with the concept of an orientation checklist or dance card, which is ubiquitous in the military. This familiarity will allow student veterans and service members to construct their new knowledge of the services and structures of higher education upon the framework of their existing knowledge.
- 2) The dance card recognizes the challenges inherent in the educational experiences of a specific group of underserved patrons in the IMLS Community Anchors category: student veterans. Many of these students are older than traditional college students, have gaps in their educations, and have substantial family and/or work commitments outside of college. The dance card provides an orientation that is differentiated, meaning it is tailored to the specific degree program and level of the student veteran, as well as flexible, meaning student veterans can complete it on their own time and in segments, rather than having to attend a single, fixed-time orientation. By familiarizing student veterans with library resources and services in a differentiated and flexible manner as they are entering the University, “Orienting Student Veterans to the Library” has the real potential to make an impact on the academic outcomes of student veterans.
- 3) The dance card model acknowledges and adapts to the constraints of a targeted orientation model. Most academic libraries do not have the resources to provide tailored orientations to differentiated groups of students, especially in a time-delimited manner. The dance card model engages both the library and a strategic campus partner, the campus veteran center, to implement both a pre-assessment and a dance card that can be completed on student veterans’ schedules and that can scale both up and down, depending on the size of a college or university’s population of student veterans.

### *Performance Goals*

This grant is intended to meet the IMLS agency-level goal of Community and the performance goal of “Strengthen museums and libraries as essential partners in addressing the needs of their communities.” As part of the assessment plan for this grant, the project team will submit an IRB application at their institution, Texas A&M University, in order to assess the impact of the veterans’ orientation on the student veterans who participated in the pilot launch of the program. This study will use a mixed-methods approach in order to obtain both quantitative and qualitative information about each veteran’s orientation.

Quantitative data will be obtained by surveying participating student veterans to determine whether they accomplished the University Libraries’ outreach learning outcomes for orientation, delineated in the Project Design segment of this proposal. Performance goals for these learning outcomes are that at least 70% of student veterans will accomplish second-tier learning outcomes. (1.2, 2.2, and 3.2) and at least 50% of student veterans will accomplish at least one third-tier learning outcome (1.3., 2.3, and 3.3). Participating student veterans will also be asked about their confidence level in using the Libraries and their likelihood of recommending library resources to a fellow student veteran. This survey will also include two IMLS performance measurement statements: “The museum or library offers programs, services, or resources that address community needs” and “The museum or library is an active contributor to problem solving in the community.” The project targets for these performance measures is 70% of survey respondents selecting either “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with both performance measurement statements on a Likert scale.

Qualitative data will be obtained by holding focus groups and individual interviews with participating student veterans. These focus groups and interviews will focus on the affective nature of the veteran’s orientation program as well as suggestions for improvement for future iterations of the dance card.

### *Project Results*

This will result in multiple products:

- 1) A fully-functional prototype of the dance card that can be implemented at Texas A&M University and directly shared with any institution with a site license to Blackboard and access to other associated software.
- 2) Content, to include the pre-assessment and modules developed for each differentiated knowledge area, which can be extracted and shared with other institutions, including those using other course management systems and software.
- 3) Findings from the project assessment that will be disseminated in order to inform the strategies employed by other institutions interested in improving library outreach to student veterans.

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## DIGITAL PRODUCT FORM

### Introduction

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is committed to expanding public access to federally funded digital products (i.e., digital content, resources, assets, software, and datasets). The products you create with IMLS funding require careful stewardship to protect and enhance their value, and they should be freely and readily available for use and re-use by libraries, archives, museums, and the public. However, applying these principles to the development and management of digital products can be challenging. Because technology is dynamic and because we do not want to inhibit innovation, we do not want to prescribe set standards and practices that could become quickly outdated. Instead, we ask that you answer questions that address specific aspects of creating and managing digital products. Like all components of your IMLS application, your answers will be used by IMLS staff and by expert peer reviewers to evaluate your application, and they will be important in determining whether your project will be funded.

### Instructions

You must provide answers to the questions in Part I. In addition, you must also complete at least one of the subsequent sections. If you intend to create or collect digital content, resources, or assets, complete Part II. If you intend to develop software, complete Part III. If you intend to create a dataset, complete Part IV.

## PART I: Intellectual Property Rights and Permissions

**A.1** What will be the intellectual property status of the digital products (content, resources, assets, software, or datasets) you intend to create? Who will hold the copyright(s)? How will you explain property rights and permissions to potential users (for example, by assigning a non-restrictive license such as BSD, GNU, MIT, or Creative Commons to the product)? Explain and justify your licensing selections.

The project team agrees that federally funded products should be available to the widest possible audience through strategies such as open access. The content will be housed within Blackboard, our campus learning management system (LMS). Blackboard is a proprietary system that is licensed by the University. In order to provide access to the dance card outside of the traditional LMS course shell structure, a Blackboard Community site will be developed and student veterans at Texas A&M will be enrolled in the community. Any digital content created by the project team will be assigned a Creative Commons license in order to promote maintenance of the content within the project team, the host institution (Texas A&M), and open sharing with other institutions.

Sharing the digital content with other institutions will be accomplished through one of two methods. If the receiving institution is a Blackboard user, content can be extracted and uploaded to their local instance. If the receiving institution uses a different LMS on their campus, course content will be provided as batch files and institutions will need to recreate the course structure before uploading content modules.

**A.2** What ownership rights will your organization assert over the new digital products and what conditions will you impose on access and use? Explain and justify any terms of access and conditions of use and detail how you will notify potential users about relevant terms or conditions.

As Blackboard is a proprietary system licensed by the university, the project team can only determine the conditions and use of the content developed within the system. The members of the project team will own the copyright to any content created. Conditions of access and use will be determined based on Creative Commons licensing. Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International license logos will be applied to the instructional content. If source files are shared with other institutions via file sharing, receiving institutions will be asked to abide by the Creative Commons licensing articulated on the logos and retain similar licensing for any derivative product.

**A.3** If you will create any products that may involve privacy concerns, require obtaining permissions or rights, or raise any

cultural sensitivities, describe the issues and how you plan to address them.

The project does not anticipate creating any products involving privacy concerns, permissions, or cultural sensitivities. Any images or videos created will use materials licensed for creative commons use, original content created by the project team, or images created locally where permission to film/record is documented using a university permission form. Any student data collected about the use of the dance card will be de-identified and only reported in the aggregate. The project team will notify users that data can be collected for research purpose and consent will be obtained consistent with the Texas A&M IRB processes.

## **Part II: Projects Creating or Collecting Digital Content, Resources, or Assets**

### **A. Creating or Collecting New Digital Content, Resources, or Assets**

**A.1** Describe the digital content, resources, or assets you will create or collect, the quantities of each type, and format you will use.

Digital content created will be analogous to online course content. Instructional videos, handouts, quizzes, and virtual tours could be included to help student veterans gain a better understanding of library services.

**A.2** List the equipment, software, and supplies that you will use to create the content, resources, or assets, or the name of the service provider that will perform the work.

Blackboard will be used to host the instructional content for the dance card. Texas A&M University maintains a hosted instance of Blackboard, so no additional resources are needed. Standard educational equipment and software will be utilized such as Microsoft Office products, Adobe Creative Suite, Camtasia Studio, and Storyline Articulate may be used to generate content. In addition, QR codes may be used to show attendance at specific location-based services.

**A.3** List all the digital file formats (e.g., XML, TIFF, MPEG) you plan to use, along with the relevant information about the appropriate quality standards (e.g., resolution, sampling rate, or pixel dimensions).

All instructional content will adhere to principles of Universal Design and Accessibility Standards as defined by the state of Texas and federal law. Web content will meet the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG 2.0), Level AA. This includes accessible handouts, captioning of video, and operable controls for navigation of course content.

### **B. Workflow and Asset Maintenance/Preservation**

**B.1** Describe your quality control plan (i.e., how you will monitor and evaluate your workflow and products).

The project team will assess the quality of content through several methods. The project team will do a walkthrough of the dance card once complete. Student volunteers will also give feedback on the product in the Beta phase.

**B.2** Describe your plan for preserving and maintaining digital assets during and after the award period of performance. Your plan may address storage systems, shared repositories, technical documentation, migration planning, and commitment of organizational funding for these purposes. Please note: You may charge the federal award before closeout for the costs of publication or sharing of research results if the costs are not incurred during the period of performance of the federal award (see 2 C.F.R. § 200.461).

Final versions of content will be stored within the learning management system, Blackboard. Source files, project documentation, and digital assets will be shared amongst the project team using our institutional access

to Google Apps for Education, most likely in a shared Google Drive. Any assessment data and analysis will be stored in a password protected file and will only be accessible by the project team and any associated IRB staff.

### **C. Metadata**

**C.1** Describe how you will produce any and all technical, descriptive, administrative, or preservation metadata. Specify which standards you will use for the metadata structure (e.g., MARC, Dublin Core, Encoded Archival Description, PBCore, PREMIS) and metadata content (e.g., thesauri).

Metadata will not play a contributing role in this project.

**C.2** Explain your strategy for preserving and maintaining metadata created or collected during and after the award period of performance.

N/A

**C.3** Explain what metadata sharing and/or other strategies you will use to facilitate widespread discovery and use of the digital content, resources, or assets created during your project (e.g., an API [Application Programming Interface], contributions to a digital platform, or other ways you might enable batch queries and retrieval of metadata).

N/A

### **D. Access and Use**

**D.1** Describe how you will make the digital content, resources, or assets available to the public. Include details such as the delivery strategy (e.g., openly available online, available to specified audiences) and underlying hardware/software platforms and infrastructure (e.g., specific digital repository software or leased services, accessibility via standard web browsers, requirements for special software tools in order to use the content).

Final versions of content will be stored within the learning management system, Blackboard. As such, access will be limited to Texas A&M University affiliated persons due to licensing and access restrictions. However, the project team has a strong commitment to sharing the work of this project with any institution that would find it beneficial for their veteran population. Sharing the digital content with other institutions will be accomplished through one of two methods. If the receiving institution is a Blackboard user, content can be extracted and uploaded to their local instance. If the receiving institution uses a different LMS on their campus, course content will be provided as batch files and institutions will need to recreate the course structure before uploading content modules.

As Blackboard is a proprietary system licensed by the university, the project team can only determine the conditions and use of the content developed within the system. The members of the project team will own the copyright to any content created. Conditions of access and use will be determined based on Creative Commons licensing. Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International license logos will be applied to the instructional content. If source files are shared with other institutions via file sharing, receiving institutions will be asked to abide by the Creative Commons licensing articulated on the logos and retain similar licensing for any derivative product.

**D.2** Provide the name(s) and URL(s) (Uniform Resource Locator) for any examples of previous digital content, resources, or assets your organization has created.

Library content is embedded within our web environment: [www.library.tamu.edu](http://www.library.tamu.edu). Instructional content is linked from our Library Instruction Services website: <http://library.tamu.edu/libraryInstruction/index.html>. This includes links to our Tutorials Directory, our Class Guides (LibGuides), our help documentation for integrating

library resources into Blackboard and our workshop offerings.

### **Part III. Projects Developing Software**

#### **A. General Information**

**A.1** Describe the software you intend to create, including a summary of the major functions it will perform and the intended primary audience(s) it will serve.

**A.2** List other existing software that wholly or partially performs the same functions, and explain how the software you intend to create is different, and justify why those differences are significant and necessary.

#### **B. Technical Information**

**B.1** List the programming languages, platforms, software, or other applications you will use to create your software and explain why you chose them.

**B.2** Describe how the software you intend to create will extend or interoperate with relevant existing software.

**B.3** Describe any underlying additional software or system dependencies necessary to run the software you intend to create.

**B.4** Describe the processes you will use for development, documentation, and for maintaining and updating documentation for users of the software.

**B.5** Provide the name(s) and URL(s) for examples of any previous software your organization has created.

#### **C. Access and Use**

**C.1** We expect applicants seeking federal funds for software to develop and release these products under open-source licenses to maximize access and promote reuse. What ownership rights will your organization assert over the software you intend to create, and what conditions will you impose on its access and use? Identify and explain the license under which you will release source code for the software you develop (e.g., BSD, GNU, or MIT software licenses). Explain and justify any prohibitive terms or conditions of use or access and detail how you will notify potential users about relevant terms and conditions.

**C.2** Describe how you will make the software and source code available to the public and/or its intended users.

**C.3** Identify where you will deposit the source code for the software you intend to develop:



Name of publicly accessible source code repository:

URL:

#### **Part IV: Projects Creating Datasets**

**A.1** Identify the type of data you plan to collect or generate, and the purpose or intended use to which you expect it to be put. Describe the method(s) you will use and the approximate dates or intervals at which you will collect or generate it.

**A.2** Does the proposed data collection or research activity require approval by any internal review panel or institutional review board (IRB)? If so, has the proposed research activity been approved? If not, what is your plan for securing approval?

**A.3** Will you collect any personally identifiable information (PII), confidential information (e.g., trade secrets), or proprietary information? If so, detail the specific steps you will take to protect such information while you prepare the data files for public release (e.g., data anonymization, data suppression PII, or synthetic data).

**A.4** If you will collect additional documentation, such as consent agreements, along with the data, describe plans for preserving the documentation and ensuring that its relationship to the collected data is maintained.

**A.5** What methods will you use to collect or generate the data? Provide details about any technical requirements or dependencies that would be necessary for understanding, retrieving, displaying, or processing the dataset(s).

**A.6** What documentation (e.g., data documentation, codebooks) will you capture or create along with the dataset(s)? Where will the documentation be stored and in what format(s)? How will you permanently associate and manage the documentation with the dataset(s) it describes?

**A.7** What is your plan for archiving, managing, and disseminating data after the completion of the award-funded project?

**A.8** Identify where you will deposit the dataset(s):

Name of repository:

URL:

**A.9** When and how frequently will you review this data management plan? How will the implementation be monitored?