CUNY STI for Accessibility Proposal:
Getting Our Graduates into Classrooms: Lehman College School of Education Offers Asynchronous-Online Educator-Certification Test Preparation Modules for ALL CUNY Education Candidates

CUNY enrolls more than 13,000 teacher education students across nine senior colleges and six community colleges, and is the largest provider of teachers to the NYC Department of Education. All CUNY education candidates must pass several State exams to get into classrooms and enter the field of teaching. Rigorous new New York State requirements, changes in the focus and content of the exams and computer-based testing have raised the bar for candidates and teacher education programs. Unfortunately, the State Education Department’s reform efforts and test changes in 2014 have also resulted in a large percentage of CUNY students failing the new exams, which potentially closes the opportunity to enter the profession or places a financial burden on students who need to repeat exams. [CUNY data suggests that more than a quarter of all students are not passing one or more of the exams.]

To tackle this problem, Lehman College designed online modules that focus on test preparation content. During the summer of 2014, Lehman faculty from different disciplines worked collaboratively with educational technologists to create resources so that they can be accessed directly by CUNY students AND/OR for faculty to embed in coursework. We did not focus on a single course or program, but on a way to deliver key principles and content to all education students CUNY-wide.

Using BlackBoard as our learning management system and Softchalk to enable more innovative design features, technology afforded us a way to consolidate expertise and resources. Additionally, demonstrating the potential of enterprise-wide implementation, we shared our About Computer-Based Testing, ALST and EAS modules on a CUNY-wide Blackboard site so that ALL CUNY education students and alumni can self enroll and use our resources. Lehman College currently has enrolled over 2,000 students in our Lehman College Bb Organization.

Although we attempted to create the current modules with universal design in mind (offering PDF transcripts of video, etc.), we did not have the resources, expertise or personnel to make the modules truly accessible. We would like our Teacher Certification modules to be exemplary online resources that enable access and demonstrate universal design for all CUNY education students.

We would like to apply for this STI for Accessibility to:

1) Assess every aspect of our modules re: accessibility

2) Improve the following critical accessibility features during the next year:

   a) Video captioning for all video
   b) Create alt tags for graphics (identifying critical needs of long descriptions or
c) Check/create PDFs for screen reader/readability

d) Check tables for screen reader/readability

e) Check self-paced quizzes for readability

3) Create an additional module for high needs teacher certification Content Specialty Test areas that would be shared CUNY-wide. *

4) Create CUNY handbook/technical resource guide based on our experience to help make Bb/Softchalk courses/modules Universally Designed/accessible.

**BUDGET: $50,575**

1) Accessibility Project Consultants/Technologists: $36,000

2) Outsource video captioning for 75 hours of video (approx. $141/hour from 3Play Media pre-purchase quote): $10,575

   [We understand that the CIS taskforce may offer a University-wide contract for captioning, so this quote is a guide for the # hours our project would need to be allotted if we are asked to use the CUNY contract for outsourcing video.]

3) * Faculty CST Consultants (Content Specialty Exams for new CUNY module): $4,000

   [Accessibility Project Consultants/Technologists would work with faculty consultants to design/offer CUNY an additional accessible test prep module on the Special Education Content Specialty Test(s).]

**Project Supervisor:**

**Leslie Lieman** is the Educational Technology Coordinator for the Lehman College School of Education. Her professional development workshops for faculty and technology initiatives for students and public school teachers have led to improved use and integration of technology in teaching, learning and assessment. Leslie is currently focused on students’ successful completion of NYS Teacher Certification Exams. She offers open lab hours, supervises college assistants, and designs websites and online modules to support this effort. Leslie holds a B.A. from SUNY Binghamton, a Master's in Social Work from CUNY Hunter College and a Master’s in Educational Technology from Michigan State University.